

The article compares the position in the U.S.A. It states that because of exchange differences it is difficult to compare actual wages and prices, but the buying power of money in the two countries can be compared by taking the time worked to get enough to buy something, adding "The true cost of an article is the time worked to get it." The taxes in U.S.A. for the years 1942 to 1947 represented the following proportion of national income:—

	Per Cent.
1942	20
1943	14
1944	11
1945	15
1946	15
1947	14

Prices in that country are high, but that is all that is taken from the taxpayers. The quotation continues—

In U.S.A., where the Government helps the businessman, the workers are much better off than here. In Australia, where the Government controls the businessman, the worker has to work much longer to earn things.

Then there is given a comparison of the times the average worker in each country has to spend on his job in order to get enough money to buy certain ordinary goods. That comparison is as follows:—

	U.S.A. (No controls)	Australia (Socialist controls)
Bottle of Beer	12 mins.	32 mins.
Shoes	4 hr. 50 mins.	8½ hrs.
Shirt	2½ hrs.	4½ hrs.
Bread, 1 lb.	6 mins.	5½ mins.
Petrol, 1 gallon	12 mins.	48 mins.
Milk, quart	9 mins.	14 mins.
Soap flakes	4 mins.	15 mins.
Movie ticket	22 mins.	45 mins.
Sedan car	155 8-hr. days	560 8-hr. days
Cigarettes, 20	0 mins.	34 mins.

The Socialist's answer to this is to recommend more controls which mean less production, and more Government bureaucrats, which mean more and higher taxes.

My conclusion is that to save the situation in Australia we must reduce taxation by 15 to 20 per cent. and eventually 50 per cent. to come to the American level in order to give the employee an incentive to work and the employer an incentive to produce, which is the only thing that will keep the country solvent. We should also cut out the payroll tax, the most iniquitous levy ever perpetrated. The man who finds work for thousands of other men now has to pay a tax on the money he pays to those men, which is absurd. It should come out of ordinary income tax. How many men do

doctors and lawyers employ, as compared with a firm like Boans Ltd.?

We should simplify the taxation return forms so that the workers and others could understand them, instead of having to employ experts in order to know how they stand and what they have to pay. If the suggestions I have made were put into effect, there would be some incentive for employers and employees to go on working and to increase production, which would be the salvation of Australia. I support the motion.

On motion by Hon. J. G. Hislop, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.5 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 29th July, 1948.

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

ROYAL COMMISSIONS.

(a) *As to Government's Appointments and Cost.*

Hon. F. J. S. WISE asked the Premier:

(1) What is the total cost to date of the Royal Commissions appointed by his Government?

(2) Will he give the segregated costs showing amounts paid to individuals concerned with all the Commissions?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) £9,765 4s. 4d.

(2) Railway Administration and Midland Junction Workshops, including Coal and S. and D.D. Locomotives—

	£	s.	d.
Commissioner Gibson—Fees, fares and expenses ..	3,009	18	0
Union fees and expenses ..	887	9	3
R. S. Walker (University) ..	15	15	0
Hales Reporters	54	10	0
M. P. Copley (Secretarial) honorarium and expenses ..	47	11	3
O. Bowyer (Audit Officer) ..	35	0	0
A. Sutherland (Secretarial) ..	35	0	0
Railway Department—Cost of preparing information for Royal Commission ..	442	0	6
Miss J. Worthington (typist) ..	14	9	10
Mrs. B. Visscher (typist) ..	78	5	0
Railway Department—Haulage on inspection trips ..	1,409	12	9
Hire of Government motor cars	178	1	0
Blueprints of diagrams for report	120	0	0
Advertising, stationery, petty cash, etc.	93	3	3
Total	£6,420	15	10

Workers' Compensation—

G. W. Simpson (Chairman), Honorarium	100	0	0
W. S. Andrew (Member) Honorarium	75	0	0
W. Hodson (Assessor) ..	52	10	0
E. L. Wilson (Secretary) Honorarium	35	0	0
E. Spark (Reporter and Typist)	59	4	0
G. W. Simpson—Expenses on visit to Eastern States ..	144	1	3
State Insurance Office—Recoup of salaries of officers ..	451	16	0

Commission's expenses in Kalgoorlie	46	2	5
Stationery, advertising, etc. ..	57	18	10

Total £1,021 12 6

Milk—

W. E. Stannard (Chairman) Honorarium ..	75	0	0
W. Adams (Audit Officer), Honorarium & Expenses ..	35	10	4
Advertising and Stationery ..	9	17	10

Total £120 8 2

Housing—

H. D. Moseley (Chairman), Honorarium	150	0	0
O. J. Negus (Counsel assisting Chairman)	402	8	0
Advertising, etc.	8	4	8
P. V. Smith (Secretary), Honorarium	17	10	0
Total	£578	2	8

Betting—

C. McLean (Chairman), Honorarium	315	0	0
C. McLean, Expenses ..	421	16	0
J. D. Toahan (Member), Honorarium	100	0	0
J. D. Toahan, Expenses ..	84	15	0
Mrs. I. J. Johnston (Member), Honorarium ..	100	0	0
Mrs. I. J. Johnston, Expenses	6	16	6
J. E. Virtue (Counsel assisting Commission), Expenses and fees (as fixed by Taxing Master, Supreme Court)	414	15	0
P. V. Smith (Secretary), Expenses & Honorarium ..	29	1	6
Railway Travel	55	14	10
J. S. Bridgman (Hansard Reporter), Expenses ..	3	8	3
H. W. Beck (Hansard Reporter), Expenses ..	3	8	3
W. J. Chinery (Hansard Reporter), Expenses ..	3	8	3
J. S. T. Royce (Hansard Reporter), Expenses ..	3	8	3
Car Hire, Advertising, Stationery, etc.	82	13	4
Total	£1,624	5	2

Honoraria to Royal Commissioners concerned have been fixed so as to conform to standards adopted over many years, and have regard to professional or other status of Commissioners, importance, duration and extent of inquiry, and other relevant factors.

Fees to Counsel are certified by the Taxing Master of the Supreme Court.

(b) *As to Cost of Betting Commission.*

Mr. NEEDHAM asked the Premier:

(1) What were the fees paid to each member of the Royal Commission on Betting?

(2) What was the total cost of the Commission?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) C. McLean (Chairman), honorarium, £315; J. D. Teahan (Member), honorarium, £100; Mrs. I. J. Johnston (Member), honorarium, £100.

(2) £1,624 5s. 2d.

(c) *As to Cost of Housing Commission.*

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Premier:

(1) What was the cost of the Royal Commission on Housing?

(2) What sums were asked for by—(a) Commissioner Moseley; (b) assisting counsel (Mr. Negus) as payment for their services?

(3) What sums were paid these gentlemen, respectively?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) £578 2s. 8d.

(2) (a) Nil. (b) £402 8s., as approved by the Taxing Master, Supreme Court.

(3) Mr. Moseley (Commissioner), £150 honorarium; Mr. Negus, £402 8s.

ROYAL COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES.

As to Government's Appointments.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Premier:

(1) How many Royal Commissions, committees of inquiry and investigation have been appointed by the Government since it took office?

(2) What is the name of each?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) Eight, excluding departmental committees.

(2) Wundowie inquiry; Royal Commission on Railway Administration and Midland Junction Workshops, including Coal, and S. and D.D. Locomotives; Royal Commission on Workers' Compensation; Royal Commission on Milk; Royal Commission on Housing; Native Affairs Survey; Royal Commission on Betting; Royal Commission on Municipal Boundaries.

ELECTORAL OFFICE.

As to Single Enrolling Authority for Commonwealth and State.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Attorney General:

(1) Is he aware of the attitude of the Commonwealth to a scheme for the Commonwealth Electoral Office to become the sole enrolling authority for parliamentary elections in W.A., as is the case in several other States?

(2) Have any Federal approaches been made in this matter?

(3) What is his attitude to the scheme?

(4) Does he propose to take any steps in the matter?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

(1) No. Some degree of co-ordination between electoral offices regarding enrolments has been under consideration for some years in this State.

(2) Not governmentally, as far as I am aware, but the matter has been raised by Mr. T. Burke, M.H.R.

(3) The Government is prepared to consider any practicable basis for co-operation in relation to enrolments.

(4) The matter is being further examined by the Chief Electoral Officer of this State.

ELECTORAL DISTRICTS.

As to Co-terminous Boundaries for Commonwealth and State.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Attorney General:

(1) In view of the fact that a redistribution of seats embracing the alteration of electoral district boundaries is being conducted by the Commonwealth concurrently with similar action by this State, have any

moves been made in an endeavour to make Federal subdivisional boundaries and State electoral district boundaries co-terminous?

(2) If not, why not?

(3) Will he be prepared even at this stage to initiate steps in an endeavour to achieve such a desirable result?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

(1) Yes. When in Canberra this year the Minister for Housing, Mr. McDonald, asked the Commonwealth Electoral Office to take up with the State Electoral Office the matter of co-terminous boundaries. The Chief Electoral Officer of this State also conferred with the Commonwealth Electoral Officer for Western Australia on the same subject, but the Commonwealth considered that there were difficulties involved.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

(3) The matter is to be further discussed with the Commonwealth as to Commonwealth subdivisions being co-terminous with State districts.

FOODSTUFFS.

As to Restoring House-to-House Deliveries.

Mr. NEEDHAM asked the Premier:

(1) Is he aware that the non-delivery of meat, groceries, etc., is causing considerable hardship to housewives in Western Australia who have to carry heavy parcels of food-stuffs from the shops to their homes?

(2) Is he further aware that this hardship is intensified in the case of mothers of large families and elderly people?

(3) As three years have elapsed since the cessation of hostilities, does he not think an effort should be made to bring about a resumption of the usual house-to-house deliveries of meat, groceries, and other essential foodstuffs?

(4) Does he intend to take any action to have general deliveries resumed?

(5) If so, what action?

The PREMIER replied:

(1 to 5) Although difficulties are still being experienced, it is felt the position has improved and will continue to improve. The State Government places no restrictions whatever on the resumption of deliveries,

but compulsion would require legislation which would be unacceptable.

WESTERN STEEL, LTD.

As to Organising Industry.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

What specific progress has been made by Western Steel Ltd. in the direction of organising an industry in Western Australia for the production of processing of steel?

The MINISTER replied:

A company has been registered. Arrangements are being made for underwriting capital required for preliminary work and negotiations are proceeding regarding ore and coal leases. Finality is expected shortly.

POTASH.

As to Extraction Process at Chandler.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

(1) What is the actual degree of progress made in developing better processes for the extraction of potash at Chandler?

(2) Has a decision to triplicate the existing plant been made?

(3) If not, when is a decision on that question likely to be made?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) A new process called the "Salt" process has been developed over recent years. This process has been thoroughly tested both in the laboratory and on a pilot plant scale.

This process involves the use of common salt to convert the potassium sulphate into chloride at the same time producing anhydrous sodium sulphate which is in great demand in Australia and elsewhere. For each ton of potash salt produced one and a half tons of sodium sulphate will also be produced. Both the potassium chloride and sodium sulphate produced will be high grade.

(2) Yes, the first step will be the application of the salt process to the present plant.

(3) Triplication will follow after twelve months' experience of operating the salt process on the present plant.

AVON RIVER.

As to Cleaning and Deepening at Northam.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Is he yet in a position to make available to the Northam Municipal Council his Department's proposals for the cleaning and deepening of the Avon River where it passes through the Northam township?

(2) If not, when are those proposals likely to be finalised.

(3) If the proposals have been finalised, what is the total estimated cost of implementing them?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) It is regretted that owing to the illness of the officer dealing with this matter, and the scarcity of staff, the report has not yet been completed.

(2) The problem is a difficult one and there is not available another senior engineer to take it over. It will, however, be given attention as soon as possible.

(3) Answered by (2).

RAILWAY BUS SERVICE.

As to Perth-Northam Route.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Has he yet made a decision covering the running of a departmental road bus between Perth and Northam on as many days a week as is practicable?

(2) If not, when is a decision likely to be made?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) The position is being examined departmentally and a decision will be made when the Commissioner's report is received.

EDUCATION.

As to West Northam School Playground.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Has the proposed coating of coarse sand been spread in the West Northam school playground?

(2) When is the ground to be given a gravel surface to make it more fit for use in the winter months?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The Department is aware of the unsatisfactory condition of the West Northam school grounds and instructions have been issued for the placing of a top-dressing of coarse sand to overcome the difficulty.

The Department is in the hands of a contractor for the carrying out of the work.

The matter is being vigorously pursued.

(2) With the placing of the sand coating (as in No. (1) reply) the ground should be fit for use in winter months.

WHEAT MARKETING.

As to State Scheme and Prices.

Mr. REYNOLDS asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) Will he give an assurance that the Government will implement the decision of wheatgrowers at the coming poll to decide the acceptance of Commonwealth marketing or State marketing?

(2) If the ballot of growers favours State marketing, will he give an assurance that no wheat will be sold oversea or in Western Australia at concessional prices, except for purely home-consumed flour?

(3) Will he assure the House that in the event of the Western Australian Government permitting concessional sales of wheat to stock feeders, pig and poultry industries, any deficiency in price will be subsidised from Government funds?

(4) Will he guarantee to limit the quantity of wheat supplied to stock feeders at concessional prices, to any fixed or stipulated figure?

(5) Will the State Government provide a guaranteed minimum price to wheat growers covering costs of production?

(6) If so, what is the guaranteed price per bushel?

(7) Will the Government undertake to conduct the ballot by an entirely independent authority, such as the Electoral Department, which is not interested in the results?

(8) Did the Honorary Minister at the Canberra conference of the Agricultural Ministers discussing the new Commonwealth wheat proposals vote for the proposals, or, as an alternative, did he give an assurance

that he would recommend the proposals to his Government?

(9) Will he give the House a clear, straight-forward and definite statement regarding wheat marketing?

(10) Will he give an assurance that every registered wheat grower in Western Australia will be given an opportunity to vote in the referendum on wheat marketing?

(11) Will he make this poll a compulsory one?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2), (3) and (4) These are matters of future Government policy in conjunction with control by a majority producer wheat board.

(5) This matter will be influenced by the voluntary stabilisation fund and, as the Commonwealth Government is not guaranteeing a minimum price based on the cost of the production determined by the Commission, it may be difficult for the Western Australian Government to guarantee a price different from that guaranteed to other States.

(6) Answered by (5).

(7) The method of taking the ballot has already been published in "The West Australian" newspaper. The Government is satisfied that the taking of the ballot will meet the wishes of the wheatgrowers who are the people most concerned.

(8) No vote was taken at the Canberra Conference. Ministers agreed to submit the proposals to their respective Governments for discussion.

(9) A statement will be made in another place by the Honorary Minister for Agriculture at the earliest possible moment. The statement will, as usual, be clear, straight forward and definite.

(10) Every wheatgrower who produces wheat for sale through lawful channels will be given an opportunity to vote.

(11) No.

HOUSING.

As to Construction of Homes in North-West.

Mr. HEGNEY asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) Has the State Housing Commission built any homes in centres north of the 26th degree of latitude?

(2) If so, what are the centres and the number built in each?

(3) Does the Government propose to proceed with the erection of homes in Port Hedland and Marble Bar?

(4) If the reply to question No. (3) is in the affirmative, will he indicate what steps have been taken in the direction indicated?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Number homes completed.—Wittenoom Gorge, 4; Carnarvon, nil; Wyndham, nil; Roebourne, nil; Derby, nil.

Number homes under construction.—Wittenoom Gorge, 16; Carnarvon, nil; Wyndham, nil; Roebourne, nil; Derby, nil.

Number homes approved and waiting tender-contract.—Wittenoom Gorge, nil; Carnarvon, 4; Wyndham, 4 homes and 1 block flats; Roebourne, 1; Derby, 1.

With regard to the building at Wyndham, this is under permit to the Wyndham Meat Works.

(3) and (4) Now under consideration.

COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES.

As to Re-introduction of 1946 Legislation.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Water Supply:

In view of his concern, as expressed in "The West Australian" on the 28th instant, at the possibility of serious water shortages in the country districts, will he exercise his influence in an endeavour to persuade the Government to re-introduce legislation along the lines of the comprehensive water supply scheme as agreed to by this House, and defeated by the Legislative Council in 1946?

The MINISTER replied:

Act No. 62 of 1947, cited as the "Country Areas Water Supply Act, 1947," covers the whole State and therefore further legislation is not considered necessary.

Act No. 63 of 1947, cited as the "Agricultural Areas, Great Southern Towns and Goldfields Water Supply Act, 1947," specially authorises the carrying out of certain reticulation works in areas the subject of an agreement with the Commonwealth Government.

Extensions to these areas may be carried out under Act No. 62 of 1947, but the works

would not be subsidised by the Commonwealth Government.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Third Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. NEEDHAM (Perth) [4.45]: The first paragraph of the Lieut.-Governor's Speech at the opening of the session to which I wish to refer deals with the result of the referendum held at the latter end of May last. It says that the State Government has accepted responsibility for the control of prices and land sales in Western Australia. Consequently this responsibility now rests with the State Governments.

It seems to me that the State Governments are not very pleased at being called upon to undertake this responsibility. During the referendum campaign the States and the Press seemed confident that prices could be controlled by the States as effectively as by the Commonwealth. The people of Australia accepted that advice and on the 29th May, decided that this control should be vested in the States. Strange to say, no sooner did the Commonwealth intimate its readiness to hand over these controls than those who had been loudest in their assertions that effective control could be exercised by the States showed an inclination to shrink from the responsibility placed upon them. The Commonwealth was even accused of showing undue haste to divest itself of the responsibility, but decided to continue control for a time until the States were in a position to take over.

The question put to the people at the referendum did not stipulate any particular time as to when control by the Commonwealth should cease. The question was, "Are you in favour of the control of prices being exercised by the Commonwealth Government?" and the reply was an emphatic "no." The Press had clamoured for State control, but when the Commonwealth accepted the verdict of the people and proceeded to hand over the control to the States, the Press accused the Commonwealth of acting precipitately and in a spirit of pique. What other action could the Prime Minister take in view of the pronounced verdict of these people on this all-

important question? There was nothing else he could do; and now the States, at their own request, are faced with this important responsibility. I notice that the morning after Mr. Chifley said the Commonwealth Government would hand over control, "The West Australian" was not too pleased at that position when dealing with the matter in its leading article.

Another paragraph in the Speech—and an important one, too—states that the building industry continues to be subject to the limitations of manpower and certain classes of material. That is a peculiar paragraph to appear in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech when we remember the statements made by hon. gentlemen on the Government side of the House during the election campaign. When we claimed that there was a shortage of labour and material it was flatly and emphatically denied by the present Premier and all those who supported him. But after nearly 16 months in office this composite Government has the temerity to place in the Speech the words I have quoted.

Not only is this plea of shortages put forward in relation to the building industry, but I care not what Minister is approached on any question, the invariable reply is that he cannot do this or that owing to a shortage of this, that or the other. When we contrast their statements today with their statements during the election campaign, we cannot wonder that the Leader of the Opposition was moved to make such strong comments yesterday when speaking on the Address-in-reply. During the recess I introduced several deputations to Ministers on various matters, and invariably that was the reply I received—that they could not get on with the business owing to certain shortages.

I notice that in the Speech it is stated that the effective building rate at the end of May was 2,712 houses per annum. That is far below what was promised during the election campaign when houses were to go up like mushrooms in the night. What has become of the promise that houses would be built rapidly? How many young couples have been accommodated? The conditions today, despite the fact that 16 months have elapsed, and that there is more material and more labour available, are little better, if at all, than at the begin-

ning of 1947. I have to go to a place where families are living under conditions that are certainly disgraceful, to say the least—places where applicants for houses have been waiting for periods of from four to five years to be accommodated; places where 9, 10, 11, 12, and even 14 people are living in two or three rooms, with four families cooking in the one kitchen. Our friends on the Government Bench lay the responsibility on the shortage of material and labour. Quite frankly, I think there is a shortage of labour and material, but what I want to point out is that our friends on the Treasury Bench secured office by promising that the shortages would be overcome, and that the acute housing position would be relieved, and they have failed to carry out those promises.

Further on in the Speech it is stated that every effort is being made to overcome the shortage of hospital staffs. That is one of our important community needs. There is still a shortage both of nurses and of hospital accommodation. I had occasion to interview responsible officers of the Health Department in connection with the case of an old lady who is over 70. She is a T.B. case in a very advanced stage and is living with others, but there is no place at Wooroloo for women of that kind. I was told that frankly this morning by the responsible officers of the Health Department. They were certainly sympathetic and would have liked to get this patient into Wooroloo, but I was told there was no accommodation there. That is only one of many instances that illustrate the existing shortage of accommodation. I admit that there is a shortage of skilled nurses and other personnel necessary to staff our hospitals, but I would point out that the admissions of members of the Government today are entirely different from what they said 16 months ago.

Leaving the Speech for a while, I want to refer briefly to one of the outstanding activities of the present Government, namely, the appointment of Royal Commissions, and particularly the Betting Commission. I read in the Press the report of the Commission and its recommendations and that was the reason I asked for information as to the cost of the inquiry. The Premier replied today that the total cost was £1,624 5s. If it had only cost the 5s. it would have been very dear, because

I think it was the most disgraceful report I have seen. The report contains nothing new. Everyone was aware that there was open S.P. betting at Collie and at Kalgoorlie. We did not need a Royal Commission to tell us that. We knew it years ago. I contend that the miner in Collie or Kalgoorlie has as much right to make a bet there in the street as his employer has to make a bet on the racecourse. In neither case is the bet legal. It is no more legal to bet on the racecourse than in the streets of Collie or Kalgoorlie. The Royal Commission told us nothing new in informing us that there was an open go in betting in those two towns.

Mr. Marshall: It is no more immoral to bet off the course than on it.

Mr. NEEDHAM: That is so. It is no more illegal for an employee to bet off the course than for his employer to bet on the course. I am not a betting or racing man. I do not think I have invested £5 in bets in the course of my life, and I could count on the fingers of one hand the times I have been on a racecourse, but I say the man on the lower income—if he chooses to invest a few shillings on a race—should have permission to do so without being prosecuted for it. If he must be prosecuted, it should be done under a proper law and not under the law which at present means that the man is prosecuted for obstructing the traffic. I do not know what the Government intends to do about the report of the Royal Commission.

Mr. May: The Government does not know, either.

Mr. NEEDHAM: Probably not, but if it brings down legislation based on those recommendations I venture to say the Bill will not pass either this House or the other place. The Government should endeavour to cope with this important problem. Betting Bills of a practical nature have been introduced into this Chamber in the past. One such Bill was introduced by the Leader of the Opposition when a Minister of the Crown, and another by the member for Murchison. That introduced by the Leader of the Opposition was before the House in 1938, and that introduced by the member for Murchison in 1946. I think you, Mr. Speaker, must have a vivid recollection of the Bill of 1938, which was defeated by a small margin. Had that measure become

law we would not have had the unwelcome position of S.P. betting that exists today. In its report the recent Royal Commission suggested that S.P. betting be conducted through the post office, but we will never get the average man who wishes to make a bet to send a telegram or write a letter for that purpose. I repeat that the appointment of that Commission was a waste of time and money, and that its recommendations are not practicable.

I come now to another matter referred to by the member for Irwin-Moore. On almost each occasion upon which the hon. member has addressed this House he has drawn attention to the menace of Communism. I would condemn Communism at all times and all places and I know that the Australian Labour Party has been fighting the Communist menace for many years. I agree with the member for Irwin-Moore that Communism is a menace to the country in which we live. I say further that it is opposed to all Christian principles and I sincerely hope we will eventually succeed in driving it away from this Southern land of ours. The hon. member doubted the sincerity of the Labour Government led by Mr. Chifley in trying to rid Australia of Communism.

Mr. Graham: I have not heard of the McLarty Government doing much about it.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I can assure the member for Irwin-Moore that Mr. Chifley and the Government of which he is head are just as sincere in the desire to remove Communism from this country as is the member for Irwin-Moore.

Mr. Bovell: Then why does not Mr. Chifley say so?

Mr. NEEDHAM: He has said it time and time again and has instituted inquiries as to where such people are, and has said that if there is any danger from their subversive activities it will be removed.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The Liberal Parties are interested in Communism only for the political advantage they gain from it.

Mr. NEEDHAM: It is my belief that Communism gained its hold in this country during the depression years. Conditions in the nineteen-thirties were of the very kind in which Communism flourishes, and unfortunately since then Communism has crept

into the ranks of trade unionism. I admit that Communism has been the means of causing many disastrous strikes in Australia, but I would remind the member for Irwin-Moore that in this State we have preserved industrial peace far better than it has been preserved in many other parts of the world, owing to our vigilant care and determination to oppose this menace. The hon. member said deliberately that he thought the Government of the day should take some notice of Communism. He said it was time that the State Government was up and doing. He claimed that there was evidence of Communism in the education system of this State and asked for the tabling of a C.I.B. report on it. He said there was Communism in the State Civil Service, in the Midland Junction Workshops, on the Fremantle wharves and in many other places. He said that in the education system Communists seemed to have a considerable hold. That is a serious statement and a definite charge. It means that the Civil Service of this State and the teachers of the State are labelled as being communistic.

The Honorary Minister: Only a few of them.

Mr. NEEDHAM: The statement should not pass without inquiry and I feel that the Premier should tell the House whether there has been such an inquiry made by the C.I.B. If it has I suggest to the Premier that the inquiry should go further and that the member for Irwin-Moore—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Will the hon. member resume his seat? I would refer the hon. member to Standing Order 127 which states—

No member shall read from a printed newspaper or book the report of any speech made in Parliament during the same Session.

Is the hon. member reading matter of that kind?

Mr. NEEDHAM: I bow to your ruling, Mr. Speaker, but would point out that that Standing Order is ignored more frequently than not. Even during the present session I have known members to read extracts from newspapers and you, also, Mr. Speaker, know that. However, I bow to your ruling. I was about to say that the member for Irwin-Moore has made a definite charge or charges against the civil servants and teachers of this State. I am sorry he is not at

present in his seat. It does not matter if the charges were not made against all the members of those bodies; they are all suspect and people who read that statement in this morning's copy of "The West Australian" no doubt asked "Who is the teacher, teaching my children, who is a Communist?" If I had children attending school I would be extremely anxious if I thought their teachers had communistic leanings or were Communists. I would want that position altered, and I am sure many parents in this State must feel the same way. In justice to parents who have children going to school and in justice to the teachers themselves, the Premier should cause further inquiry to be made and give the member for Irwin-Moore a chance to prove his statement.

Mr. Leslie: The member for Irwin-Moore asked for an inquiry but he made no accusation.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I am supporting his request for an inquiry, but he said there were teachers in this State who were Communists, that one had refused to hoist the Union Jack and that another had refused to allow the National Anthem to be sung. Are those not charges? If they are not, I do not know what charges are. The member for Irwin-Moore mentioned our civil servants, our teachers, the Midland Junction Workshops and the wharves. He said that the men in the Midland Junction Workshops, the men and women of the Civil Service and our teachers were in some cases tainted with Communism. They are employees of this Government and Parliament. When we have a member of the Government asking the Government to take action in such a matter, that action should be taken and the atmosphere cleared. I can visualise a request from the Civil Service and from the teachers for such an inquiry and I consider they will be justified in making such a request. I have had a great deal to do with the Civil Service since I have been a member of this Parliament, and I would be very surprised indeed if there were in it many men or women members of the Communist Party. I say the same thing about the teachers, but the charge has been made and I consider an inquiry should be held.

The Honorary Minister: 'Hear, hear!'

Mr. NEEDHAM: One effective action being taken to combat this menace is being

taken by the trade unions. We need not go any further than this State to see what is happening, for recently the Amalgamated Society of Railway Employees took vigorous action to remove from office members of the union who, it was discovered, had Communistic ideas. That tendency is apparent throughout Australia and it is one of the most effective ways to combat the effects of Communism.

The most important development in the political world since this Parliament last met was the referendum on price control, which the people preferred should be administered by the States. The States claim that they can control prices as effectively as can the Commonwealth, but the indications since the referendum have proved the contrary. Prices are rising, and in some cases the reasons being given for such increase have been the increase in the basic wage and the 40-hour week. I refuse to accept the reason that the 40-hour week or increases in the basic wage have been the cause of increased prices. The increase in the basic wage has been brought about because there has been an increase in prices.

It is worth while remembering that the 40-hour week was not granted in a hurry as the workers of Australia did not go to the Court and receive this concession immediately. Comprehensive and searching inquiries took place in the Commonwealth Arbitration Court and Chief Judge Drake-Brockman, when delivering his findings in the Commonwealth Arbitration Court, stated that industry could stand a 40-hour week. That must be borne in mind as it is not only the opinion of the Chief Judge but the opinion of the Full Court. The increase in the basic wage was granted to cover the increase in the cost of living that had taken place up to that date. For any person to say that the increase in prices that has taken place since the referendum is because of increases in the basic wage is to argue upon wrong premises, because the basic wage was increased owing to the rise in prices.

I have known Chief Judge Drake-Brockman for several years, as we were both members of the Senate at the same time, and I am well aware of his political thoughts, and feel confident that he would never have agreed to the 40-hour week and made a statement that industry could stand it unless

he had some very conclusive proof. The comprehensive inquiry into every phase of industry was analysed and the evidence carefully weighed. Both sides of the question were heard and yet we find today some people making the statement that the increased cost of living is due to the 40-hour week. I would remind members that we are hearing the same arguments about the result of the 40-hour week as we heard about the shortening of working hours from 60 to 54, from 54 to 50, and so on. Before the hours were reduced to 44, there was not such a comprehensive inquiry made as when they were reduced to 40. Despite the fact that the basic wage has been increased considerably—it was increased 1s. 8d. a few days ago—it is still a long way behind the soaring prices, and probably will remain so.

I consider the profit margin in industry is sufficient to stand the 40-hour week, and the Court must have been satisfied or it would not have granted the reduction in hours. One of the reasons for the increase in prices is that manufacturers want increased profits as they are not satisfied with a fair margin. Applications for increased prices totalling £60,000,000 were before the Prices Commission at the commencement of this year. Those increases suggest that there are many businessmen and industrialists who seize every opportunity to apply for increased prices for their commodities irrespective of whether they have a case or not. I believe there are some unscrupulous people, very few I will admit, in the industrial sphere in this community who seek every opportunity to obtain an increase in prices. It follows that increased prices of commodities are passed on to the consumer which, of course, means another increase in the basic wage, but the worker has to carry the whole burden. If the worker does receive an increase in the basic wage, it does not cover the increased prices he has to pay. Effective price control is vital to the national economy and, just as the workers' claim for an increase in wages is subject to a searching inquiry, so every application for an increase in the price of commodities the worker consumes should also be subject to rigorous and searching inquiry before such application is granted.

Mr. Graham: A public inquiry, too.

Mr. NEEDHAM: Yes. When the Premier puts his prices machinery in

motion, he should remember that the worker is compelled publicly to submit his claim for increased wages, and the same rule should apply to every applicant who seeks an increase in prices. Such an application would enable a rigorous inquiry to be made before such price increase is granted; otherwise, the basic wage will continue to climb but still remain behind the prices of commodities. I consider the 40-hour week should be given a trial as it has not been in operation long enough to show whether it is effective or not. I have no fear of the results, and it will not at all affect production, as some people believe it will. When talking of increased prices we hear nothing of inefficient administration or of obsolete methods and machinery in industry. Inefficient administration will increase cost of production, as will obsolete machinery and antediluvian methods.

At the annual conference of the Liberal Party it was agreed that control should be lifted from many commodities but, as we have the example of America to guide us, I consider a very close scrutiny should be made before controls are relaxed. It may be that after an investigation controls could safely be removed from some commodities, but I warn the Government that it must be very careful to prevent the position becoming any worse than it is.

We hear a lot about the necessity for overtime in order to increase production and many of the unions are agreeing with this suggestion, but we will not get very far while the Commonwealth Government continues to tax payments received for this work. Overtime should not be taxed. It is not worked for the benefit of the employee but for the benefit of the employer, and I hope that representations being made to the Commonwealth Government will result in the removal of such tax. I will go further and say that taxation could be reduced all round, in view of the buoyant revenue now possessed by the Commonwealth Government.

The Premier: Hear, hear!

Mr. NEEDHAM: If that were done and the tax on overtime removed, I assert that there would then be a very fine incentive to increased production. I come next to another important phase of this question, and it concerns the basic wage and taxes. While there has been a very big increase in the

basic wage, the only result has been some startling changes in the incidence of taxation in 1939 and 1948. For instance, a tram driver who was married but had no children, paid 3s. 5d. a week in taxation in 1939 but today he has to find 10s. 11d. The increase in the higher income groups has not been in the same proportion. I notice that a survey of the position shows that the nominal gross wages for workers has increased from 20 to 53 per cent. in the past nine years. The coalminers gained the maximum increase and accountants the minimum. While motor mechanics' wages expanded by 52 per cent., clerks' wages were 40 per cent. higher.

Of the sample section surveyed, accountants' wages were the highest, closely followed by those of coalminers. When we go further into the figures we find that the real value of the increased basic wage to the worker is almost infinitesimal. When the increase in real net wages—that is, the effective purchasing power at 1939 levels—was considered, it was found that miners' wages were up only seven per cent., motor mechanics 8 per cent. and clerks 6 per cent. It will be seen therefore that although there has been an increase in the basic wage, the net result has not been very beneficial to the workers, and that is the reason why I say that taxation on overtime should be abolished and taxation generally reduced.

Another matter of very considerable importance to the State is the work being carried out to secure the control of tuberculosis in our midst. Members have been supplied with copies of the bulletin issued by the Tuberculosis Association W.A. (Inc.), setting out what is being done by that organisation in an effort to counter this terrible disease. Amongst other activities are those associated with the Chest Clinic in Murray-street. Possibly some members have had an opportunity to visit that very welcome institution, and I certainly think it will do a great deal of good. I sincerely hope that the people of this State will co-operate and submit themselves for examination with a view to ascertaining whether they show any signs of T.B. The Tuberculosis Association here is doing really wonderful work and at a conference recently held in Melbourne some very sound recom-

mendations were proposed. I have some details that I intended to quote, and these included some figures, but I shall refrain from doing so as it would possibly take too long.

I realise the necessity for the work of this Association and I believe that, with the co-operation of the public, the target it aims at can be reached; that is, the elimination of tuberculosis from the community within 20 years. I notice that in a report of the conference attended by State Ministers for Health and others, there was a long discussion on the question of compulsory or voluntary notification, and that the conference decided against compulsion. The Commonwealth Minister for Health, Senator McKenna, regretted that decision on the score that the problem could not be properly or effectively handled unless there was compulsion. While I admit that the Tuberculosis Association in Western Australia and in other parts of the Commonwealth has made splendid progress so far with the work it has set out to accomplish, I am of the opinion that the most important phase of the drive against T.B. has not been dealt with.

In my opinion not sufficient thought has been given to the economic side of the problem. Certainly, an allowance is made to patients who submit themselves for treatment, but the amount available is far from enough. I am afraid there are many in the community who would not risk going to the Chest Clinic to discover whether or not they are suffering from tuberculosis because they know they could not afford to undergo treatment on the allowance now offered. If the Association or, better still, if the Commonwealth Government could ensure to patients a sufficient weekly income for the support of dependants, then I am sure there would be a greater response to the appeal for co-operation.

We can imagine the position of a man on the basic wage who is responsible for the maintenance of his wife and three or four children. He may discover he is suffering from T.B. and may be anxious to participate in the scheme and be cured. His concern will be as to what will happen to his wife and children while he is undergoing treatment, and I am afraid, because of that, he will not undertake it. I go further and suggest that even if he were to submit himself to treatment under existing conditions,

his would be a most difficult case to cure because of his worries. I suggest to the Tuberculosis Association, therefore, that if it is to be successful in its objective of eliminating T.B. from the community within 20 years, greater attention must be paid to the economic aspect.

From time to time we have heard the trite saying that when war is with us, there is no limitation upon the spending of money. During the recent war we were spending at the rate of £1,500,000 a day to keep the enemy from our shores. Surely we can spend considerably less than that amount to drive the enemy of tuberculosis from our midst. I see no reason why the Commonwealth Government should not say to this association that is doing such fine voluntary work, "Go ahead with your efforts. We will finance you and will see that every patient who submits himself for treatment shall have assured to him an income enough to enable his dependants to live in reasonable comfort." Until that is done, there will be no hope of eliminating the disease.

If we go into the figures minutely we find that the economic loss to the Commonwealth today through the incidence of tuberculosis is astounding. In very many instances absence from employment is really accounted for by the worker suffering from T.B. If we can effectually deal with the disease, I hold it would amount to saving money if it were expended on combating this terrible plague. The matter must be dealt with definitely, especially in a country like Australia, seeing that we are inviting people from all parts of the world to come here and help in the development of the continent. In those circumstances, I do not think sufficient attention is being paid to the phase of the problem to which I have referred. I suggest to the Minister for Health that at the next conference called to deal with this matter, he should stress the necessity of T.B. patients receiving a weekly allowance sufficient for the maintenance of their families.

MR. TRIAT (Mt. Magnet) [5.43]: I have listened to many members speaking to the Address-in-reply debate, and as usual have taken keen interest in the remarks of the member for Irwin-Moore. On this occasion I do not take umbrage at all at the speech by that hon. member and as

I listened closely to him I could see that he had a lot of cocky chaff mixed up with some grain—and a certain amount of good grain.

There is one matter I would like to impress upon the House and it is that at no time have I had any liking for Communism. The portion of the hon. member's speech regarding that phase should receive attention from the Minister. There is definitely no room on teaching staffs in Western Australia for men who have no faith in the British way of life. If there are such men, then the challenge should be taken up by the Government and steps launched to deal with them immediately. On the other hand, I have grave doubts whether the tactics of the Communist Party could outweigh the tactics used by the Liberal Party and the Country and Democratic Party.

The Honorary Minister: Don't be silly!

MR. TRIAT: We are taught that the tactics of the Communist Party are intimidation, trickery and treachery. All these are bad and therefore the party should not be tolerated if that is so. I venture to say that if the Labour Party were in power in Western Australia today, the Legislative Council of this State would have adopted the same tactics in connection with the Supply Bill that was before the House recently as were adopted in both Victoria and Tasmania. No one can say that we live in a democratic country when a small minority of members, representing a minority of votes, can control the popular House. There is nothing democratic about that.

MR. GRAHAM: Adolf Hitler still lives!

MR. TRIAT: Yes. Might is right with some people, and evidently might was right in the Legislative Councils of both Victoria and Tasmania. So long as such an attitude is maintained, Communism must flourish, because those are the tactics used where minorities rule the majorities. Such minorities do not rule by fair means, by debate or by decency, but by sabotage, treachery and trickery. I am not a Communist, but I believe I would feel inclined to become one if such an attitude were adopted in this State. I certainly would not lie down and let the Legislative Council of Western Australia withhold Supply, if I had any voice in the Government.

I am surprised that the Governments of Victoria and Tasmania did not challenge the Legislative Councils of those States when Supply was withheld and Government workers and workers in Government instrumentalities did not receive their wages. In such circumstances, my instruction would be that work in all Government departments and Government instrumentalities should cease and so give the Legislative Councils concerned the opportunity themselves to run the departments which would then be dormant. Had such an attitude been adopted—it is a Communistic attitude—it would have proved successful. I believe the member for Irwin-Moore is sincere in what he said about Communism. It is a great danger.

Yet members of Legislative Councils, men of high standing, of business capacity, and selected because they are supposed to be above the average, adopted Communistic tactics, and can one blame the people if they endeavour, with that example before them, to fight for something and adopt tactics that are neither fair nor above-board? Anyhow, Communism seems to be fashionable in some parts of Australia at present, and so those tactics are adopted. I hope the Government will follow the lead given by the member for Irwin-Moore and make an investigation to ascertain whether we can in this State curb the activities of the Communist Party.

It is strange that the Premiers of a few of the States should endeavour to do things that are not altogether fair. I include in that statement the Deputy Premier of Western Australia. I have here a cutting from a reliable newspaper—it was not printed during this session—reporting a discussion between the Honorary Minister for Agriculture (Hon. G. B. Wood), Mr. Playford, Mr. Watts and Mr. Hollway. They were discussing the possibility of introducing legislation attacking Commonwealth legislation. The possibility was challenged by one of the Premiers and Mr. Wood said that they should not take Mr. Chifley's letter to Mr. Playford "lying down." Evidently Mr. Chifley had written some letter to Mr. Playford and the gentlemen concerned determined to stand up and fight Mr. Chifley. That was quite a manly action to take provided that they had right on their side. Mr. Watts is reported to have said—

It would be better to have a "showdown" rather than to say that we will leave the Commonwealth in the box seat.

That is good language, but how is "showdown" to be interpreted? What is a "showdown"?

Mr. Graham: It is a revolution.

Mr. TRIAT: Yes. Where there is a showdown, there is violence of some description. They were going to knock Mr. Chifley off the box seat. Mr. Watts is a moderate man. I have travelled with him and he has never shown any violence while I have been with him. Evidently, since he has become a Minister, he favours violence. He wants a showdown." Mr. Hollway said:—

Whether it is feasible or constitutional, I am inclined to have a crack at it.

Mr. Playford is a good fellow. One of these gentlemen is going to knock Mr. Chifley off the box seat, and another is going to crack him.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Crunch, crunch!

Mr. TRIAT: These men are not Communists; they are the leaders of the Liberal Party. Mr. Playford, however, is not so sanguine. Whether he is a big man or not, or timid, I do not know, but he said—

I would not like to give an undertaking that my Government would pass legislation that it could not submit to Parliament as having the recommendation of the Government's legal advisers that it was fundamentally sound.

Mr. Playford was not going to knock Mr. Chifley off his perch, or take a crack at him, or have a showdown. All this leads to the same picture that I have drawn: That might is right with many people. However, sooner or later the weak gather forces together and in time right becomes might. I am not going to bother a great deal about it, except to draw the attention of the public of Western Australia to those people who adopt the attitude, when they are strong physically or numerically, that might is right.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: This Government is not very strong.

Mr. TRIAT: I hope this Government will not adopt such an attitude, because it is a dangerous one. It would have many "come-backs." The member for Irwin-Moore is quite right in saying that 16,000 Communists in Australia should not control 8,000,000 Australians. I sincerely think that the pre-

sent Premier would not attempt to crack anybody or knock anybody down.

Mr. Styants: The B.M.A. has given a good lead.

Mr. TRIAT: The Government should give the people a good lead. I have not the time to say all I would like to say, as we expect to adjourn at 6.15. There are, however, some matters connected with my electorate I would like to discuss whilst speaking to the Address-in-reply. I shall make my remarks as short as possible. One big question is that of water supplies. The present Government, for some unknown reason, has found it necessary to take away from the people who live in my electorate—600 miles from Perth—the right to obtain water at 2s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons in order to grow vegetables. That concession was granted by the Labour Government in 1942. I have here a letter, dated the 21st June, 1948, from the Under Secretary for Water Supply. It reads as follows:—

Referring to your letter of the 11th instant with which you forwarded a letter from the Leonora Road Board drawing attention to the fact that concessions in water charges for the growing of vegetables are being discontinued and urging that these be allowed for the current year or until such time as a uniform rate in the State has been decided upon, I wish to acquaint you with the present position.

The concession referred to was granted as from the 1st of January, 1942, in several districts under the Goldfields Water Supply Scheme as well as at Cue and Leonora, with the object of encouraging private consumers to cultivate vegetables for their own domestic consumption during the war years when vegetables were in short supply. This, coupled with the manpower difficulties then being experienced by market gardeners, promoted the decision in favour of the concession.

However, circumstances have now altered considerably, with the result that there is considered to be no substantial reason for continuing, and consequently it has been recommended that the prescribed by-laws prices shall operate as for the 1st January, 1948. The concession referred to above has been cancelled in all districts as for the 31st of December last.

What a high and mighty attitude to adopt towards people who live 600 miles from the metropolitan area! They are to buy their vegetables from Perth!

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Is the letter signed by the Minister?

Mr. TRIAT: No, by the Under Secretary for Water Supply.

Mr. Styants: That is in contrast to the reduction that has taken place in drainage rates in the metropolitan area.

The Minister for Works: What is the period during which the concession was to continue? Was it for the duration of the war?

Mr. TRIAT: Yes, according to the letter from the Under Secretary for Water Supply.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Rates have been reduced in the South-West district.

The Premier: No.

Mr. TRIAT: We thought the concession to the Leonora people a good gesture, because they were able to get their vegetables fresh and edible. Vegetables that are transported by trains that run up to 16 or 17 hours late do not arrive in good condition; the tomatoes and lettuces are frequently bad. There are only two trains a week to Leonora, yet the department considers it advisable to discontinue this concession, for some unknown reason.

The Minister for Works: You cannot say that it was for an unknown reason, when the Under Secretary stated the concession was to continue during the war period.

Mr. TRIAT: That is only an excuse.

The Minister for Works: No. It was a condition laid down by the previous Government.

Hon. A. H. Panton: As the Premier said, "It is no good saying there was a war."

Mr. TRIAT: It is a great hardship to these country people to be deprived of locally-grown vegetables. Much of the water evaporates and is not therefore being used. Why not let these people use the water at the concessional rate? I sincerely hope the Minister will give this matter his attention.

Gold is produced in my district. In season and out of season, I have always advocated better facilities for prospectors, better crushing facilities and better treatment facilities, but I have not been able to get much assistance so far. When the present Minister for Mines assumed office, he immediately proceeded to visit the Goldfields and I was of the opinion that some alteration would be made and something done. The Minister knew nothing about gold-mining, fortunately for us, and I thought he

would be easily persuaded by the prospectors, who did know their job, to give them some concessions. However, I am afraid there has been no result, because I recently received a letter from the Amalgamated Prospectors and Leaseholders' Association of Western Australia, dated the 15th July, 1948. I was dumbfounded when the letter was handed to me because I could not believe its contents. For the benefit of the House I will read it—

Since the present Government came into office, members of the executive of the above association have met the Hon. the Minister for Mines on three occasions when visiting Kalgoorlie. On these occasions, and at other times by correspondence, various requests for improvements to the prospecting side of the mining industry have been placed before the Minister. Following the most recent visit by the Minister to Kalgoorlie, a report of a deputation which met Mr. Parker, was discussed at a conference of delegates of this association, and deep concern was expressed at the negative replies given to the requests.

Evidently the Minister had no idea of assisting them because the replies were negative. The letter goes on—

Consequently I was instructed to communicate with you on the matter, stressing the fact that this association views with grave alarm the apathetic attitude of the Government towards the mining industry generally, and prospecting in particular.

That surprises me, because in my district we have a very active secretary of the Liberal Party, and he is consistently booming the activities of the present Government and telling people what it is prepared to do for the goldmining industry. At the same time he is continually clamouring through the Press about the inefficiency of the Commonwealth Government because, as he says, it will not do this or that. Yet here is the Prospectors' Association, which represents the prospectors of Western Australia, stating without quibble that the present State Government is apathetic to mining. Prospecting is not a Commonwealth matter but a State matter. I can remember members of the Labour Government and the Minister for Mines referring to the prospectors of Western Australia as the salt of the earth, and they meant it. These men are prepared to go out to search for gold and other minerals in an endeavour to improve the conditions of the State. They are worthy of consideration, but here we are told that this Government is apathetic

to mining generally and prospecting in particular.

The Minister for Lands: Is this since the change of Government?

Mr. TRIAT: Yes, this letter is dated the 15th July, 1948. Let me tell the Minister for Lands that the members of the Prospectors' Association are not all Labourites.

The Minister for Lands: You did not have this trouble previously?

Mr. TRIAT: No. The prospectors always got some consideration. Maybe they did not always get complete consideration, because I was not satisfied. I thought that even our Government did not do enough.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: They are getting nothing now.

Mr. TRIAT: The letter continues—

This association is of the opinion that a supervised assisted prospectors' scheme, with an increased sustenance allowance, such as was in operation before the war, should be reintroduced, and that prospectors who could qualify for the old-age pension, but desire to avail themselves of the prospecting scheme, should not be debarred from doing so.

Can members tell me that because a man is able to obtain the old-age pension he should be refused a sustenance allowance to go prospecting? The founders of Kalgoorlie were not beardless boys, but greybeards. Paddy Hannan and Flannagan were elderly men. This Government is going to say that because a man is 65 he is no longer to receive sustenance from the Government for prospecting. These are the only men we will get to go out because the youth of today will not go prospecting. The future of the Goldfields depends on someone going out and seeking for new fields. If we can equip a present day youth with a good motorcar, a caravan and a picture show in the bush every night, he will go out looking for gold, but not otherwise. I will read further from this letter—

This association is of the opinion that every encouragement should be given to an industry that has meant so much for the State, and that no impediment should hamper the man who prefers to "battle in the bush", in an effort to find new fields or bring about a revival in old ones.

The gold industry to which the State owes so much, has, because of the present high prices for primary produce such as wheat, wool, meat, butter, eggs, cheese, etc., gone

into the doldrums. But members on the Government side will remember when Western Australia was dependent on gold to keep afloat. I am quite sure that within the next few years the State will again be dependent on its gold and mineral resources. When the world is filled with grown goods, a market 12,000 miles away will not appeal; people there are taking our produce today because they are starving. Sooner or later our mineral resources will again be called on to assist us.

The Minister for Housing: A most important industry to the State, I agree.

Mr. TRIAT: I do not think it is the most important, because I think foodstuffs are paramount, but it really is an important industry.

Mr. Bovell: Sir James Mitchell said, "Gold brought the people here, and superphosphate is keeping them here."

Mr. TRIAT: Yes, and superphosphate kept them poor and will again when the market is fully supplied. But gold will keep the men on their farms when bad days come. Sooner or later over-production will take place and men will not be able to sell their wheat. The distillery will have to be re-established at Collie to extract spirit from wheat. I will read again from this letter—

The vast areas held under exemption by influential companies is, to a great extent, detrimental to prospecting, and an amendment of the Mining Act on the matter of large holdings is long overdue. Members of this association are aware of the shortage of supplies in many lines, and that labour is needed for other industries, but feels that the amenities provided for the city dweller do not balance the hardships of the prospector.

In acquainting the Opposition with the opinion of the association it is hoped that some effort may be made to keep the industry at least "level", during this transition period, and improve the lot of the prospector to whom so much is owed. Yours faithfully (sgd) H. G. J. Ware, General Secretary.

That letter points out that the Minister is not anxious to do much for goldmining. I do not think he can increase the price of gold but he could find ways and means by which the ordinary man in Western Australia, who desires to seek for more gold or minerals, could be given assistance. If the Minister were anxious to assist the prospector, he would give him better facilities at the State batteries. There is an old battery which has

been standing for 50 years or more, with no improvements made to it, and no prospects of any being made. I shall deal with goldmining at a later stage, on the Estimates.

Another matter dealt with today is that of pricefixing. It has me very worried. I really believe that sooner or later pricefixing is going to create such an upheaval in Western Australia that no Government will be able to control it. The time is arriving when the housewives will not be able to afford to buy sufficient goods for their children and they will revolt against whoever is in power. There are more sheep's heads than there is rump steak in the working man's home—and even sheep's heads are pretty costly. Fish is unknown to the average working man. Peas and beans are definitely unknown. Even the common cabbage, the old standby, is today at times unprocurable by the man on the basic wage. Yet this Government, without hesitation, said to the people of Western Australia, "Let us handle prices and we will make a job of the question. Do not be misled by the propaganda of the Labour Party." Let me tell members that the propaganda of the Labour Party is not my propaganda, but is commonsense. Rising wages are no good.

The Minister for Housing: Prices are still controlled by the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. TRIAT: The Commonwealth authorities are assisting.

The Premier: They were getting out before.

Mr. TRIAT: Take tinned milk! It has gone up 3½d. a tin. Fish has doubled in price.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: This Government will not have enough hands to hold price fixing.

Mr. TRIAT: The necessities of life have all gone up and the luxury items are just phenomenal. I am, unfortunately for my pocket, the owner of a motor car. I recently took it to a garage for repairs, and was given an account showing so much for parts and so much for labour, and the labour costs were 10s. per man per hour. That is scandalous! Can members tell me why the man controlling prices, Mr. Mathea, or anyone else, should say that the price for labour on my car is to be 10s. an hour when

the company employing the mechanic pays him only 3s. 9d. per hour? That is one luxury item. Beans are 2s. lb. and so are peas. Tomatoes are over 1s. per lb.

The Minister for Lands: Beans have to travel a long way these days.

Mr. TRIAT: They come from our suburbs. The beans from Carnarvon are sold just as cheaply as those grown here. The maximum price is the minimum price, evidently.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: They are the best beans in the world.

Mr. TRIAT: I think the Minister for Lands will know that a man grew some special grapes known as Flame Tokay and brought them into the market. They are easily recognised by people who know anything about grapes. He sold them in the market for about 2½d. per lb. On the following day he went down the street and saw them in a shop window at 10d. per lb. To satisfy himself he walked in and said, "What do you call those grapes?" The shopkeeper said, "I do not know." The grower lifted the box down and saw his name on it. Can members tell me that there was any price control over that?

The Premier: There has not been.

Mr. TRIAT: When is there going to be control?

The Minister for Lands: That happened all through the war.

Mr. TRIAT: When the attempt is made to get control, I am going to have a lot to say. I want to see the methods of price-fixing made public, as was mentioned by the member for Perth. When a worker wants an increase in wages or a betterment of conditions, he goes into the court where there is a president on the bench, together with a representative of the workers and a representative of the employers. The court hears the evidence and the parties have the right to cross-examine any witnesses. As a result of the facts and figures submitted on oath, the bench fixes the wages and other conditions. Let us do the same with prices.

Why should there be all this hush-hush? Why should I, as a producer, be able to go to Mr. Mathea, in private, and say, "I want 1s. 4d. a lb. for this commodity because it is costing so much?" How does Mr. Mathea know? How does the President of the Ar-

bitration Court know the conditions of workers, except by the advocates of both sides putting forward their arguments? Let price-fixing be done in open court with a consumers' representative and a growers' representative on the bench. I regret that I have not more time.

The Premier: Could leave, Mr. Speaker, be given to the hon. member to continue his speech on Tuesday next?

Mr. TRIAT: I will not put the House to that trouble. I am sorry I did not have a little more time, but I thank members for giving me the hearing they have. My remarks in support of the member for Irwin-Moore, and on price-fixing and other matters are made seriously and sincerely, and I hope they will not be taken lightly.

On motion by Hon. A. H. Panton, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.15 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 3rd August, 1948.

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DEPUTY PRESIDENT—ELECTION OF HON. J. A. DIMMITT.

The Clerk (Mr. L. L. Leake): I have to announce that the President, Hon. H. Seddon, is absent. It is, therefore, necessary for members to elect one of their number, now present, to fill the office, perform the duties, and exercise the authority of the President during such absence.

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker): I move—

That Hon. J. A. Dimmitt be elected to fill the office, perform the duties, and exercise the authority of the President during the absence of the President, Hon. H. Seddon.