

Mr. ACKLAND: Unless we do something now it may be too late to do it in a few years' time. It does not need many fifth columnists to upset all the machinery of a State. I believe that the Government knows who these people are but—

Mr. Marshall: There was one in the gallery looking down at you last night.

Mr. ACKLAND: —it was denied when I made the statement in the House that there was such a list of people who could be readily dealt with. The denial was given that there was such a list in the Education Department and I believe that reply was quite correct. If the Premier would take action he would have every member of this House, and the great majority of the people of Western Australia, right behind him.

Mr. Marshall: How far behind him?

On motion by Mr. Needham, debate adjourned.

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying the personnel of sessional committees appointed by that House.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 1), £6,000,000.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

House adjourned at 10.5 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 3rd August, 1950.

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

QUESTIONS.

RAILWAYS.

(a) As to Merredin Train Cancellation.

Mr. KELLY asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

(1) Is he aware that the Sunday 9.15 p.m. Perth-Merredin train, has been cancelled as from the 31st July, 1950?

(2) As this is the only available train by which workers on week-end concession rates can arrive back to country towns en route in time to commence work on Monday mornings, will he give immediate consideration to its reinstatement?

(3) Is he aware that the Merredin-Perth train departing Merredin at 1.45 a.m. on Mondays has also been cancelled as from the 31st July, 1950?

(4) Is he aware that city workers on week-end concession rates are now deprived of the opportunity of visiting their families who are resident in country areas because of housing problems?

(5) Is he aware that the cancellation of both these trains will also prevent new Australians, employed in various centres, from visiting their wives and families stationed in Cunderdin during week-ends?

(6) What was the reason for cancelling these two trains?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Owing to the poor patronage the train was cancelled and a road service substituted. Reinstatement of the train is not warranted.

(3) Yes.

(4) City folk may return by the Kalgoorlie express departing Merredin at 4.6 a.m. Mondays.

(5) No.

(6) Poor patronage of train and provision of bus service.

(b) As to "P.M." Class Locomotives.

Mr. STYANTS asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

(1) What was the initial cost of a "P.M." class locomotive?

(2) Was advice other than that of the designer received before they were finally ordered?

(3) Why were these engines withdrawn from traffic?

(4) What was (a) the cost of alteration or repairs while off traffic; and (b) the nature of such alterations and/or repairs?

(5) Are they now considered suitable to perform the work for which they were intended, i.e., to work all classes of trains?

(6) Is it true that these engines were intended to haul express trains and that after doing some of this class of work they are now confined to slow work due to their spreading or moving the "road"?

(7) Is it considered desirable to have a flange on the main driving wheel on this type of locomotive?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

(1) Average cost £34,815 including import duty of £7,600 for which remission is being sought from the Commonwealth Government.

(2) The P class locomotive was designed and built by the North British Locomotive Company; the PR class was built in the Midland Junction Workshops to the same design and the PM by the North British Locomotive Company to almost identical design, but with certain modifications according to W.A.G.R. specifications. No other advice was received in respect of their design.

(3) Some PM class engines were withdrawn from traffic on 13th May for the strengthening of firebox corners.

(4) (a) About £36 each. (b) To ensure that the corners of the foundation ring complied with the Australian Boiler Code.

(5) The PM class locomotive is a general purpose engine and is suitable for hauling all trains on sections where 14-ton axle loads are permitted, except those required to travel excess of 40 m.p.h.

(6) The PM class locomotives are general purpose engines, not necessarily for hauling express services only. Power is available in the PR class for such trains and adequate work exists to employ all 35 PM engines. Reports were received from certain sources that PM engines were affecting the road and as a precautionary measure pending further investigation, their speed has been restricted to 40 m.p.h. at which speed they are giving good service.

(7) On a rigid wheelbase of 10 ft. it is immaterial.

(c) As to Late Running of Kalgoorlie Trains.

Mr. STYANTS asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

(1) Does he know that all trains to and from Kalgoorlie are frequently running hours late?

(2) What causes the express from Perth to Kalgoorlie to be consistently late?

(3) Why are goods trains frequently late on arrival at Kalgoorlie?

(4) As this late running disorganises the business life of the community, is the department able to adopt measures that will effect an improvement?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Mainly engine trouble and crossing delays.

(3) Answered by (2).

(4) Everything practicable is being done to maintain schedule running but the position will be difficult until more locomotive power is available.

CHANDLER ALUNITE WORKS.*As to Negotiations and Legal Position.*

Hon. J. T. TONKIN asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

(1) On what date was the Government Analyst (Mr. Rowledge) asked to supply the information concerning the composition of alunite upon which the Crown Law opinion that the State works at Chandler could not legally process gypsum was based?

(2) On what date was the opinion of Mr. Rowledge given to the Government?

(3) On what date was machinery taken from the State alunite works for use at the Kent River case mill?

(4) Did Brady & Co., plaster manufacturers, peg certain gypsum leases at Chandler and apply to the Mines Department to have them granted?

(5) For what reason did the Mines Department refuse to grant such leases? What was the date of the decision?

(6) Had these leases previously been pegged by J. H. Collett after his being informed by the Mines Department that they were available for pegging?

(7) Is it not a fact that J. H. Collett did not proceed with his application for the leases because the chairman of the board of management of the State Alunite Industry, acting on behalf of the board of management, agreed to manufacture plaster of paris and to supply it to J. H. Collett if the latter would unpeg the gypsum leases?

(8) Are any of these leases contained in the area which the Government is now arranging to make available to an Eastern States firm which is to be allowed to use the State works for processing gypsum?

(9) Did any State Government or the Commonwealth Government make representations to the Western Australian Government concerning the need for plaster of paris in the Eastern States, and request this Government to do what it could to help the supply position?

(10) Which Governments communicated with the Western Australian Government on the matter, and what were the respective dates of the communications?

(11) Is there a shortage of plaster board in Western Australia at the present time?

(12) Did the chairman of the board of management of the State Alunite Works advise J. H. Collett, managing director of Gypsum & Plaster Exporters, Ltd., in November last, that the Chandler alunite industry was prepared to supply to his order and specification gypsum and plaster at the rate of 100,000 tons per annum—delivery to commence early in 1950?

(13) What reply was given by the manager, State alunite works, to an inquiry received from the manager, Melbourne Rope Works, in February this year, regarding supplies of plaster of paris?

(14) On what date was the board of management advised by the Government that the State alunite works would not be able to produce plaster of paris because of the legal position?

(15) What was the estimated profit per ton to the State alunite works in the price of £2 5s. per ton of plaster supplied at the rate of 1,000 tons per week in accordance with the quotation supplied by the manager of the State alunite works on the 8th December, 1949?

(16) What is the estimated amount of profit per annum which is expected to be obtained under the arrangement which the Government is now negotiating?

(17) On what date did the Minister first become concerned about the legal position in connection with the processing of gypsum by the State alunite works?

(18) Does the Government intend to include in the agreement which it is at present negotiating with regard to the leasing of the State alunite works a clause stipulating that the plaster to be produced must not be sold for use in this State?

(19) If so, for what reason is such a restriction being imposed?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) On 1st May, 1950, the Solicitor General asked for such information.

(2) The Solicitor General informs me he received the advice of Mr. Rowledge on the following day.

(3) The removal of certain machinery from the State alunite works for use at the Kent River case mill commenced in March, 1950, but a decision was reached some months before.

(4), (5), (6), (7) and (8) The subject matter of these questions will probably be involved in a writ which has been issued and is at present, therefore, sub judice.

(9) Yes.

(10) Premier's Department, Queensland, 11/5/50; Premier of Queensland, 1/6/50; Minister for Housing, Victoria, 13/6/50.

(11) According to monthly reports issued by the State Housing Commission, the supply of plaster board in this State is satisfactory.

(12) Yes, but the offer was withdrawn by subsequent letter dated 23/11/49.

(13) The Manager Melbourne Rope Works was advised that negotiations were proceeding with Mr. Collett, for the purchase of plaster from the works, and the inquiry was referred to Mr. Collett.

(14) Cabinet decision on the future conduct of the industry was reached on the 19th May, 1950, but on the 22nd December, 1949, the board of management was made aware of the fact that it was not authorised to proceed as the Government was unwilling to undertake any new production.

(15) A profit of 10s. per ton was estimated.

(16) It is not considered desirable to disclose any estimated profits, as negotiations are still proceeding.

(17) In March, 1950.

(18) Certainly not.

(19) Answered by No. (18).

MEAT.

(a) As to Price and Basic Wage.

Mr. W. HEGNEY asked the Attorney General:

(1) Is he yet aware that the consumers have been for a considerable period paying up to sixpence per pound over the fixed price for meat?

(2) Does he know that the computation of the basic wage has relation to the fixed price of meat and in consequence such wage is lower than it would otherwise be, and working people are suffering a grave injustice?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

(1) No.

(2) No. I understand the prices used in the computation of the basic wage are those ascertained by the Government Statistician as being the prices charged to, and paid by consumers.

The Government has for some time been making available frozen meat of a good quality at the fixed price.

(b) As to Tabling Papers.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Attorney General:

Will he lay on the Table of the House all papers dealing with the control of meat prices?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

No. Under Section 12 of the Prices Control Act, 1948-1949, the Prices Control Commissioner is prohibited, excepting for the purposes of the Act, from directly or indirectly communicating or divulging any information relating to any matter which comes to his knowledge in consequence of his official position.

(c) As to Meat Advisory Committee.

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

(1) What has become of the Meat Advisory Committee the establishment of which by the Government early last year was stated by the Minister for Lands to have been justified?

(2) Was the Committee regarded by the Government as being incapable of conducting an inquiry, such as was entrusted to Mr. Kelly?

(3) Of what use is the Committee?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The Committee is still in existence.

(2) Because of Mr. Kelly's special knowledge of the fixing of meat prices, it was considered desirable to secure his advice.

(3) To advise the Minister when required.

(d) As to Inquiry into Prices.

Mr. W. HEGNEY asked the Premier:

(1) When did he first decide that some form of inquiry into meat prices was necessary?

(2) Why did not the Prices Advisory Committee or the Prices Commissioner carry out such inquiry?

(3) What authority fixed the present legal prices of meat?

(4) Is it a fact that he or another Cabinet Minister urged Mr. Kelly, who was appointed an investigator, to recommend that all controls on meat prices be abolished?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) The invitation to Sir Douglas Copland was forwarded on the 21st July, 1950.

(2) These authorities are constantly investigating the price of meat. Because of the acute shortage, the Government felt that further advice was desirable.

(3) The Prices Control Commissioner.

(4) No.

(e) As to Consumption and Freezing Space.

Mr. KELLY asked the Premier:

(1) What is the frozen meat storage capacity at Robbs Jetty freezers?

(2) What other freezers suitable for holding meat carcase are available to the Government, and what is the capacity of same?

(3) What is the estimated weekly meat consumption in W.A.—(a) metropolitan area; (b) country?

(4) Are any additional Government freezers in the course of construction?

(5) Is it the intention of the Government to provide greater freezing space during the present financial year?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) 8,000 tons or 800,000 cubic feet.

(2) None.

(3) Average weekly consumption:—Metropolitan—Beef, 278.1 tons; veal, 17.72 tons; mutton and lamb, 217.04 tons; pork, 23.25 tons. Country—Beef, 109.63 tons; veal, 2.24 tons; mutton and lamb, 64.78 tons; pork, 8.65 tons.

(4) Yes.

(5) Under consideration.

CEMENT.

As to Establishing Industry at Bunbury.

Mr. GUTHRIE asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

Is the Government prepared to establish, or to assist to establish, a cement-making industry at Bunbury?

The MINISTER replied:

Certain proposals for the establishment of a cement manufacturing industry in the Bunbury area and which may involve Government financial assistance are at present receiving consideration.

EDUCATION.

(a) *As to New School, Baker's Hill.*

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

When are tenders likely to be re-called for the erection of a new brick school at Baker's Hill?

The MINISTER replied:

Tenders for the erection of a new brick school at Baker's Hill were invited on the 28th July and will close on the 22nd August.

Conditions may be seen at the Public Works Department, Perth, or at the Water Supply Office, Northam, on and after the 8th August.

(b) *As to Staff, Northam High School.*

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

(1) Is he aware that a teacher was recently transferred from the Northam High School staff to the school established at the Northam Immigration Centre?

(2) If so, is he aware that such transfer has reduced the Northam High School staff below what is required to enable the school to function effectively in all its sections?

(3) When is it intended to add another teacher to the staff of the Northam High School?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) A teacher was transferred.

(2) The school was liberally staffed. It is still effectively staffed even without the teacher in question.

(3) A senior assistant is resuming on Monday after long service leave.

HOUSING.

(a) *As to Rental Homes, North Northam.*

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

What are the main reasons responsible for the long delay in completing the Commonwealth-State rental homes still under construction at North Northam?

The MINISTER replied:

The contractor for these homes experienced financial difficulties. He recently arranged with his creditors for the work to be carried out by trustees. During negotiations with the creditors work was delayed, but it is now expected that arrangements made will enable the work to proceed satisfactorily.

(b) *As to Sale of Rental Properties.*

Mr. GRAYDEN asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) Are occupants of Commonwealth-State Rental Homes allowed to buy the homes they occupy?

(2) If the answer to (1) is "yes," what are the terms and conditions under which the occupants purchase the homes?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Terms and conditions of sale of Commonwealth-State rental homes are as follows:—(a) Occupiers of Commonwealth-State rental homes who took occupation prior to 1st January, 1950, were permitted to buy at any time before 30th June, 1950, at cost price plus value of land as assessed at the time of sale by the Taxation Department, plus a charge of £10 to cover administration costs. Such occupiers who do not take advantage of this arrangement may purchase after 1st July, 1950, the home in which they reside on a basis of cost price plus land value as assessed at the time of sale by the Taxation Department, or at valuation of the whole premises, whichever is the greater. In such cases the charge for administration expenses will also be added. (b) Occupiers of homes who have taken occupation at any time after 1st January, 1950, may buy at any time within six months of the date of occupation at cost price plus the value of the land as assessed at the time of sale by the Taxation Department plus the administration charge. Such occupiers who do not take advantage of this arrangement within six months of the date of occupation may purchase the home in which they reside on a basis of cost price plus land value as assessed at the time of sale by the Taxation Department, or at valuation of the whole premises, whichever is the greater. In such case the charge for administration expenses should also be added. In respect of every sale, credit will be given for such portion of the rental paid during tenancy as represents capital repayment. In certain areas of land the Commission is not in a position to give a transfer of the land until such time as subdivisional plans have been approved. Delay has also occurred in assessing final costs of the home. In these cases the tenant will not be prejudiced provided he has already made application to purchase and receipt of such application has been duly acknowledged by the Commission.

I will lay the papers on the Table of the House.

(c) *As to War Service Homes Charges.*

Mr. GRAYDEN asked the Minister for Housing:

What fees, deposits, and charges does an ex-serviceman, who privately builds a War Service Home have to provide if he is advanced the maximum amount of £2,000?

The MINISTER replied:

An ex-serviceman who builds privately may, on completion of building, have his liability of £2,000 taken over under the provisions of the War Service Homes Act. Fees payable would be—Valuation, £1 1s.; search, 2s.; survey of land, £1 11s. 6d.; mortgage registration, 12s. 6d.; stamp duty, £2 15s.; total, £6 2s. If he builds privately employing his own architect and advances are made during progress of building, the fees payable are—Valuation, £1 1s.; search, 2s.; inspections during building operations, £3 3s.; mortgage registration, 12s. 6d.; stamp duty, £2 15s.; total, £7 13s. 6d. An ex-serviceman building under the self-help scheme and borrowing £2,000 under the War Service Homes Act, receiving progress payments during building operations, pays the following fees—Valuation, £1 1s.; search, 2s.; survey of land, £1 11s. 6d.; examination of plans, £1 1s.; supervision $1\frac{1}{2}$ s., £30; mortgage registration, 12s. 6d.; stamp duty, £2 15s.; total, £37 3s. If original plans are drawn by the Commission, a fee of 1% is charged on the cost price of building, but if stock plans obtained from the Commission are used, the fee for plans is £5 5s.

ONIONS, IMPORTED.

As to Price Decision.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Attorney General:

Will he lay upon the Table of the House all papers dealing with the recent price decision made covering the onions imported from Egypt?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

No. Under Section 12 of the Prices Control Act, 1948-1949, the Prices Control Commissioner is prohibited, excepting for the purposes of the Act, from directly or indirectly communicating or divulging any information relating to any matter which comes to his knowledge in consequence of his official position.

BULK HANDLING.

(a) As to Silo, Grass Valley.

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

Will he lay upon the Table of the House the papers dealing with the proposal to establish a bulk wheat silo at Grass Valley?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

Yes.

(b) As to Bins for East and West York-rakine, Kodj Kodjin and North Baandee.

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

Will he table the papers concerning the erection of wheat bins at East and West Yorkrakine and the proposal to erect bins at Kodj Kodjin and North Baandee?

The MINISTER replied:

Yes.

AVON RIVER.

As to Cleansing and Improving, Northam.

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

Will he lay upon the Table of the House all papers dealing with the proposals to cleanse and improve the Avon River where it passes through the Northam township?

The MINISTER replied:

The files will be made available to the hon. member at his convenience.

PUBLIC SERVICE.

As to Retiring Age and Transport Board Chairman.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

(1) Is it the policy of the Government to continue the employment of civil servants after they have reached the retiring age?

(2) If not, why was a civil servant on the eve of retirement appointed for a three-year term as chairman of the Transport Board?

(3) What length of accumulated leave (including pro rata leave to date) is due to this officer?

(4) At what date would this officer normally cease work in order to commence leave prior to being retired?

(5) At what date will his Transport Board appointment terminate?

(6) What will be his age then?

(7) Is there any younger member of the service with sufficient experience to hold this appointment?

(8) If so, will he take immediate action to remedy the position?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

(1) No; but it is sometimes desirable to retain the services of individual officers after they have reached the retiring age (65 years).

(2) The appointee was not on the eve of retirement at the date of appointment.

(3) Approximately seven months.

(4) The 2nd November, 1950, when payment for accrued leave (including pro rata leave) would be made as a retiring allowance.

(5) The 31st August, 1952.

(6) Sixty-six and nine-twelfths.

(7) Possibly.

(8) Such action is not considered to be necessary.

LICENSING ACT.

As to Hotel for Northcliffe.

Mr. HOAR asked the Attorney General:

(1) Is he aware that earlier this year a hotel license for Northcliffe was refused?

(2) That these applications were submitted, each of which involved expenditure, including furniture, of from £30,000 to £36,000, and that the plans and sites appeared entirely satisfactory to the court?

(3) That Northcliffe area has 86 farms occupied, with a further 60 in course of development which will shortly be in production; in addition, two timber mills, one large, within a mile of the town?

(4) That Northcliffe is considered a rapidly expanding district and destined to carry a large population?

(5) In view of the foregoing facts, are not the mill employees, farming community and travelling public entitled to this amenity? If so, will he state the reason for the refusal of a hotel license for Northcliffe?

(6) Is it the policy of the Government to allow the Swan Brewery Co. Ltd. to obtain a complete monopoly in hotel ownership, and bar trade in this State, to the exclusion of other interested parties or community hotel ventures?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) (3), (4) and (5). Under Section 47 of the Licensing Act it is the responsibility of the Licensing Court to grant or refuse new licenses.

(6) No.

BUSH FIRES.

As to Assistance for Affected Farmers.

Mr. HOAR asked the Premier:

Referring to the disastrous bushfires of March this year, and to the Premier's statement that a scheme of Government assistance was being evolved, will he inform the House—

(1) Is this scheme in operation yet? If so,

(2) What is the total number of farmers affected to date, and the amount of money involved?

(3) How many farmers have been assisted in each of the following districts—Walpole, Northcliffe, Pemberton, Manjimup and Nannup?

(4) Is the scheme limited to Rural Bank clients only; if not, what steps should a client of another bank take to receive Government assistance?

(5) Does the scheme envisage free grants of money to the most necessitous cases; if so, how many have been assisted in this manner to date? If not, what are the terms of re-payment?

(6) Has the Government made any attempt to give to these burned-out areas, the highest priority in fencing materials where needed; if so, how much has been sent, and who is responsible for distribution?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Will not be actually known until applications close on the 15th August. Applications, however, are now being received and dealt with daily. Preliminary estimate taken shows settlers involved in bush fire damage approximate 396 involving an amount of £186,020.

(3) Walpole, 9; Northcliffe, —; Pemberton, —; Manjimup, —; Nannup, —. See answer (5) for temporary assistance given.

(4) No. Application forms are available at branches of the Rural Bank and can be obtained by any farmer for the purpose of lodging an application for assistance.

(5) Yes. Assistance is being made available in the form of—(a) grants; (b) long term loans ranging up to 10 years (interest free for first three years); or both.

Applications approved to date—13 covering both grants and loans; four covering loan only.

Immediately following bush fires, assistance covering fodder supplies has been given to all urgent necessitous cases.

The Rural Bank has also given temporary overdraft accommodation to those necessitous cases pending application for assistance, irrespective of whether bank clients or otherwise.

(6) The Government has no control over the distribution of these materials, which were available through normal trading channels.

STATE ELECTRICITY COMMISSION.

As to Tabling Annual Reports.

Hon. E. NULSEN asked the Minister for Works:

Can he inform the House when the annual reports of proceedings and operations of the State Electricity Commission for the years 1947, 1948, 1949 and 1950 will be laid on the Table of the House, in accordance with Section 58 of the State Electricity Commission Act, No. 60, 1945?

The MINISTER replied:

It is anticipated that the annual reports of proceedings and operations of the State Electricity Commission for the years 1947, 1948 and 1949 will be placed before the House very shortly.

In regard to the year 1950, this is in course of preparation now.

TIMBER INDUSTRY.*As to Amenities for Workers.*

Mr. HOAR asked the Honorary Minister for Forests:

(1) Does he remember the following motion being passed in this House in October, 1948:—

That, in the opinion of this House, the Government should examine the position as to the provision by the sawmilling industry of amenities for timber workers?

(2) That the then Minister for Forests, in speaking to the motion, promised that he would arrange a conference between the Sawmillers' Association, Timber Workers' Union and certain interested members of Parliament in this matter?

(3) If so, did such a conference take place; on what date was it held, and who attended it?

(4) If such a conference was held, was any finality reached regarding the establishment of an amenities fund for timber workers; if not, what progress was made, and have any further conferences been held? If so, with what result?

(5) Has the Government a desire to assist timber workers in this manner? If so, what justification is there for an almost two-years' delay?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes.

(3) A conference was held on the 17th June, 1949, at which the following were present:—Messrs. H. M. Sweeney (secretary) and McCallum (president), Timber Workers' Union; Mr. Nail, Trades Hall; Messrs. N. Temperley, C. R. Bunning, S. D. Gomme, L. Hadfield, E. O. Osborne, Sawmillers; the Conservator of Forests and his senior assistant.

(4) As no very definite conclusions or undertakings were arrived at, the Minister for Forests wrote to the Sawmillers' Association on the 31st August, 1949, suggesting that they should set up a committee of their own members to consider what practicable and progressive steps could be taken to improve amenities for timber workers, particularly at the isolated mills.

A committee consisting of Messrs. C. R. Bunning, C. Craig and D. G. Smith submitted a report to the Hon. Assistant Minister for Forests on the 9th November, 1949. Sawmillers were then requested to comment on the suggestion to appoint a committee consisting of a member of their Association, a member of the Timber Workers' Union, and an independent chairman, to further consider the question.

The sawmillers have now requested a further conference with the Minister, and this is expected to take place next week.

(5) Yes. We have stressed with sawmillers from time to time the desirability of providing suitable amenities according to the circumstances of each mill.

HOSPITALS.*(a) As to Maternity Ward, Midland Junction.*

Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Health:

In view of the urgent need of a maternity hospital to cater for the requirements of Midland Junction and the surrounding districts with a population approximating 30,000, will she state if the plans and specifications for the proposed new maternity ward have been finalised?

The MINISTER replied:

No. Midland Junction Hospital has been given the first priority for construction and has been allotted a midwifery ward of 25 beds.

The details are under close attention, but are not completed.

(b) As to Emergency Ward, Midland Junction.

Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Health:

(1) Has she received a request from the Midland District Council A.L.P. for the provision of an emergency ward with adequate blood bank to be made available at one of the private hospitals at Midland Junction?

(2) If so, will she state what decision has been arrived at in respect to same?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) It is the Government medical officer's opinion that, under present conditions, it is better in the patients' interests to ensure quick transport to Royal Perth Hospital, where every facility of staff and equipment is available at all times, than to make arrangements at Midland Junction, which must prove inadequate in practice.

NATIVE AFFAIRS.*As to Establishing Institution, Fitzroy Crossing.*

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY asked the Minister for Native Affairs:

(1) Has a decision been made to establish a native institution at Fitzroy Crossing?

(2) If so, has a site been determined? If so, where?

(3) On whose recommendation was this site selected?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) A site has been tentatively nominated by the Commissioner for Native Affairs, such site comprising the old post office grounds plus a portion of the Police Reserve, both near the Fitzroy Crossing aerodrome.

(3) Answered by (2).

TROLLEY-BUS SERVICE.

As to Kalgoorlie-St., Mt. Hawthorn.

Mr. W. HEGNEY asked the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

(1) Can he indicate the approximate date on which the trolley-bus service to and from Kalgoorlie Street, Mount Hawthorn, will commence?

(2) Will he give an assurance that the maximum fare from Perth to Kalgoorlie Street, and vice versa, will not exceed the existing maximum for the present tram service from Perth to Coogee-street Mount Hawthorn, and vice versa.

(3) If not, will he state the reasons?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

(1) The 1st October, 1950.

(2) No. The fare from Perth to the new terminus will be 5d.

(3) Tramway fares are provided for on a mileage basis and the new fare will be struck to conform with the general practice. Also the proposed fare will approximate the existing fares on the Perth-Osborne Park omnibus service which provides fares of 4d. to Coogee-street and 5d. to Powell-street.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Third Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. NEEDHAM (North Perth) [4.55]:

Before addressing myself to you, Sir, respecting your reappointment to the Speakership, I desire to offer my congratulations to another hon. member in connection with a very important event. I have been informed on very good authority that today the Leader of the Opposition has become the father of a bouncing baby boy, and I wish to congratulate him upon that very pleasing occurrence. I also tender my congratulations to you, Sir, upon your re-election to the position of Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, and I hope you will enjoy good health and will have strength to carry out the responsible duties attached to your office.

Next I desire to express my appreciation of the maiden speech of the member for Cottesloe in moving the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply. Unfortunately, I was not present on that occasion owing to indisposition, but I have read his speech and feel sure I shall enjoy listening to him on other occasions.

There were some features of his remarks with which I do not agree, but there were other portions that I can endorse in their entirety. I sincerely congratulate the hon. member on his effort.

At the outset I shall deal with the question of housing to which, I notice, brief reference was made in the Speech by His Excellency the Governor at the opening of Parliament. I had occasion on Tuesday last to address the House on a question of considerable importance, namely, that of prices. To my mind, the housing problem is as important today as is that of prices. The housewives are seriously concerned about the increase in the cost of living which has caused considerable trouble, particularly to people who are rearing families. The shortage of housing accommodation is causing untold misery and unhappiness. After three years under the direction of the present composite Government, despite all the promises of Ministers in 1947, that serious position remains, and I assert that there is no improvement to be seen today compared with the situation three years ago.

When we contrast the situation in 1947 respecting the availability of labour and material and take into consideration the short time that had elapsed after the return of men from the fighting fronts, we would be justified in thinking that, after a period of three years, the position respecting labour and materials as it affected the housing problem would have been very much better than it is today. In conversation with a highly placed officer of the Housing Commission a fortnight ago, I was informed that there were 11,000 applicants waiting for war service homes and Commonwealth-State rental homes, and for permits to build. From an answer to a question I put to the Honorary Minister for Housing on Tuesday, it appears that the number of applicants greatly exceeds 11,000. It was on Tuesday that I asked the following questions:—

How many applications were outstanding on the 30th June last for—

(a) War service homes;

(b) Commonwealth-State tenancies?

The Honorary Minister for Housing replied—

Applications outstanding on the 30th June, 1950—

(a) War service homes, 4,572;

(b) Commonwealth-State rental homes, 11,123.

It is estimated that 20 per cent. of the applicants for War service homes are also applicants for Commonwealth-State rental homes.

Allowing for the estimate of 20 per cent. of the applicants for war service homes being applicants for rental homes, it will be seen that there are 13,000 people at least waiting for houses, and if that number be multiplied by four as representing

an average family, it will give a picture of the very unfortunate position in which many of our people find themselves today. I understand that the allocation of homes is made on a time basis, but people who applied for rental homes or for permits to build three and even four or more years ago, are still waiting for them. I have many cases of applicants who have been waiting three or four years and many of them are cases of hardship involving large families living under inhuman, unhygienic, unnatural and unmoral conditions.

There is one glaring case that I shall mention and I can only express great surprise that the people concerned have not been allocated a home before now. I believe their application was lodged in 1947 or 1948; I am not sure which year it was. In this case five people—husband, wife and three children—are living in one room and a very small room at that. The mother is partially paralysed and the ages of the children, consisting of two girls and one boy, range from 18 years to 8 years. The family have to cook, eat, sleep and do their washing in that one room, and necessarily the male members must retire while the females are dressing, and vice versa. On washing day, wet clothes have to be hung in the room. I was informed that four months ago a home was to be allotted to that family, but nothing was done. If that is not a case of hardship, I do not know what is.

This housing problem has been the cause of more unhappiness and has resulted in the wrecking of more marriages than anything else in recent years. If we compare the conditions that prevailed under the Labour Government from 1945 to 1947 with those under the present Government during the last three years with respect to labour and materials we find that the present Government has in no way lived up to its election pledges to the people in the matter of housing. Even the member for Subiaco, the Minister for Health, has frankly admitted that the Government has ignominiously failed to honour its election pledges. After having been an Honorary Minister in the McLarty-Watts Cabinet for three years, she was reported in "The West Australian" of the 21st April last as follows:—

In the view of the Minister for Health (Mrs. Cardell-Oliver), who was speaking at a civic reception in Perth yesterday to the Federal President of the Australian National Council of Women (Mrs. Herbert Brookes), the old saying that "the women who rock the cradle rule the world" was outmoded.

Today, said Mrs. Cardell-Oliver, "the women who rock the cradle use a mechanical device." She said that women were chased out of home life because there were not enough houses and, instead of being able to set up

a home, were being forced to live in rooms. They had to go to the local delicatessen for food because they had no proper cooking facilities, and they had to put the baby in an institution for the day so that it could have some place to play. "We have fallen down on the home life," added Mrs. Cardell-Oliver.

The Minister for Health: Due to the 40-hour week.

Mr. NEEDHAM: The statement I have quoted was made by a Minister of the Crown and was not denied, and she cannot deny it now. The Leader of the Opposition, in a speech which gave us much food for thought, and of which the dyed-in-the-wool conservative member for Moore took notice, made extensive reference to the question of the export of timber. The Honorary Minister is reported to have said that the Government will do everything possible to overcome the shortage of labour in the timber industry, and I hope it will keep that promise, but it would be of little benefit if the indiscriminate export of badly-needed timber were not stopped, because shortage of timber is one of the most potent factors in the persisting housing shortage, while the consequent delays in getting supplies add considerably to the cost of building. Goodness knows, even with a plentiful supply of material quickly on the job, house building today is already dear enough.

Mr. Bovell: It is not only lack of timber which is holding up the building of houses?

Mr. NEEDHAM: There is a constant delay in the building of houses caused by the shortage of timber. These delays add to the staggering cost of £200 per square foot for a brick and tile house, and just a little under that for the less enduring timber house, which would cost £2,500 for 12½ squares. The Government should be more alive to the necessity for providing materials than has been the case during the past three years; otherwise, not only will a longer time be occupied in the building of houses but they will be even dearer.

The question of the cost of houses deserves greater attention than it has received. The Government should also review the question of interest. The interest rate could be lowered considerably to help prospective home-builders, and particularly men on lower incomes. The average working man cannot afford to undertake the obligation of purchasing a house of his own at the prevailing cost, and I suggest to the Premier that this question of reduction in interest might well be taken up by him and representations made to the Commonwealth Government. I realise that the giving of further financial assistance to prospective home-builders is not within the competence of the State,

owing to its limited financial resources, but I do think it is quite within the competence of the Commonwealth Treasury to help in this regard.

The interest rate should be reduced to 2 per cent. That would mean a considerable saving on a £2,000 home, and it is not possible to secure a house of 12½ squares for under £2,000. Such a reduction would enable a worker to purchase his own home and would bring about a better feeling of security. I think it is the ambition of every man to become the owner of his home. Men do not like the idea of paying rent, which they regard as simply a waste of money. A man likes to be in a position to put down a reasonable deposit and, in 15 or 20 years' time, become the owner of his little house. Under prevailing prices, however, he cannot become the owner in his lifetime, nor can his children hope to do so for some considerable time.

I referred to the question of timber exports, and I repeat that this Government has not taken proper and effective measures to prevent the indiscriminate export of timber. This question was prominently before the people during the election period and, if my memory serves me aright, the reason or excuse given by the Government was that the prevention of exports would be a breach of the Commonwealth Constitution which provides for free trade between the States. I am not a lawyer but I venture to say that that interpretation was wrong. My interpretation of that part of the Constitution is that it deals with the law preventing the imposition of Customs duty on goods exchanged between the States. It cannot prevent a sovereign State, within its own ambit of jurisdiction, from stopping anyone exporting any commodity to the detriment of the State. If this Government had the courage, it could say to the timber exporters, "So far shall you go, and no further. This timber is required for the purposes of this State, for housing the people." But it would be too much to expect a Government committed to private enterprise to interfere in that way with big business and it would be foolish for any member on this side of the House to expect any action of that kind. But I say to the Government that unless strong measures are taken to prevent the indiscriminate export of timber, the housing position will not improve.

I have here a statement by the secretary of the Carpenters' Union, Mr. T. W. Henley, which I think is of interest, since it deals with the question of timber exports. The extract is from the "Daily News" of the 19th June, and reads as follows:—

While timber shortages held up many metropolitan and country housing projects, timber continued to be exported in considerable quantity

through Albany and Bunbury. Carpenters' Union secretary T. W. Henley said today.

Mr. Henley stressed the difficulty that the industry faced through lack of building materials. He said that on a recent visit to Albany, union organiser L. Westfall found that local builders were short of timber, yet large quantities were being exported.

In Kalgoorlie and Geraldton, Mr. Henley said he found that the material shortage was having a marked effect on the building industry. A large timber yard in the Kalgoorlie district could not get supplies of timber from its mill because of a shortage of railway trucks.

Asbestos, timber, bricks, tiles and other building materials were in such short supply on the Goldfields that many carpenters were leaving the industry and securing work on the mines.

Mr. Henley said he visited Geraldton last week and found builders and tradesmen hampered by lack of material.

Mr. Henley is an authority on this question, and his statement in connection with the drastic shortage of timber defies contradiction. Another failure on the part of the Government has been to prevent the export of timber, and it has failed to provide better, bigger and more modern brickyards. Many promises have been made during the past three years, but few of them have been fulfilled. Until we have more and more efficient brickyards we will always be short of bricks. I suggest to the Minister for Housing that he should get busy in this direction in order that we may have assured a plentiful supply of bricks. From my inquiries in the metropolitan area I understand that there is a general shortage of bricks, tiles, iron, cement and timber. Fittings are available if people are willing to pay higher prices for imported articles, but there, again, we have the skill and the materials, so why not produce those articles here instead of having to pay high prices for the imported goods?

In passing I would mention that the new member for West Perth, our genial Lord Mayor, when wooing the electors of West Perth, mentioned that he was a builder and told them that the sooner they sent a builder to Parliament, the better, the inference being that, with a builder as a member of this House, dwellings would commence to grow like mushrooms. We will have to wait to discover just what filip will be given to the building industry now that we have the hon. member among us. One of the greatest causes of unhappiness, hardship and suffering in this State today is shortage of housing. In the 1930's, during the depression years, we saw a great deal of misery.

During the recent war we saw people suffering anxiety as to the fate of their loved ones on the various battle fronts of the world, but during neither of those periods did we see such misery as exists today owing to the shortage of houses. We must remember that family life is the foundation of our society and we must be seized of our responsibility to ensure that our people are properly housed, if this country is to progress as it should. Yesterday I asked the Minister for Housing whether his attention had been drawn to a statement by the retiring Director of Industrial Development. I asked the Minister—

(1) Has his attention been called to the unit panel house mentioned by Mr. N. Fernie, retiring Director of Industrial Development and appearing in "The Sunday Times" of the 23rd July, 1950?

(2) If so, will he take immediate steps to test the statement that this class of house would step up, and reduce the cost of, house building?

The Minister replied as follows:—

(1) Yes.

(2) Investigations by the Commission into this type of construction in the Eastern States had already been commenced.

I am glad to hear of that inquiry and hope it will result in that kind of building being produced here because, according to the statement of Mr. Fernie, it is at least worthy of experiment. If his statement is correct this type of house would not only be cheap but also of good appearance. In "The Sunday Times" of the 23rd of July last Mr. Fernie is reported to have said—

Unit-Panel Houses Cheaper, Quicker:

Present method of house construction in this State will never catch up with the leeway caused through the war. If this lag is to be overtaken within a reasonable period revolutionary methods of house building will have to be adopted.

The article continues—

In unit-panel construction the cement in a 2-bedroom home is 1.13 tons, and in a 3-bedroom home 1.30 tons. Unit-panel construction aims at providing a worker's comfortable home with external appearance of brick and with modern amenities at £1 per square foot. This method particularly suits self-help home building groups.

Mr. Fernie said panels and foundation blocks could be mass produced at a central factory, or, alternatively, steel formes could be sent to country areas for manufacture of panels.

Equipment.

Capital cost of equipment is low, formes and a small concrete mixer being all that is required.

With unit construction standard joinery in multiples of 3ft. widths is possible.

The 2 x 1 nailing strips fixed to the concrete of the panel in pouring can be cut from sawmill waste. Panels can be constructed in "nofines" concrete or light aggregate concrete. Formes will be vibrated. Outside surface is of rich waterproof grout.

Contact surface between battens and concrete is tarred or separated by strips of malthoid, ensuring waterproofing.

There is a cavity in all external units. No lintels are necessary, and doors and windows extend to the bottom wall plate.

Designs:

Several designs for 2 and 3-bedroom homes are available. Internal linings can be fibre plaster, cement asbestos, caneite or marbalite—a new washable board soon to be made in Western Australia.

Designs eliminate wall cracks associated with concrete prefabs, concluded Mr. Fernie.

If the Housing Commission erected two unit-panel houses as a test, the actual cost and time could be checked.

Once the scheme got under way the cost of large numbers of houses should decline sharply. Mr. Fernie's scheme seems worthy of urgent official examination.

To my mind that type of house is certainly worthy of a trial. In order effectively to cope with the all-important problem of housing there must be an increase in the production of all types of building materials—bricks, iron, timber, cement, etc. The question of immigration is also bound up with the housing problem and in that immigration scheme we should include a greater number of building tradesmen. I believe the Government is already doing something in that connection and arranging for further building tradesmen to come from overseas. I read a statement in the press that 4,000 building tradesmen were to come from this source. That will be of considerable help in overcoming this problem but it will also intensify the housing position. However, unless we can add to the number of tradesmen our housing programme will not improve as quickly as we would like.

I have another suggestion, which I think worthy of consideration, to assist in overcoming our housing difficulties. I refer to the lowering of tariffs and customs duties for the encouragement of a greater import of building materials and prefabricated houses. The Premier should approach the Commonwealth Government with a view to abolishing customs duties on goods used for building purposes or for goods, in that connection, that cannot be produced in

Australia. If customs duties cannot be abolished then we should press for a large reduction. That should go a long way towards lowering the cost of home building. Alternatively, a subsidy could be granted by the Government to bring the price of the imported article to the level of the local product. I have always been a great stickler for the encouragement of Australian industries.

I was a Federal member for many years and when the question of customs duties came under discussion I always voted for the highest possible protective duty for Australian industries. I still have those ideas but I realise that in times like these, when we are still recovering from the effects of World War 2, I would not be opposed to, but would welcome, a reduction in duties on various materials which I know can be produced in Australia, and will be produced in Australia, when we get back on to our economic feet again. Other factors which should be taken into consideration are mass production methods and prefabricated houses to shorten the time in the building of homes.

Financial assistance should also be granted to a worker who wishes to buy his own home. Workers now can be assisted under the workers' homes legislation but in my opinion the assistance could be improved. It is not possible for any man on the lower income group to take upon himself the responsibility of purchasing or building a house. Interest-free loans could be granted by the Commonwealth Bank or the interest rate lowered to 2 per cent. That is sufficient interest to cover administrative costs and, if necessary, the home builder could make a nominal deposit.

I realise that even if those concessions were granted it would not immediately solve the housing problem but it would go a long way towards achieving something in that direction. I had intended to refer to several other matters such as transport, education and other items, but I understand it is the desire of the Premier to adjourn prior to tea. Therefore, I will defer consideration of those matters until a later date.

MR. MANNING (Harvey) [5.37]: Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate you upon your re-election to your present position. No doubt the work that you have performed in the past three years in this House was the reason for your re-election. My electorate is a new one arising out of the redistribution, and I wish to thank the electors of Harvey for showing their confidence in me by electing me to this Parliament as their representative for the next three years.

I propose to deal mainly with matters affecting my own electorate. The main theme which I intend to stress very firmly

is—methods to increase primary production. In particular I refer to milk, meat, potatoes and timber. I am anxious that the Government should do everything possible to increase production of these commodities and I intend to make a few practical suggestions. The first point is improved drainage. There are many drains in my electorate but these can be improved and deepened. If this work is performed on the main drains it will speed up the carry-off of storm water.

The next point is irrigation. I believe there is a need to speed up the completion of the existing schemes upon which the department is now working. If this is done it will assist greatly in bringing more country under production. There is a serious shortage of superphosphate at present and I consider this to be the greatest restricting factor for increased production. The position is most serious, and until it is improved it will be impossible to obtain the desired increase in production. The Government is to be commended for its decision to inquire into the superphosphate position. As soon as the inquiry has been completed we will have grounds for going ahead and looking for further improvements.

The provision of good roads is another essential in primary production. The Government can assist in this direction by permitting local authorities to use their grant money as they think best. In the past there have been restrictions and I think the time has now arrived when the local authorities should be given the power to spend the money as they think best, provided it is used for roadmaking and roadmaking equipment. The opening up of new land would also assist, and I am very anxious to see the old coast road linked up with Australind and that road put in trafficable order.

If the local authorities could do that work I think the Government could then assist by taking over the road and maintaining it. Also, there should be a complete survey of the gully land which embraces the lands east of the railway line in the forestry area. If that survey were made we would then know exactly what lies there. At present that land is unused. Much of the gully land is not growing jarrah but it is in the forestry area and is not available for selection. Fencing supplies constitute another factor against increased production and the boosting of the production of these materials is urgently needed.

I turn now to the research station at Wokalup. The Government is to be highly commended on its decision to establish such a station at that centre. I hope its activities will be wide and varied so as to be of real service to the primary producer. A qualified soil analyst stationed at Wokalup, and available to analyse soil and to give advice to farmers,

would be of great assistance. That would overcome the years of trial and error through which farmers have to pass to ascertain what types of seed, superphosphate and pastures are the most suitable for certain soils. A veterinary surgeon placed at the station to render service to the farmers would, especially, be of great value to the dairy industry. Pastoral experimental work should be carried out and organised through this research station, which could well be the headquarters of the Agricultural Department's experimental work. These are the ways and means by which we can increase our production of primary products.

The rural training centre at Harvey for ex-servicemen has been showing excellent results and the soldier settlers passing through it have stated that the six weeks course has proved of immense value to them. When all these men have completed their courses I suggest that the Government should continue the centre as a college to give six-week courses to junior farmers and other youths interested in farming.

I would like to see a mineral survey made in the Lake Clifton and Lake Preston areas. I have heard many rumours and statements about the mineral wealth there, and if a full survey was made of those two lakes it would reveal exactly what is there. If there exists mineral wealth in that area we should know of it and it should be exploited.

The Government should give consideration to subsidising bushfire insurance schemes. The heavy financial loss experienced by farmers last summer indicates that a scheme of this nature is necessary. I will not enter more fully into that matter now because I will have another opportunity later of speaking to it when the Bush Fires Act is discussed.

I must commend the Government also on its decision to build a junior high school at Harvey. Unfortunately, the work on this building has not yet commenced but I hope it will not be long before it is put in hand. In the meantime, the urgency for school accommodation there is just as acute as it was when the establishment was first requested. I want to stress the need for co-operation between Government departments. The departments which perform work in the country, such as the Forests Departments, the Department of Agriculture and the Lands Department, would benefit if there were closer co-operation between them. For instance, if such co-operation existed, the Forests Department would not plant pines on country suitable for dairying and it could also be induced to release land in areas controlled by it which had no marketable timber, but which would be suitable for cultivation.

As to amenities for mill towns, the first approach to this problem should be through the building of good roads to the mills. It is essential for us to have timber but the people will not stay in the mill areas if they are stuck away in the bush and have to traverse long and rough roads to reach their homes. The roads from all the mills these days are carrying heavy loads of timber and, if they were put into good order, the mill people travelling to town to do their shopping and to attend their entertainments, etc., would feel much happier whilst living in the bush.

The Government should give some consideration to the provision of amenities, such as lighting, in bush towns. Lighting would be one of the most important amenities for townships such as surround Mornington Mill and Hoffman Mill which are well out in the bush and where the people are doing an excellent job. The Government should show some interest in those people and thus give them encouragement to carry on. I have not spoken at great length and I hope that all my speeches will be short and sweet. I know that we will have an opportunity of speaking on these same subjects at a later date so I will leave any further remarks until then.

On motion by Mr. Griffith, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.49 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 8th August, 1950.

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