

the ambulance cannot be fitted with a siren and the police allowed to be engaged on other useful work.

Mr. Styants: Who is stopping the use of sirens on ambulances?

Mr. YATES: The Police Department. Sirens are used on fire brigade vehicles, and in quite a number of cases there are false alarms and the fire engines are sent out and use their siren on every occasion. They cut round corners at a terrific speed, even though it may be for a false alarm. Nearly every case attended by a St. John ambulance is genuine, and in all accidents they are urgent. The cases are too numerous to mention where drivers of these ambulances have been forced to follow long lines of traffic. Especially is this the case on race days, when the traffic over the Causeway and the Great Eastern Highway is held up because there is a fairly slow car travelling in front of the line and doing probably only 15 miles an hour. Immediately the ambulance driver blows his horn the driver in front thinks it is another car trying to race ahead and will not give him right-of-way. If the ambulance were equipped with a siren all car drivers would know it was an ambulance and give it right-of-way. I request the Minister for Police to confer with the Commissioner of Police and have something done immediately so that a report can be given to this House before the close of the session to the effect that something has been done. Otherwise, I consider it will be necessary to bring down legislation to compel the Commissioner of Police to have sirens installed on ambulances.

I have very little to say about the activities of my electorate as I said all I wished to say in my speech last year. Most of the activities of which I spoke on that occasion have been put under way. One very important project which has been undertaken by the Government is the comprehensive drainage scheme which is being commenced between Victoria Park and the foothills, going as far as Midland Junction. When the drainage scheme becomes a reality I consider it will be one of the greatest undertakings outside the Goldfields water scheme, and I trust it will be one of great benefit to many thousands of people. This drainage scheme has been required for a long time. In the winter months many hundreds of people are unable to keep their properties

drained, to keep their stock dry, and those engaged in agricultural work find their produce flooded and their year's work ruined. With the introduction of the scheme I consider it will bring prosperity to that portion of the metropolitan area.

On motion by Mr. Brady, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.50 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 4th August, 1948.

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

QUESTION.

CHAMBERLAIN INDUSTRIES LTD.

As to Government Guarantee for Building Tractors.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM asked the Chief Secretary:

- (1) Has the Government made any advances to Chamberlain Industries Ltd.?
- (2) If so, what is the total amount advanced?
- (3) When was the first advance made?
- (4) Were the advances, if any, made to them to build tractors?
- (5) If so, what progress has been made, and what is the total output of tractors to date?
- (6) If no tractors have been made, when is it anticipated that the first one will be available?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Capital is being provided by the company's own bankers, but, in addition, the fol-

lowing guarantees have been given by the State Treasury—

(a) £80,000 to the E.S. & A. Bank, £40,000 of which is in turn guaranteed by the Commonwealth Government to the State Government.

(b) £65,000 to the Rural and Industries Bank.

In addition the Government is purchasing and reselling to the company under H.P.A. tools and plant to the estimated value of £100,000. The balance of the plant required is being purchased by the company from the Commonwealth Government through the agency of the State Government.

(3) The first guarantee was given on the 22nd May, 1947, but was arranged several months prior to that time.

(4) All Government support has been given to this end only.

(5) Pilot models have been made and satisfactorily tested by Government departments and installation of mass production plant is nearing completion, and manufacture of most tractor parts is in progress.

(6) It is anticipated that the first batch of mass-produced tractors will be available for the coming harvest.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fifth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM (East) [4.35]: At the outset I would like to express my thanks to hon. members who have made complimentary remarks concerning the honour which has recently been conferred upon me. To you, Sir, I desire to offer my congratulations on again being elected to the highest position that this House can offer to any of its members. Evidently, the Goldfields provides quite a lot of useful members who can occupy the position that you do, as you are the third consecutive member from that part of the State who has occupied this position. To the new members of the House I desire to offer my hearty congratulations and extend to them a welcome.

It is pleasing to see in this House, as well as in another place, the younger members of the community taking an interest in politics. After all, I am afraid the

public generally do not take politics as seriously as they ought to, because it is a very important thing. One should know something about the government of the country and the legislation that is enacted from time to time because we either profit or lose by the legislation as passed by members of Parliament. To the House generally, I think we have had brought in men of great experience and they will be very helpful to us. It is always pleasant to see the old faces returned to this Chamber after a general election, and, of course, years of experience will bring wisdom and certainly will be helpful to those who will have to deliberate in the interests of the people of this State as a whole.

I read with a great deal of interest the Speech of His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor and, with the Government, I think we are all very happy to know that next year we are to have a visit from Their Majesties the King and Queen and Her Royal Highness, Princess Margaret. We will have no opportunity outside of this session of expressing ourselves respecting that visit, and so I now take the opportunity of saying that I know a very hearty welcome will be extended to them by the people of Western Australia. I do not know of any more loyal community in any part of His Majesty's Dominions than this is, because when any of the Royal Family have visited us, the people of this State have extended a welcome that has been unequalled in any other part of the Empire.

After studying the Speech of the Lieut.-Governor, I sum it up in this way: There are two essential things that the citizens of Western Australia are hoping for. The first is that they shall be properly housed, and probably today that is uppermost in the minds of the people who are living under very uncongenial conditions. I dare say that hon. members of this Chamber, like myself, are continually being approached by people who make out very reasonable cases in favour of their being given a home of their own. It is very unwise that young people should have to start their married life with the old folk. It is unwise and it is not healthy. These people desire to start out in life for themselves in their own way and anything we can do to assist them in that direction should be done.

When a number of families live in the one house, it must be very difficult for them to agree, and trouble must occur not only between families but also between man and wife. I sometimes ask myself whether everything that can be accomplished is being done to provide homes for the people. We hear stories about bottlenecks; we hear of supplies being held up by the State Housing Commission; we hear and also read that supplies of bricks are becoming an encumbrance to the manufacturers and have to be carted away to make room for the next batch from the kilns. This should not occur, and evidently some relief could be afforded if permits were granted to people who could build their own homes. We have those who are quite capable of building homes for themselves. Looking back over the years, it is not long since 50 per cent. of the homes were built by the occupants. After all, the Australian can generally turn his hand in any direction if the results are beneficial to him.

Hon. G. Bennetts: We can turn out 50,000 bricks at Coolgardie.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: That would be some help in relieving the position to which the hon. member referred last evening when he spoke of the difficulties being experienced on the Goldfields. I hope that the stories we hear of the State Housing Commission's hoarding supplies to the detriment of builders are not true. I trust that before long much more work will be done by contract. We are told that the men who become available from time to time are pushed on to Government jobs to the disadvantage of the man who has tendered and obtained a contract for building. That is not a healthy sign. I am satisfied that the men who work for a contractor can render just as good service to him and to the eventual occupier of the house as can those working under Government supervision. Therefore I hope that further opportunities will be made available to contractors to undertake these jobs.

I say advisedly that there are in this State contractors who today will not undertake building because they believe they will be so badly handicapped. They are not prepared to undertake such work until there is a release of materials in sufficient quantities to permit them to finish a job. Recently I

visited the Eastern States and concluded that the problems there are just as great as they are here. Many more wooden buildings are being erected in New South Wales and Victoria than in Western Australia, and quite a number of homes were partially constructed, but there was no sign of any activity about them. Evidently roofing and other materials were not available.

The Honorary Minister: And over there you can see whole districts of fibrolite houses.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Yes. Some of the houses had the walls up, but the flooring could not be put down until material was available for the roofing. I wish to make a suggestion, though I feel sure the Government will not accept it. Seldom do we find a Government that is prepared to adopt the advice of a layman. However, I ask the Government to consider removing the restriction on the building of houses in country districts.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Hear, hear!

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I believe that the type of house to be constructed could be controlled by fixing a maximum price. One cannot haphazardly say that a four-roomed house or a five-roomed house shall not exceed a certain price. The same type of house built on the Goldfields and at York would cost different amounts, but it could be stipulated that in the respective districts the value should not exceed a certain sum. It is easier to get a building permit in the metropolitan area than in the country. The result is that quite a lot of retired farmers are coming to Perth, though they would prefer to have a home in their own village where their friends are living and where they can spend the remaining years of their lives among friends. Yet such people are being forced to come to the city when they retire. That is unwise. We are always complaining about the over-populated cities. Yet, Governments, despite the fact that they preach decentralisation, do not practise it. I offer the suggestion in the hope that the Government will give consideration to people who wish to build a home to live in. I do not want to encourage speculative building, but a person desiring a home to live in should be permitted to build without restriction, save in the matter of the maximum sum to be spent on it.

Next to housing, the great need is for increased production, both primary and secondary. This is a big problem. I appreciate that it is easy for me to stand here and direct attention to this need, but to give effect to it is a totally different matter. To-day there is in the employ of the Commonwealth and State Governments a tremendous number of people who could be more profitably engaged in industry. When the controls are undertaken by the State Government, a man should be selected to go carefully through the various offices where the control staffs are housed and see whether it is not possible to release quite a number of employees who might be absorbed in constructive industry. These people are more or less cash spenders and what we want are cash earners. This is one way in which we might get additional labour for use in a producing capacity.

The Honorary Minister: Most of those people will not go out of an office and work with their hands.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: There comes a time when offices may be over-staffed.

The Honorary Minister: I agree.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: It is surprising what an Australian is capable of doing. When the war broke out, we took young fellows from universities, schools and offices, and they were able to do a really good job. It was not a matter of tin-soldiering; they had to do hard work. If members knew of some of the work these young men had done in the Islands, they would be surprised, and that task was carried out by men who had not previously undertaken a day's hard work in their lives. If the necessity arose, I hope that they would be prepared to accept the responsibility of earning a living and would go out of the offices to do it. It is of no use saying, "If there is no work available that you like, we shall provide sustenance from the social service funds." Such action as that will not help Australia to build up industries. This situation must be faced not only in Western Australia but also throughout Australia, and the public will have to accept the position if we are to get out of our difficulties. The only way in which we can hope to get out of them is by work. You, Mr. President, and I, know very well

that we could not have got anywhere if we had not been prepared to work. People would not have employed and paid us unless we were able to give value for the money.

Hon. G. Fraser: There are a few confidence men.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Unfortunately that is so, but I hope there is none in this House. I want men that we can have confidence in. I listened to a speech made by Mr. Gray the other night which was very disconcerting to me. He told us that the world was being over-supplied with wheat. The population of the world is increasing enormously, and I think that the last war produced a different set of conditions of living amongst the people of the world, one which was unheard of prior to that conflict. Countries that in the past probably never saw wheat are to-day becoming eaters of wheat products. They have to be, because there is not enough rice, or whatever their staple food happens to be, to go round. India, which has consumed a fair quantity of both rice and wheat, is still short of food, and we have been exporting wheat to that country during the past year, for which it has been prepared to pay a high price.

I agree that the price of wheat is too high. The producer of wheat in this country has never said that he would not sell wheat for 10s. a bushel, which is 7s. or 8s. below what we are getting today. He would be quite glad to get 10s. and would be prepared to take less; but it is unwise for us to say that he should not accept the market value, and the market value today of sales effected is 17s. to the Old Country, which it offered to pay and which was less than the market price at the time. Sales have been effected to India at 18s., which was then less than the world's market price. So I am perfectly satisfied that we can continue producing a great deal more wheat than we are growing now, because it will be a long time before we will have supplied the world's needs.

In America today, farmers are producing a great deal more of what is known as rough grain, or coarse grain, which is being used for stockfeed purposes. The world is extremely short of mixed foods—such as pig meats, beef and mutton—and there is a large market for them. Looking to the

development that has taken place close to Australia, we find that in the Netherlands East Indies the dark races are becoming much more Europeanised than they were before and are demanding a better standard of living—and rightly so, too. When I have been in those countries and have seen dark people without a roof over their heads, living and sleeping under trees and feeding off barrows, I have wondered whether they were God's creatures or not. We would not deal with our animals in the way they are treated. I have no objection to their being treated more like human beings than has been the case in the past; and the only way in which that can be done is to see that they are fed decently. We can do a great deal towards assisting in that direction.

There are very few industries, important to the welfare of the people, that are over-supplied. I do not know of any. Whatever one wants to buy, one has difficulty in purchasing, and the price is extremely high. The only way to bring down the cost of living is to persuade people to produce goods for which there is a ready market; and when that is done, instead of having quarterly adjustments upwards, we will probably get a little better value for our currency than we are receiving now. I appeal to the Government to do what is necessary in this respect and to everybody outside the Government, because it is not only a Government function. The worker plays a very important part in this connection. If he will not do a fair day's work during the time he labours, we cannot get anywhere; we cannot produce the conditions I would like to see. A man should give full value for the wage he receives exactly the same as another man is expected to give full value in the article he sells in return for the price he gets.

I do not want to be critical in my comments, but I do not think we can talk these things over too frequently. There is another section of the community that is telling people they would profit by having fewer hours of labour—at a time when the world is crying out for supplies! These people are receiving publicity. We are not getting it. Whatever comments may be made in this House during the rest of this debate, very little publicity will be given to them, but let some Communist leader say, "We

are going to have a 30-hour week and another £1 increase in wages," and there will be a lot of publicity given to his remark! Unfortunately there are people with the kind of mind that absorbs that type of utterance more readily than the considered statement of those who are prepared to tell them the right way to get out of their difficulties.

The outside world will, I hope, assist the Government with the problems that are facing it. The Honorary Minister for Agriculture will be interested in what I am about to say. Some little while ago a soil conservation committee was appointed to try to do something to prevent loss of soil by erosion either by wind, water or other means. I do not know whether that committee is still functioning, but I do know there is a big problem arising in Western Australia from the presence of salt and other foreign substances detrimental to growth. Members will know that throughout Western Australia there are in the pastoral and agricultural districts many salt lakes and, with the clearing that has taken place in the last few years, there has been a large accumulation of salt. In course of time, the salt is washed into the lakes, in some of which there is no less than one foot of salt today. Though we are importing salt from the Eastern States, we have more than we can do with in our own State within a very reasonable distance.

When heavy rain falls, such as was our experience last year, that salt is washed out of the lakes and goes on to the flat country, where the best wheat areas are situated. It spreads over the land and leaves a deposit on the soil. Going through the wheat belt today, one can see that there has been a good deal of soil erosion on account of salt. There is a solution for this problem, though it may be an expensive one. We will have to make our own rivers—provide water courses to drain the overflow from the lakes into existing rivers. With the use of bulldozers it should not cost a great deal.

The Honorary Minister: Would you like to drain these lakes into the Avon River?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The Avon River is salty now, and so long as the salt was kept within the bounds of the river itself, it would be all right.

The Honorary Minister: The Avon River floods.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: It does not flood from Beverley down. It might when it gets to Guildford. I have followed the course of the river very carefully and I do not think it spreads out unless it is very high; and if it is exceedingly high, the water will be fresh and will not have the same detrimental effect when it empties out of these lakes. At any rate, something will have to be done in the future if we are to preserve the fertility of a lot of that soil. I know that the Minister will take the advice of his experts in this matter.

As a man with some knowledge of farming and of the detrimental effect that salt has on the soil, I am prepared to say that so far as those of us in some parts of the State are concerned, we would pay to have the work done through our farms to open up channels to take away the salt-laden water. The work could be done very easily today when prices of farm produce are what they are, because the farmers could afford it. As a matter of fact, they cannot afford not to have the work done. However, it is no use one man doing it and the next one leaving it undone. That is where the problem arises for the man who wishes to see his land protected against salinity. I could take the Minister to many farms where he would be surprised at the spreading of salt that took place last year.

It is usually found that in dry years the salt comes to the surface. When heavy rains occur, the salt is washed into the lakes and then it follows down the water-courses when the rains come again. Creeks that in the past contained fresh water are now salty, and the salt is being spread over large areas of country. The land itself is the most valuable asset of the people. Whether or not it is owned by individuals, it is the source of the supply of food for the people, and must be protected. Owners of land come and go, but the land remains. The good land is there to feed and clothe the people. I hope that the Minister, when replying to the debate, will tell us whether the board I have mentioned is in operation.

The Honorary Minister: It is and has been functioning.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I have not heard of it for some time, and there

arises the question of whether it has a leader. We, in this State, educate such leaders and then other States offer them better salaries and conditions than we are prepared to grant them.

The Honorary Minister: The chairman of this board visited every State in the Commonwealth in order to gain information about soil conservation. He has his experts, and he is chairman of the board.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I do not know that we can supply the experts. When Dr. Teakle left this State, I think he was replaced by another man who was busily engaged on other activities of the department. I do not think the Minister has an idle officer in his department today.

The Honorary Minister: This man's principal job is now that of soil conservation.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I think he should be relieved of all other employment and kept on that work until he can provide a solution. We could then see whether the farmers are willing to pay for the work that must be done. I cannot see any other solution to the problem, although I do not know whether my suggestion is entirely practicable.

I desire to commend Dr. Hislop for the speech he made last night. It was well prepared and well worth listening to. Members should give serious consideration to what Dr. Hislop said. He has made a close study of hospitalisation—I do not like the word—in this State, and of nursing conditions. There is no doubt that he said what the Country and Democratic League in this State has asserted in this State for a long time about building a main hospital in a centre where its scientific experts could be of most use.

Hon. E. H. Gray: That is Labour's policy.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The Labour Party followed the Country and Democratic League in that. It generally picks up the best points of other parties' policies. We also said there should be base hospitals at Albany, Katanning, Narrogin, Northam and so on, but I cannot see how we can do away with the smaller country hospitals. It is no use Dr. Hislop saying that the local doctor will follow his patients from Narembeen to Merredin, 50 miles away. He could not do it.

Hon. W. J. Mann: He would never be at home, if he did.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Parents would not be prepared to send their sick children so far away if they could get treatment for them closer at hand.

Hon. G. Bennetts: It would not be wise to take away the maternity hospitals from such places.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Unless there were complications, such as can be detected in advance these days, maternity cases should not be sent so far away. It is essential, generally speaking, to maintain the small hospitals in country districts. With all patients, it is the nursing care that eventually brings them round, and they can get better care in hospital than can be provided in their own homes. The alternative to country hospitals is nursing in the home, which is not advisable, particularly on farms where the mother, or lady of the house, already has sufficient to do in caring for the menfolk who work the property.

I think Dr. Hislop's best suggestion was that instead of our building a huge edifice to house the nursing staff for the Royal Perth Hospital, we should allow the staff to live out, as do our firemen, though the staff would have to be provided with telephones or some other method of communication in case they were required at short notice. Nurses' quarters to house all the nursing staff of the Royal Perth Hospital would have to be a very large structure, and I think it would be better to distribute that portion of the population round the city. It might be necessary for student nurses to live close by the hospital, but I do not know that even they should be housed actually in the hospital grounds. I am referring to the position that will arise when, with the completion of the Royal Perth Hospital, there will probably be 400 or 500 nurses involved.

A few words of encouragement may be extended to Mr. Bennetts and I agree with him that it is unfair to ask people in the outer Goldfields areas to shoulder the terrific price they are asked to pay for water. The Government might well give consideration to making a more reasonable charge in such districts. I would not live at Norseman, under the conditions obtaining there,

and pay 10s. per thousand gallons for water.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: It is 3s. 6d. per thousand gallons at Port Hedland.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: That does not relieve the position at Norseman. I understand something is to be done about the position at Port Hedland, but the water at Norseman is brought to the town through pipes, and the people are still paying 10s. per thousand gallons for it. We cannot blame women for not wanting to return to that town after having once been to the metropolis. Mr. Bennetts will have a champion in me in any efforts he may make to have that position relieved.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Just a small increase in the rate in the metropolitan area would do it.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: An increase of 1d. in the rate for the metropolitan area would allow cheaper water to be supplied to these people who are today being asked to pay such a terrific price.

Hon. A. L. Loton: Would you include electricity in that?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I have no objection to such people being charged only a reasonable price for electricity, though of the two, water is the more essential. I believe the intention of the Government is to provide some assistance with regard to electricity also. I come now to deal with land at Esperance. Mr. Bennetts must realise that this State has enormous areas of Crown land still unused, and it must remain unused until we build up the population of the country. I have been through the Esperance area and know it reasonably well. I know some of the settlers who have led a fairly hard life establishing themselves there. While I do not think any of them could be regarded as being wealthy, today they are making a living off the land under good conditions. The climate is pleasant and the surroundings are fairly attractive.

It is not many years ago that legislation was introduced granting a company a great area of land in the Esperance district for the establishment of a pine plantation. That measure passed through this House, and a considerable sum of money was spent in trying to establish pine planta-

tions on that country, but without much success.

Hon. G. Bennetts: I believe they were the wrong class of pines.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: There is always an excuse. There are some fine pine trees growing on the coast, but the soil may change within two or three miles of the seaboard. We can produce many things five miles from the coastline that cannot be produced actually at the coast. It was not long before the idea of growing pines was abandoned, and the company asked to have the legislation amended so that it could establish pastures. The Government of that day was amenable to reason, and granted the altered legislative authority. The Act is still on the statute-book giving that company authority to establish pastures. Some were established on the sandhills, and I think there is still a block of land, on the right hand side as one goes into Esperance, growing clover, though it was not topdressed. That country can be made to produce pastures, but it requires a lot of fertiliser that must be railed from Perth, though I suppose it could be sent more cheaply by boat. I do not know whether any boats run from Fremantle to Esperance today.

Hon. G. Bennetts: That is why I wanted the "Kybra" put on to that run.

Hon. F. R. Welsh: You will not get her.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: Certainly not.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: There is a fight between the North and the South! I believe there was something of that kind in America on one occasion. It created a great deal of trouble, and I will not encourage anything of that sort here.

The Chief Secretary: The slaves are still in the South?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Each area has the right to have its problems ventilated in this House. There was a Select Committee appointed to inquire into our light lands, and I think it finished up as a Royal Commission. If Mr. Bennetts reads the report of that commission, he will see what is said about Esperance. Hon. E. Nulsen was a member of that commission, and he was a member of the Ministry for a long time, but I have not seen any development of that land as the result of his association with the Ministry of that

day, although he still represents that area. When he did not do anything in the matter it is hard to expect others, who do not understand the problems as well as do Mr. Bennetts and Hon. E. Nulsen, to take action in it.

The Honorary Minister: His Government was in power for a long time.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Continuously for 14 years, and I think Hon. E. Nulsen was a member of the Ministry for at least nine years. One would think a Minister of the Crown would, in such circumstances, assert himself in his Cabinet—

Hon. W. R. Hall: He may have been very impartial.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I should hope so, but I have noticed no marked disposition about the people there to take up Esperance land. As a matter of fact, we must acknowledge that the position is not very easy; it is useless to suggest that it is a simple proposition. We first have to get people to accept the responsibility of developing those areas. We must appreciate the fact that, year after year, people from the Goldfields visit Esperance and on either side of the railway line, they pass through vast areas of Crown land. Those people do not seem to be keen on becoming farmers down there. The only solution of the problem is to settle the country, and the value of our land will be determined by the number of people it will carry. I do not want the impression to be created that I am not concerned about the situation. I am certainly concerned about it and I am anxious to help, but it is not very easy to do it.

The really vulnerable part of the Commonwealth is Western Australia. When we have a port such as Esperance without any population there to speak of, we can agree that it must be very annoying to our friends north of Australia to see such vast areas here unpeopled while their country is exceedingly over-populated. We must use every endeavour to make the country attractive enough to encourage settlers to take up the land and assist in its development. It may be asked, "If you put people on the land there, where will they get markets for their products?" For my part, I think the answer to that is that the starving millions throughout the world will have to be treated differently from their experience in the past,

and Western Australia, I feel sure, is destined to play a very important part with its land settlement policy and the consequent provision of foodstuffs.

Hon. E. H. Gray: If you want the trade, you will have to grade the wheat.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: It seems to me that Mr. Gray must have been a baker at one time!

Hon. W. J. Mann: You must have some inside information.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: If he has not been a baker, then he must certainly have looked inside a bakehouse, because he is always harping on his pet theme. I want to tell him that I am prepared to bring to the House two loaves of bread produced from just ordinary Western Australian wheat and will demonstrate to him what a good baker can do with it and what a bad baker can do.

The Honorary Minister: That is the point.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The wheat used for bread will not be specially selected but just the ordinary type of wheat that one can buy.

Hon. G. Bennetts: I will bring you a loaf of bread baked by a lady at No. 1 Pumping Station, and it will be better still.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: That simply serves to prove that Mr. Gray wants us to go to a lot of expense in grading wheat and putting it through the processes he suggests, instead of continuing to deal with it properly, as can be done now. During the course of his speech last session and again this year, Mr. Gray referred to the work of Dr. Kent-Jones. I can tell him that I was invited by Dr. Kent-Jones to spend a day with him at Dover. Because I have always been interested in wheat matters I accepted the invitation.

As members know, Dr. Kent-Jones is the scientific expert who advises many of the principal millers of Great Britain, and it is his duty to determine the quality of flour requisite for special purposes such as bread baking or biscuits and breakfast foods manufactured by them. During the time I was with him, he set a batch of bread consisting of three lots. One of the sets had been made from what he described as really good wheat, another from medium wheat and the third from an inferior article.

Prior to putting the batches into the oven he surprised me by inserting a tube into the dough and pumping it up to test its breaking strength. I daresay Mr. Gray has witnessed the process but it was foreign to me, and I was not of a sufficiently scientific turn of mind to know what the effect would be. On the other hand, I was able to see the results of the procedure.

During the time he was doing this, Dr. Kent-Jones said to me, "I want you to remember, Mr. Latham, that Canada is supplying us with all the red wheats we want. Don't get into the bad habit in Western Australia of growing red wheats. We want your white wheats because we are able to use them and turn out excellent flour." I asked him about the different types and he told me that in some years a greater moisture content was apparent in some wheats, which were not as hard then as in other years. That position is easily explained. When we have a dry season we produce great quantities of wheat from the western portions of the wheatbelt but in a wet season the greater part of it is produced in the eastern portions of that belt. Where the heat is greater, the wheat is drier and of better quality. Thus we have differing qualities of wheats according to the years of production.

In reply to a question from me, Dr. Kent-Jones said that they did not want any more of the Gallipoli wheat from Victoria. That was really the only type of wheat of which he complained. During his speech, Mr. Gray spoke about Beneubbin wheat and said it was too soft. The extraordinary thing is that that strain of wheat has become so popular and, in fact, there is hardly any part of Australia where it is not produced.

The Honorary Minister: I will give you some figures regarding Beneubbin wheat when I reply.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: When travelling round, I have been amazed to see the quantity of that type of wheat that is being grown. If the flour millers have any objection to it, why do they not discourage its production. I can only come to the conclusion that Mr. Gray has a friend who is a baker and he is trying to find an excuse for the foisting of bad bread on to the consumers, particularly under the beastly, rotten zoning system that the bakers insisted upon after putting their heads together.

Hon. E. H. Gray: You know that Dr. Kent-Jones recommended the grading of wheat.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Yes, but he does not care what it costs the farmers to market their wheat. Dr. Kent-Jones represents the millers. They only want the best article they can get for their purposes. If we were to do what Mr. Gray suggests, it would cost farmers at least 3d more per bushel.

The Honorary Minister: And they will not give any more for it.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: It must be remembered that we have to sell our wheat on the world's market and any such added cost would be to our disadvantage. I am aware that in Canada they have their No. 1, No. 2 and No. 3 Manitoba hard wheats, but there is very little No. 1 and No. 2 marketed as such. They bulk their wheat, because it is more profitable to dispose of the output in that way. I do not want to hear a great deal more from Mr. Gray on this subject, otherwise I shall have to demonstrate to him the difference between the good and the bad baker.

The Honorary Minister: You have saved me a lot of trouble in dealing with that point.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: During my membership of the Legislative Council I have listened to many speeches. In fact I came here to do so, and I hope I am profiting by them. I certainly did profit from what I heard last night. I am sorry that Dr. Hislop was not present when I spoke about his speech, which I regard as one of the most interesting and educative that I have listened to for a long time, and I have much pleasure in stating that publicly. Mr. Bennetts pointed out—I certainly agree with him—that the cost of producing gold is so enormous that it is very doubtful whether it will be a business proposition in future, except for a few favoured mines.

Let us examine the possible solution. The mining companies are similarly situated to the farmers in that they produce their output, which is promptly acquired by the Commonwealth Government at a price very much below that at which it can dispose of the gold, if it should choose to do so. I know that gold is being sold in India—illegally,

I admit—at £35 an ounce whereas the price of it today in this State is, with the bonus added, about £10 12s. 6d.

The Chief Secretary: It is a premium, not a bonus. That is the name used for it.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: That is so. In understand the premium is £6, and that premium really indicates the depreciation in the value of our currency. We should realise that that is the position. It is not quite fair to ask the people of Western Australia to subsidise the goldmining industry when the Commonwealth Government is deriving the benefit from the output of the production of gold here. While Mr. Bennetts is to be commended for his advocacy on behalf of his constituents of cheaper water charges and improved railway services, we must remember that the people who obtain their supplies there receive an increase in wages every time there is anything added to the cost of living on the Goldfields. Those charges are not passed on to the people who use the railways for the purpose of getting their supplies. I would not like to see the Goldfields retrogress. If one casts one's mind back to 1933 and subsequent years, an appreciation of what the fields have meant to us will be gained.

Hon. G. Bennetts: The Goldfields carried the State over the depression period.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The goldmining industry has served to build up the State and to attract population to it. In fact, the State would not be in an enviable position at all without the industry. There came a period in its history when the industry slumped and in its place agriculture came to the fore. When production for the land failed us to an appreciable extent, fortunately for Western Australia, gold came into its own again and helped us out. When we consider the millions of pounds' worth of gold that is in this country, we must realise that the industry is well worth fostering. I desire to see the industry flourish and I think the Commonwealth Government should accept a great deal more financial responsibility for its support and not ask the handful of people residing in Western Australia to foot the bill, especially when every ounce of gold that is produced has to be lodged at the Commonwealth Bank and thus is brought under the jurisdiction of the Federal authority.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Assistance rendered by the State to prospectors has mostly been paid back.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I do not know how much younger than I am is the hon. member, but I remember the old prospector of years gone by.

Hon. G. W. Miles: He was the salt of the earth.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: He certainly was. He did not come to the Government clamouring for assistance. I remember talking to an old chap at Coolgardie who still had the idea that there was a wonderful lode beneath the hill on which he was camped, and he was determined to find it. All that man wanted was to get on with the work and have sufficient to provide for his livelihood, but he had no desire to put every ounce of gold he produced into the Commonwealth Bank under present-day conditions. He was the true type of prospector. As a matter of fact, the man who blazed a track in the early days would not accept assistance. Nowadays, they want to be paid to work and want £3 a week before they will go out.

Hon. G. Bennetts: All they want is a little assistance.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The State gives every consideration to any man who finds a new show. That should be some encouragement to him. If he is worth backing, the local people will assist him, particularly if they know their man.

Hon. W. R. Hall: He will find plenty of backing.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The hon. member has backed a few in his time and been perfectly satisfied with them, because they have delivered the goods. I assert, however, that there are some men he would not back, because he knows that type of man, too. I have every desire to see the prospectors carry on their work, but there is not much encouragement for them to do so now, notwithstanding that conditions are different from those when the early prospectors went out.

Hon. G. Bennetts: The Mines Department has that type of man keyed up pretty well.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: He makes a lot more noise than the genuine

prospector, too. Members should realise that during the depression period we did give help to the Goldfields residents by reducing the water rate. I think we lost about £50,000, but it was well worth losing, as it did help them along. The Government, like every other State Government, is willing to do all it possibly can, but it is no use expecting the impossible. There are heavy calls on every Government in Australia. The first is to house the people. The next is to endeavour to get people working in industries, while the third is to bring people here from overseas. But we must be able to house them. Peopling Australia will be our greatest protection and I know the Government will do all it can in that respect.

There is always much comment about the Railway Department. To criticise our railway system is easy, especially if we do not travel. It is fortunate that one can at times visit other States and make comparisons. This is not the only State with railway problems. New South Wales has its railway problems. There is in that State an immense quantity of wheat which cannot be transported by rail. I would hardly dare to estimate the quantity, but I should say it is close to 90,000,000 bushels.

Hon. H. Turkey: That is mainly due to the coal shortage.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Not only that, either. New South Wales has break-downs with its engines and the railway tracks are not all they should be. Many of the railway accidents in New South Wales can be traced to the fact that the tracks are not kept in good condition. I admit the coal shortage has something to do with the non-transport of wheat in New South Wales.

The Honorary Minister: The trouble is that New South Wales wheat is bagged. That State has not bulk facilities.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: That is so. When I left that State, there was every prospect of another record harvest. If that prospect is realised, I do not know what will happen to all the bagged wheat. There is a small bulk system, but not nearly large enough to cope with the wheat. Dealing with our own railway system, our rollingstock is in a bad condition owing to lack of maintenance, although I believe our tracks are in fairly good condition, despite the fact that the report of the Royal Commission was not very encouraging in that respect. We have

not had nearly the same number of railway accidents that have occurred in the Eastern States, particularly in New South Wales. South Australia has the best railway system in Australia today. When I consider the comments made in South Australia—I remember them well—at the time Mr. Webb was Commissioner of Railways, about the expenditure he incurred, at a time when it was wise to incur it, and look at the railway system of that State today, I feel that at least South Australia had one man of vision.

Hon. G. Bennetts: He should have been looking after the Midland Junction workshops.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I think it is a misnomer to call them workshops. They are the worst laid out shops I have seen. They are unsuitable for the men working in them and there is very little organisation within them. I say that definitely.

Hon. G. Bennetts: You should see the Kalgoorlie shops.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Real workshops are those where a job can be commenced at one end and turned out complete at the other. At the Midland Junction workshops, however, the machines are higgledy-piggledy: there is no proper system. I say that in all humility, as a layman and not as an expert. I hope the Government will deal with the problem of country water supplies for the ensuing summer. I do not know whether it is possible to procure water pipes, although I am aware that some little time ago a quantity was brought to the State. If we had pipes, we could fill some of the reservoirs in the agricultural areas, although I am afraid they could not be filled with this year's rain. However, some relief could be given during the summer months to those who have had to cart water by rail or road. Unfortunately, the railways cannot cart all the water required; at least, they could not do so last year. It might be possible to lay the pipes on the surface of the ground.

The Honorary Minister: Do you mean to fill the reservoirs from Mundaring?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Yes, during the winter months.

The Honorary Minister: The supply at Mundaring is very low.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The evaporation would be great during summer. It would be better to do the work now than in the summer. The Minister is aware that there is a connection between the Canning Dam and the supply at Mundaring.

Hon. H. Tuckey: Is it possible to get the pipes?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I do not know what constitutes a lot of piping, but some piping did come to this State. I do not know, either, whether four-inch pipes would not suffice.

Hon. W. J. Mann: What are the pumping costs likely to be?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: They would be less now than in the summer. There is not much time to carry out this scheme; if the pipes are not here, we cannot proceed with it.

The Honorary Minister: Barberton is connected.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Then it might be possible to fill the reservoirs there now. I was very glad to hear the speech by Mr. Miles. I like to hear him tell us about the North-West. I was also pleased that the Premier found time to make his trip to the North-West and the North. Wyndham is about as far from Perth as London is from Constantinople. If London people were going to Constantinople they would think they were going to the end of the world, that is, in the old days before we had air travel.

One cannot get a proper picture of the North-West unless one travels through it. I agree with Mr. Miles that it is the most vulnerable point in Australia. I say advisedly that unless something is done to build up the population there—and I point out that over the years it has declined—it will be a danger point. I believe that gold is still to be found at Hall's Creek and would be discovered if some encouragement were given to men to prospect for it. I am hoping that, as a result of the Premier's visit, consideration will be given to the North-West by rendering assistance to the people settled there. I think Mr. McLarty is the only Premier to have visited the Kimberleys so extensively.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Mr. Wise has done so.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Yes, he is well acquainted with the district. No-one knows it better than he, but he was a paid servant of the State when he travelled through that country. He certainly did excellent work while he was Tropical Agricultural Adviser. It was then that he visited the Kimberleys and other parts of the North-West. His knowledge of those districts is equal to that of most of the men who have been living there for some length of time.

The North has always had in Mr. Miles a great champion. He does not look at it merely from a parochial point of view, but considers it from an Empire standpoint. He is perfectly right in saying that Asia-tica, if they so desired, could at any time take possession of that part of the State, with its marvellous water supply and fertile soil. The Kimberley flats are typical of the land utilised for tropical agriculture in New South Wales. They are, in fact, identical. The box trees growing on the Kimberley flats and the box trees growing on the land in New South Wales are identical, as is the type of soil.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Is it tropical country in New South Wales. They are, in fact,

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Yes. The temperature rises to 120 degrees in the shade during summer—it is often 109 degrees at midnight—but it is a drier heat than is that of the Kimberleys. Our land there could be made to produce abundantly if it were irrigated. As I said, I am always pleased to listen to Mr. Miles. It is an education to hear him speak and he is always doing something towards encouraging and bettering the lot of the people of the North. That is my contribution to the debate. I am pleased with the information given to us in the Speech, although I dare say much has been left unsaid.

HON. J. A. DIMMITT (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.44]: On opening day of this session I had the privilege, Sir, of complimenting you on your re-election to the office of President, and tonight I desire to join with other members in congratulating our two new knights, Sir Frank Gibson and Sir Charles Latham, both of whom are deserving of the honour conferred upon them by His Majesty the King. I hope

they will live many years to enjoy the benefits of knighthood.

I join with previous speakers in welcoming our three new members. The two who represent the Metropolitan Province are old friends of mine, and their records of public service suggest that they will be valuable members of this branch of the Legislature. So far as Mr. Cunningham is concerned, we had on the opening day evidence of his ability as a speaker, and we look forward with interest to his contributions to the debates. I am very sorry, of course, to have lost my old next-door neighbour, Sir Hal Colebatch, but such is the fate of politics. He, no doubt, is now enjoying his retirement. We shall miss him in the House, but his successor will, I am sure, play an equally important part in our activities.

It was pleasing to me to note from the Lient.-Governor's Speech that it is the intention of the Government to simplify the system of price-fixing. I hope the Government will be able to live up to its intention. After all, one of the greatest handicaps traders have experienced during the regime of the Federal Prices Branch has been the undue delays in obtaining, frequently from Canberra, decisions as to the price at which they could sell merchandise. I know merchants and retailers in Perth who have landed into their stores or shops thousands upon thousands of pounds worth of merchantable goods.

They have been unable to dispose of them for weeks in many cases, and for months in others, because the decision as to price has been referred to Canberra, and Canberra for some reason or other delayed at arriving at the decision. The result has been that traders have been unable to turn over their money for long periods, and people have been unable to obtain goods that have been in short supply, although those same goods were actually on the shelves waiting to be sold. Thank goodness, one of the results of the "No" vote at the referendum is that all decisions regarding prices will be made in Perth. I hope that the State Prices Department will expedite its decisions and be more rapid than Canberra has been in the past.

Hon. G. Fraser: We will probably pay dearly for the privilege.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: We will save a lot of time, and the merchants will be able to get their goods out more quickly to the

public who will be glad to have them, as many of the items have been in short supply for a long while. At the same time, I cannot help expressing disappointment that the Government did not accept the suggestion I made, which was that it appoint a brand new Minister or Honorary Minister to control our new State Prices Department. With all due respect to the Attorney General (Hon. A. V. R. Abbott), to the Chief Secretary (Hon. H. S. W. Parker), and to the Minister for Lands (Hon. L. Thorn), who will be administering certain aspects of price fixation, they have, with the portfolios they now hold, full-time jobs.

Take, for instance, the Attorney General. Not only is that hon. gentleman Attorney General, but he is Minister for Health as well. Our Chief Secretary has many portfolios in his care, and the Minister for Land is, so far as his ministerial duties are concerned, fully occupied. The intention it to superimpose on these already over-worked Ministers the important task of administering various aspects of price fixation. Even at this late hour I would again appeal to the Government to reconsider its decision and appoint a brand new Honorary Minister to handle what may be one of our most important departments for the next few years.

Hon. G. Fraser: It is too important for an Honorary Minister.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: It is certainly too important for a Minister who is already over-worked. If it is important enough for a full-rank Minister, then let one be appointed. But after all, I still believe that the easiest way to simplify price-fixing is to abolish 90 per cent. of the price controls and allow the law of supply and demand to prevail. Sir Charles Latham opened a theme which I would like to develop a little further. For that purpose I shall go back into history and say that Australia has become prosperous and great, and enjoys a higher standard of living than many other countries, as a result of work, not of slack-ing.

We, as members of Parliament, should approve of anything that encourages work. Anything that discourages it or undermines the incentive to work should be frowned upon by us and by public opinion generally. As a matter of fact, if we monkey with the money incentive to work, then we start to

deteriorate. I apply these remarks just as much to the employer as to the employee. If we discourage enterprise and give to the person who is not anxious or willing to work, the same monetary return as we do to a good worker, or if we impose such a rate of tax on an efficient and capable businessman that his net income is little better than that of the inefficient and incapable businessman, then we set in motion a process of discouragement and inefficiency that can only end in financial chaos and disaster.

That is where I believe we are heading. It is of no use levelling things up, or rather down so that the slacker does just as well as the man who is prepared to work, because that will discourage the worker, and it certainly will not have the effect of making the slacker work. So I say it is important for all of us to encourage competitive rewards in industry and business. We should induce employers to give incentive pay and to go in for profit-sharing with their employees. I say these things because I believe that there lies the way to greater production, and greater production means prosperity, not only for the individual but for the State at large.

There is only one other matter I wish to deal with tonight. Recently I had a letter from the Midland Junction Municipal Council, in which I was asked to bring under the notice of the Premier a resolution passed by that body. I think the other members of the Metropolitan-Suburban Province received a similar letter. With your permission, Mr. President, I would like to quote the resolution—

That the council of this municipality views with concern the anti-Australian efforts of Communists. We urge all local governing bodies, State and Federal Parliaments, to use every effort to implement suitable means for protecting our Australian way of life and the British Empire from the Communist menace.

I was pleased to note in the paper—I think it was last Friday—that 35 local governing bodies had supported the resolution. Other institutions and organisations including a number of trade unions, have passed similar resolutions. That all gives us a good deal of encouragement. But I think you will agree with me, Mr. President, that Communism is a doctrine with which democracy cannot compromise! It does not admit of argument. It simply gains momentum by force and by violence.

Unfortunately for us, our Prime Minister, Mr. Chifley, is of the opinion that Communism is simply a political belief, and that the Communist Party is a political party in the same way as is the Labour Party, the Liberal Party or the Country and Democratic League, whereas we know it is the spearhead of a foreign ideology. But whilst we have Mr. Chifley expressing these opinions which, if not encouraging Communism, are certainly failing to discourage it, and the complacency exhibited by his Ministers, it will remain for the State Governments to clear up this menace which is in our community.

We in this State will have to declare Communism for what it really is—a subversive, anti-democratic and illegal setting up of a State within a State. I suggest we outlaw Communism. Some people have said that if we outlaw Communism it will go underground. I say it should be underground where all the other creeping and crawling things are, rather than that it should have the freedom it enjoys today, to be able to carry on its subversive programme.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It would not get as many disciples, either.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: That is so, and if they poked up their heads from underground, we could knock them off.

Hon. G. Fraser: You are bloodthirsty!

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: I think it is time every member of Parliament expressed the same feelings about Communism. I appeal to the Government to play its part and to declare Communism for what it really stands, and clear it out, so making Western Australia somewhat better than some other States. I support the motion.

On motion by Hon. H. K. Watson, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, the 10th August.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 5.59 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 4th August, 1948.

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

QUESTIONS.

MILK BOARD.

As to Constitution and Retail Distribution.

Mr. MURRAY asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) Is he satisfied that the Milk Board as at present constituted is in the best interest of the State, including the producer-retailer and consumer?

(2) Is the present monopoly of retail distribution in the best interest of the State and consumer?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The present Milk Board is constituted by Act of Parliament and until the Act is amended there is no alternative.

(2) The distribution of milk is determined by the Milk Board in accordance with its powers under the Act.

HOUSING.

As to Ex-Serviceman's Quarters at Bunbury.

Mr. MURRAY asked the Minister for Health:

(1) Is he aware that the Bunbury Municipality is harassing with threat of action under the Health Act, a young returned serviceman and his wife, living in a tent (floored), 20 x 14, on private property in a country district not within the municipal boundaries?