

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 7th August, 1945.

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

QUESTIONS.

WHEAT.

As to Transport by Road.

Mr. SEWARD asked the Minister for Agriculture:

1, From what centres is wheat being transported by road (a) to Fremantle or other port; (b) to flour mills, and to which ones?

2, Is this wheat stored in bulk in wheat bins situated in railway reserves and alongside railway lines?

3, If so, why is the wheat being transported by road and not by rail?

4, Has this wheat to be bagged before it is loaded into motor trucks, whereas the railways could handle it in bulk?

5, What is the added cost over and above railway charges of transporting this wheat by road (a) to the ports; (b) to the flour mills?

6, Who pays any additional cost to handle and transport this wheat by road?

7, What amount of wheat is it proposed to transport by road?

8, Can he state what amount of petrol per ton of wheat per mile will be used in these operations, or alternatively, the amount of petrol being used per week in the work?

9, Are Military trucks and personnel being used, and if so, what charges are made for such services?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) (a) From York and Northam Districts to Fremantle; (b) To Metropolitan mills from Quairading and Mt Kokeby;

Kellerberrin mill from Bungulla and Pantapin; Northam mill from Meckering, Konnon-gorring and Yarramongy; York mill from Dulbeling, Burges' Siding; Narrogin mill from Wickepin; Wagin mill from Dumble-yung.

2, Yes.

3, Emergency transport is necessary to fulfil the increased shipping programme to Victoria and New South Wales because of drought conditions.

4, Only one-seventh is being bagged; the remainder is carted in bulk.

5, Accurate figures not available at present. The following are approximations: (a) to port and metropolitan mills, 18s. to 28s. per ton (approximately); (b) to country mills, 9s. per ton (approximately).

6, The Commonwealth Government.

7, Up to 5,000 tons per week.

8, Not available as petrol is being provided by the Commonwealth Government in addition to State allocation.

9, Yes. Charges are a Commonwealth matter and not available.

TOTALISATOR DUTY ACT.

As to Undistributed Fractions.

Mr. STYANTS asked the Premier:

1, What amount of money was received by the W.A. Turf Club during the two years immediately prior to the 30th June, 1945, from "undistributed fractions" withheld from winning totalisator investors?

2, What amount of money was received by the W.A. Trotting Association during the two years immediately preceding the cessation of trotting meetings, about February last, from "undistributed fractions" withheld from winning totalisator investors?

3, In view of the unprecedented prosperity being enjoyed by these two sporting bodies, will the Government consider an alteration to the Totalisator Duty Act, 1905, to provide that payment should be made to the nearest 3d. similar to that operating in New South Wales?

The PREMIER replied: 1 and 2—

	Racing. £	Trotting. £
1943-1944 ..	15,117	18,677
1944-1945 ..	28,007	13,500
	<u>£43,124</u>	<u>£32,177</u>

In addition to the above figures approximately £9,000 per annum for fractions is retained by Goldfields races and trots.

3, The matter is receiving consideration.

"HANSARD."

As to Bound Copies for 1944.

Mr. SEWARD asked the Premier:

1, Is he aware that members' copies of last session's "Hansard" have not been available to them since the close of that session?

2, When are the bound copies to be delivered to members, and will he expedite such delivery?

The PREMIER replied:

1, Yes.

2, Delivery will be effected by the 21st August. The paper position has improved sufficiently to revert to the pre-war practice of setting aside 80 additional copies from week to week to provide members with bound volumes. It will no longer be necessary for members to return their weekly issues for binding.

COUNTRY VISITORS TO PERTH.

As to Hotel Accommodation.

Mr. SEWARD asked the Premier:

1, In view of the considerable reduction in the numbers of Service personnel in Perth, and bearing in mind the very great difficulty that civilians have in securing accommodation when compelled to come to Perth, often in order to obtain medical advice, will he take up with the respective commands the matter of releasing those hotels situated within the metropolitan area that are reserved wholly or in part for use by Service personnel.

2, If not, why not?

The PREMIER replied:

An approach has already been made to the Prime Minister and the reply received was forwarded to the hon. member. A copy, together with a copy of a report from the Licensing Court, will be laid upon the Table of the House. A further effort will be made to improve the position.

The papers, accordingly, were laid on the Table of the House.

CHARCOAL-IRON INDUSTRY.

As to Production and Cost of Plant.

Mr. CROSS asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

1, Has the charcoal-iron plant at Wundowie commenced the production of pig-iron?

2, If not, when will production commence?

3, What amount has been expended to date on plant and preparations?

The MINISTER replied:

1, No.

2, This will depend upon the availability of sufficient labour, equipment and materials. As their availability is uncertain under war-time conditions, production may commence in from 12 to 18 months' time. The Commonwealth Government is again to be asked to give the project a reasonably high priority.

3, £61,000 to the end of July, 1945.

PIG INDUSTRY COMPENSATION FUND.

As to Receipts and Payments.

Mr. SEWARD asked the Minister for Agriculture:

1, What amounts have been paid into the Pig Industry Compensation Fund in each year since its inception?

2, What amounts have been paid out in compensation each year (a) for pigs that died from or were destroyed because of swine fever before the commencement of the Pig Industry Compensation Act, 1942; and (b) for pigs that died or were destroyed since the commencement of the Act?

3, What was the balance of the fund at the 30th July, 1945?

The MINISTER replied:

1, 1942-43, £3,496 10s. 8d.; 1943-44, £7,864 2s. 4d.; 1944-45, £10,139 17s.

2, (a) The Pig Industry Compensation Act, 1942 was made retrospective to 27th October, 1942. Compensation paid for losses through swine fever—1942-43, £27,985 10s. 1d.; 1943-44, £944 12s. 5d.; (b) Compensation in connection with other diseases—1942-43, £80 19s. 9d.; 1943-44, £1,142 16s. 6d.; 1944-45, £2,401 3s. 10d.

3, £1,933 15s. 1d.

MURCHISON ELECTORATE.

Resignation of Member on Appointment as Minister.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received the following letter:—

I have the honour to inform you that at a meeting of the Executive Council today Mr. W. M. Marshall, member in the Legislative

Assembly for the Murchison electoral district, accepted and was sworn into one of the eight principal offices of profit under the Crown, namely, Minister for Mines, Railways and Transport. (Sgd.) F. J. S. Wise, Premier.

Seat Declared Vacant.

THE PREMIER (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne) [4.37]: I move—

That as the member for Murchison has accepted an office of profit, the seat for the electoral district of Murchison be declared vacant.

Question put and passed; the motion agreed to.

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES.

Election of Mr. A. J. Rodoreda.

MR. SPEAKER: I announce that the position of Chairman of Committees and Deputy Speaker has now become vacant.

THE PREMIER (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne) [4.38]: I move—

That the member for Roebourne (Mr. A. J. Rodoreda) be appointed Chairman of Committees.

Question put.

MR. SPEAKER: There being no further nominations I declare the member for Roebourne duly elected as Chairman of Committees.

Question thus passed.

MR. RODOREDA (Roebourne) [4.38]: I desire, briefly, to thank the members of this Assembly for the confidence they have reposed in me in appointing me to this very responsible position. I trust I shall be able to carry out the duties involved with the utmost impartiality, and will be able to do so with credit to myself and to the members of this House. I realise that a very high standard has been set by my immediate predecessors in this position and I hope that, in my turn, I shall be able to live up to that standard. I do not think it could be bettered.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fifth Day.

Debate resumed from the 2nd August.

MR. W. HEGNEY (Pilbara—continued) [4.39]: While on the question of full employment, I desire to say that it has be-

come increasingly noticeable that those who are opposed to any change in the social or economic system use the argument that full employment can only be brought about if there is regimentation. But I believe the argument submitted is very weak in the light of the facts. We have merely to look back to the pre-war period to appreciate that it can very definitely be said that if there is to be a return, without any qualification whatsoever, to the economic conditions that obtained prior to the war, there will have to be regimentation. I repeat that from 1930 to 1939 there were thousands of men who were unfortunately placed. As a matter of fact, at one stage there were almost 750,000 able-bodied men who were prepared and willing to work, but were denied the right to secure full-time employment. They were subject to relief schemes instituted by the several State Governments, and they were sent to various parts of the Commonwealth to undertake work. If they refused to accept part-time employment they were denied what was then termed "sustenance." That constituted a measure of regimentation, and undoubtedly the Governments were to a large extent unable to avoid it. We contend there must be full employment available after the war, and if the Governments face up to the situation it could be done.

I believe that in the immediate post-war years private enterprise will play no mean part in the rehabilitation of ex-service men and women, as well as of those who are at present engaged in wartime industries. I believe also that the Commonwealth and State Governments must play a major part in the work, inasmuch as they will require to institute public works programmes so as to absorb large numbers of semi-skilled and unskilled men. If we are to rely entirely on private enterprise, the position will be extremely difficult. I base my argument on historical records when I say that after all wars there has been a period of boom and prosperity, followed by a depression and, later on, war. If we are to revert to pre-war conditions we shall undoubtedly have the boom followed by a period of depression, if not another war. The question of employment is closely related to the action of the Commonwealth Government with regard to the training of ex-servicemen who were denied the opportunity to learn a skilled trade prior to enlistment.

In the post-war reconstruction scheme planned by the Commonwealth Government, particular provision has been made for the men who enlisted, or were called up, prior to their reaching 21 years of age, for those whose capacity has been impaired by war injuries and will be precluded from resuming their pre-war occupations, and for those who were self-employed before the war and will be unable to follow their vocations on their return to civilian life. The principal feature of the scheme inaugurated by the Commonwealth is that there will be a period of training in technical institutions for a minimum period of three months and on apprentices or trainees reaching a 40 per cent. efficiency they will be placed in employment. The building industry is the calling mostly involved at the present time, although training will be provided in a multiplicity of callings as the demand arises. After the employee has been placed with an employer or if it is shown that the ex-service man possesses prior vocational skill, the period of modified apprenticeship will be still further reduced.

It is evident that those who have been advising the Commonwealth Government have benefited from the mistakes that occurred in connection with training schemes after the 1914-18 war. A perusal of the appropriate statistics shows that of the 13,673 men who engaged in the industrial training scheme some 4,249 men withdrew before completion of the course. That is a fair percentage of wastage, and efforts have been made on this occasion to reduce such withdrawals to a minimum. As a matter of fact, before a man can participate in the scheme now suggested he must be considered eligible and suitable for employment in the occupation that he has indicated his desire to follow. As far as Western Australia is concerned and, in fact, every other State of the Commonwealth as well, the type of training given the men in the past was such that they were turned out as semi-qualified tradesmen, and while the boom lasted they could stand side by side with the expert tradesmen. When normality was reached, however, they were unable to compete against those who had served a full-time apprenticeship.

In more than one trade practically all the men who were trained after the last war had to leave the trades concerned. The attitude in this State now is such that men

who are trained will be assured that, on the completion of their training, they will be fully qualified tradesmen. There is this difficulty, too, that inasmuch as the reconstruction authorities have determined that when the absorptive capacity of an industry has been reached no further men will be trained for that industry. Regard must be had to the fact that when the war is over, a fair period of time will elapse before the demobilisation of the last men is effected. In those circumstances it will be difficult to ascertain just how many men may desire to participate in the scheme and at just what point the absorptive capacity of a given trade will be reached. Every effort will probably be made thoroughly to train as large a number of men as industry generally will absorb. There is no doubt that the transition from war to peace will be a very anxious period for the Commonwealth and State Governments. Approximately 1,000,000 people will be involved in the switch over. Furthermore, there will be thousands of people now engaged in wartime industries who will have to be absorbed in peacetime occupations.

Numbers of men and women returning from wartime activities will take the places of those who have held positions in a temporary capacity, and these latter will also have to be provided for. Many people will follow their ordinary occupations with their former employers but some firms now engaged in war activities will in a short time transfer their organisations to the fulfilment of civilian requirements. It will be a big job successfully to absorb close on 1,000,000 people in a short period after the expiration of the war, and, much as I dislike saying it, I believe that the Commonwealth Government will have to continue the exercise of certain controls for at least a period after the cessation of hostilities.

There will require to be control over the investment and flow of capital to ensure that only essential undertakings will enjoy what might be termed a first priority. There will also be competition for borrowing, which must be controlled; and there must be a high priority for essential needs during the reconstruction period. Commonwealth wartime powers will vanish within a short time after the cessation of hostilities. We all realise, no matter what our political beliefs may be, that there must be a measure of price control if we are

to have full employment. If that full employment is to continue, there must be stability in the way of a general level of prices. I believe that the Commonwealth, in co-operation with the States, will be able to exercise that temporary control in such a way as to avoid the debacle that occurred after the last war. Within 2½ years of that war there were no fewer than 125,000 people out of employment in Australia. This is the problem as I see it:

Vast numbers of trained men and men who have acquired vocational skill in the Forces will be seeking work on their release. Those who have served in the Forces will, of course, desire to return to their pre-war occupations. Very large bodies of men and women will also have to be absorbed in industry in peacetime, so it will need the wisest statesmanship on the part of both the Commonwealth and the States to ensure that, at that critical period, employment will be found for all these people, it may be by putting in hand essential public works, so that the soldiers who will be returning will not be faced with a period of unemployment. I believe that with the States and the Commonwealth working together, and with the experience that has been gained during the past six years, there will be no need for unemployment in Australia. We can advance as a logical argument that full employment was found for everyone during the war and that consequently Australia should not be confronted with an unemployment problem when the war is over, as it was during the 10 years previous to the outbreak of this present conflict.

MR. READ (Victoria Park) [4.53]: Mr. Speaker, it is with some diffidence that I stand before you this afternoon, in an unusual environment, to make my first speech as a new member. The assistance and instruction which have been given to me by some of the members, however, have somewhat allayed my nervousness and I thank those members for their kindly aid. I deeply regret the circumstance which necessitated the recent Victoria Park by-election, the death of my great friend, Captain Howard Stirling Raphael. He sat alongside me for upwards of 20 years in the Perth City Council; and during that period his work for the ratepayers and for the district was of exceptional value. During that period he was re-

sponsible for many of the parks, gardens and children's playgrounds which we now have in our ward for all time. These will for ever stand as a monument to his labours for our district. As member for the district, he was at all times most zealous in the welfare of the families and the individuals. Particularly valuable was the grand work he performed during the dreadful years of the financial depression and unemployment. He was indefatigable in helping the poor of the district, who will ever cherish his memory in their hearts.

May I be permitted to congratulate our new Premier on his elevation to the high office he now holds. He is facing an arduous and difficult task, because the problems of the post-war period, rehabilitation and reconstruction, will certainly not be less difficult than the problems dealt with during the war period. He brings to his office ability and experience which will enable him to carry out his duties with honour to himself and benefit to the welfare of Western Australia. I wish him a long and prosperous tenure of office. On behalf of every section of the Victoria Park electors, I desire to thank the ex-Premier for the many kindnesses he has shown us in the improvement of our district. We have sent many deputations to him and these were always kindly received. The answer was generally no, but it was expressed in a very pleasing manner. We wish him a speedy return to health and hope he will live many years to continue his useful service to the part of the State which he represents. Recurring to the passing of the late Capt. Raphael, I wish to offer my sympathy to the members of his party on the loss of a vigorous, sincere, and loyal supporter.

The most important subject with which we have to deal, and which has already been touched upon in this Chamber, is housing. Thousands of houses are required. The conditions under which people are living at present are distressing, and we are not getting on with the job as rapidly as we should. The Perth City Council is making a survey of its territory in order to ascertain the number of sub-standard houses and the extent of the distress caused by them. I know fairly well what is lacking in that direction in my own electorate. During the election campaign I was in touch with the people there; and in many instances I found the conditions deplorable. Small houses

in Victoria Park were accommodating as many as three families; a man, woman and child were eating and sleeping in one room, in which the cooking was done also. I found that people were housed in shops, most of which were small. In the main thoroughfare and in other places, shops that are not being used for business have been occupied by people for housing purposes. These shops have their windows painted over. Sometimes there is just a shop and sometimes a shop with one small room attached. There are no fire-places, no baths, and no coppers or troughs.

Mr. Cross: And at least one has no lavatory.

Mr. READ: Very likely! Many of them have no water laid on, except in the yard or in the yard next door. In some instances there are two or three shops occupied by families and having only one yard between them for the children to play in. The conditions are such that I fear what would happen if an epidemic of sickness should occur. Figures have been quoted to us concerning housing. There have been reams in the newspapers about the subject, and we have heard over the air of the shortage of houses. Master builders have written letters and had them answered. In spite of it all, very few houses are being erected. One member complained about the price of houses. I do not regard that as seriously as I regard the conditions under which some of the people are living in these premises. Last week in the Legislative Council, one hon. member said that the people on the land found the housing position just as acute as did the people in the towns. He said that people were expected to live in shacks and in those shacks to bring up their families.

Conditions in the country and in our towns regarding the amenities attached to the houses and the inadequacy of the accommodation are similar, but there is this difference: In the country, the people are able to move about and the children are able to play in an environment which those in the town do not enjoy. They are able to play in God's brown clean earth; but in Victoria Park the children are playing in a few square yards of dirty black sand impregnated with the sweepings and the household rubbish which have come from possibly 20 or 30 years of housekeeping, and which

contain millions of harmful bacteria. Those conditions should be changed. As an indication of the real need in regard to houses, let me give a few figures. The Workers' Homes Board has 2,300 applications from people requiring houses. It receives 800 applications per quarter, but the number which the Federal authorities permit it to grant is only 120 per quarter. That figure does not include people who would apply but have no priority. I refer to people who are about to marry and married people with no children. When they go to the Workers' Homes Board, they are advised not to apply. The trouble is that we have no building material in any quantity in Western Australia.

On four occasions I have approached the Workers' Homes Board on behalf of people needing homes, with a request for permission for them to build. They were people who had the labour and who were prepared to erect their own homes. Two of them had clubbed together with carpenters working at shipbuilding. They ceased work on Friday and consequently had Saturdays and Sundays on which to build the houses which would have been of weatherboard and asbestos. They could soon have completed the job, but the trouble was that there was no material. One individual whom I advised not to apply did so and last week he brought me this letter which he had received, and which emphasises the helplessness of the Workers' Homes Board to give any assistance to anybody until a reserve of building materials is built up. The letter states—

Re your application for permission to erect a new dwelling in Victoria Park. With reference to this application for a permit, as above, I regret to inform you that the application will have to be deferred. The present acute shortage of manpower and materials prevents the application being approved at the present time. You are advised to renew your application in six months' time, when it is hoped the position will be improved.

A State Advisory Committee on post-war housing was appointed by the State Government. Mr. D. L. Davidson was the chairman, and the members of the committee were well-known experts in building and the production of materials. They were drawn from Government departments and from outside sources for their knowledge of the subject. They had before them 37 heads of departments and other experts

from whom they took evidence. That evidence and the committee's report were presented to the Minister. The first of the committee's recommendations was that 4,000 houses per year were needed in the metropolitan area for a period of five years. The committee suggested that existing brickyards should be kept going by the release of manpower; that a large reserve of building materials should be stored up immediately; that 50,000,000 bricks should be produced to be ready for use at the cessation of hostilities; and that large stocks of seasoned Western Australian woods, cement, and asbestos sheeting should be set aside in a pool from which they could be drawn when we are ready to build.

There are nine brickyards in the metropolitan area capable of supplying our needs in this direction, including the State Brickworks and the Canning Cement Brick Works. At present, only three of them are working, and the time has come when the other brickyards should be opened up. They will require some improvements with regard to amenities, such as showers, retiring rooms, water, and eating facilities that do not exist at present. That is one of the first steps that should be taken by the department towards solving the housing problems. The matter has a further significance. Unless we build up a big reserve of material as quickly as possible, we shall be faced with unemployment. The Premier has told us that probably 2,000 artisans will be released from the Army for the building of houses. Amongst those there will no doubt be some who will be put into production; but they will not be sufficient, and we will have the spectacle of carpenters, bricklayers, plumbers, and their numerous assistants and unskilled attendants standing down half the time and waiting for supplies to come forward. The remedy for that is to transpose men immediately from some less important works and send them to our mills in the country, and to the brickyards and factories, so that they may produce huge reserves of building material against the time when they will be needed. The Commonwealth Government has announced that it will provide money for private producers of building materials until such time as they can be utilised, so that there will be no difficulty regarding finance.

The member for Perth has made reference to migration. That is something we must have. I do not want to be misunderstood. I am in favour of migration, as I was years ago, but I do not think the time has arrived when we are ready to receive migrants. Our housing conditions are such that for some time new arrivals would only increase our difficulties. Until we have thousands more new homes, no further population from outside can be accommodated. We are told that 70,000 persons per annum will probably be brought to this country. It is also stated that 17,000 children might be expected, but at the present time what could Western Australia do with them? We have all too few kindergartens. Our health centres are not sufficient, our schools are over-crowded and, before we could accommodate many more children, the schools would require to have additions, and we would have to build new schools. The position at present is such that we have very little accommodation, our teachers have to take 50 or 60 children in classes where there should only be 30 children. This is not at all fair to the children concerned. Our own children who are coming on will find accommodation very inadequate, without our importing further children before we are ready for them.

One of the difficulties that will confront people who come here before we are ready for them will be our limited hospital accommodation. At present, the hospitals are working to full capacity and, in fact, cases which should be treated in hospital are at present being refused admission, while many patients—for some time after treatment—are not able to receive the full measure of attention that they should receive at the hands of the medical people. That is all due to the shortage of hospital accommodation.

Preference has been made to the fact that local committees have been relieved of the payment of the infant health nurses' salaries. That is so. The Department of Public Health has taken over the control of infant health nurses. Their salaries are being paid through the Department of Public Health, but are contributed to by the local governing bodies, the Lotteries Commission and, principally, by the Government. We who have been on the committee of management for the infant health centres have ceased to have any function in

the management of the different centres. The nurses have been absorbed, not only as to payment of their salaries, but as to their employment, in the same manner as are the visiting health nurses. These sisters belong to the same unions, and should therefore be working under the same conditions. The manner in which these nurses were taken over by the department left something to be desired, so they wrote, asking what their position was. They wrote to Dr. Stang, and the reply was—

With reference to your letter of the 1st inst., addressed to Dr. Stang, I have to say that when Cabinet decided to find additional funds with a view to assisting the infant health movement and widening its scope, it was on the definite condition that no question of superannuation should arise.

How could that be agreed to by any body of employees? The conditions of employment are laid down by Act of Parliament or by Arbitration Court awards. The reply goes on to say that the department, in this new arrangement, is merely the agent for paying the salaries, and that the Government, as such, is not the employer of the infant health nurses. But the Government is the employer of the infant health nurses. The nurses look to the department for direction, and for every condition under which they work. I hope, therefore, that the Minister for Health, when the new Commissioner takes charge, will inquire into this matter and inform the House whether these nurses are entitled to the conditions of superannuation, sick pay, long service leave and holiday pay, especially as a Labour Government is in power.

In the matter of public health, action should be taken to safeguard our people from exploitation by patent medicine companies. Years ago there were a few hundred patent medicines on the market, but now there are thousands. Exorbitant prices are being charged to the public, while the virtues of the medicines are, in many instances, very doubtful. There should be an Act of Parliament governing the qualities and prices of these preparations. We see advertisements in the papers and we hear over the air many statements which are questionable, with regard to the virtues of these preparations. In the papers just now there is an advertisement depicting a man holding up a tablet, and in the same picture is portrayed a man tossing about, sleepless. The advertisement says

that if you take these tablets they will produce sleep. The compound is composed of phosphates and iron. Iron is a compound which is very necessary to our bodies, and we can all do with a little phosphates. If one took a course of this preparation for about three months, it would not do one any harm, and would possibly do one a little good, but I do not think it would produce sleep.

Then there is the price of these preparations! Iron is available in great quantities and is cheap enough—it will be cheaper still when Yampi Sound has been opened up—and we sell phosphates to the farmers by the ton. There is no control over the prices of these patent medicines. We read that we can get, out of a bottle, immunity against any disease, and the price of this nostrum is £1 1s. per bottle, it being recommended that one should take three or four bottles. A person might take this medicine and yet find, later on, that he had contracted the very disease against which it was supposed to have immunised him. He would then have lost his money. There is no control over the people who are making hundreds of thousands of pounds out of exploitation of this kind. It seems to be very unfair that there is no control over such people, because in our own town a pharmacist, who came under the eye of the Price Fixing Commissioner, was fined £10 for charging 3d. extra on a bottle of camphorated oil, a preparation the medical virtues of which are defined and laid down for our protection by the British pharmacopoeia in a book compiled by the British Medical Association. The evil of this, to my mind, is that if a poor sick person, who cannot afford to go to a doctor for treatment, takes this medicine without result, not only is his health affected but he has paid away money which he can ill spare and possibly through paying away that money he has to go without food or other necessities—if he is on the basic wage. Something should be done to put an end to this evil.

There is another matter—olive oil! We hear over the air, and we read in the Press, of the virtues of olive oil. We are told that olive oil is contained in many toilet and other articles, but I do not think there is any olive oil in them. If there is, it should be controlled by some authority, and should be given to the hospitals for the treatment of sick people, and particularly for

the treatment of children. We know that the supply of olive oil is so short that it should be controlled in the interests of public health. I think the proof that there is no olive oil in these preparations lies in the fact that at the present time it costs 40s. per gallon in Australia, and one could not expect many of these preparations to contain olive oil while it is at that price. I see by the papers that some of the broadcasting announcers have been suspended, not for mis-statements about patent medicines or the price of such preparations, but for telling us funny stories, so our morals are more protected than are our bodies or our pockets.

The health of the people at the present time is in the hands of the Commonwealth Government. The Pharmaceutical Benefits Act will come into operation, we are told, at the beginning of next year. It would have been in operation many months ago, but for the opposition of the British Medical Association. I hope the time will come when the British Medical Association, through its members, will co-operate with the Government in supplying free medical advice, free medicine and free hospitalisation. This is something we should have. A free health service is absolutely necessary. Just fancy a man afflicted with pain not being able to get rid of it unless he has money! This is not a socialistic measure; it is a common necessity of a civilised Christian people.

Now I come to the vexed question of the Causeway. We are all proud of our capital city, but we must continue with the improvements so necessary to advancement. Our great blemish is the Causeway, which is the river approach to the city. It is the means by which two-thirds of our rural population enter and leave the city. This bridge is the only one in a distance of 12 miles either to Fremantle or Midland Junction. There is no ferry to carry motorcars or other traffic across the river; there are no other means apart from this narrow causeway by which traffic may move from a city with a population of about 240,000. Members have visited the capitals of other States, and I ask them whether they can visualise such a causeway over a river leading to any other capital city in Australia. No; it is fit only to give approach to a country town.

The narrowness of the Causeway has led to the occurrence of many accidents. I made

inquiries at the Police Department in order to try to calculate the number of accidents that had occurred on the Causeway, but I found that the department does not analyse the figures in a manner to show the number. Only last week a young man was killed while crossing the Causeway. It was just another death. That man left a wife and one child. I do not know, but possibly the Child Welfare Department is paying for the upkeep of the children hereof of parents killed in accidents on the Causeway and probably paying enough to meet the interest and sinking fund on a new bridge. It might astound members to learn that the average daily number of vehicles that crossed the Causeway in 1938-39 was 15,874 while the number that crossed the Sydney Harbour Bridge in 1937-38 was 18,745—only 3,000 more. To carry the comparison further, let me inform members that the width of the Causeway is 38 feet and the width of the Sydney Harbour Bridge is 77 feet. I consider that one of our first post-war works after the No. 1 priorities have been attended to should be the building of a new causeway that would be safe and would be a matter of pride to the citizens of Perth.

The beautification of the foreshore on the south side of the river should be continued upstream as on the downstream portion. The territory of the City Council extends from Rivervale to the Causeway, and the dredging by the Government should be continued so that the subsequent filling, levelling and beautification work might be carried out by the Perth City Council.

The whole of Victoria Park must be sewered. This district has many sewered premises, but it has 1,000 unsewered houses which the deep drains pass and which are capable of being connected up at once. The owners of these houses should be induced to link up with the system as soon as labour and material are available. We in Victoria Park are in an unfortunate position. Orders have been issued for the removal of the sanitary depot, but the position regarding that depot is very little if any worse than it has been for the last 10 years, except for the building of a public school nearby. There are no more houses near the depot than there were before. Certainly the depot must be removed, but it seems a waste of money, labour and material, which could be utilised for some other purpose, to move it now. The carrying out of the work will

cost the Perth City Council ratepayers over £10,000, which is equal to almost a 2d. rate, apart altogether from the uselessness of this expenditure when the Government in turn sewers the whole of the district.

Thanks are due to the Minister for Works for his interest in having kept going, temporarily, at any rate, the Welshpool factory, certain sections of which were to have been closed and the staff discharged. The men working there reside in the Canning and Victoria Park electorates, and we are hoping that some arrangements will be made whereby those works may be permanently kept in operation. They could be utilised for manufacturing hardware, such as bolts, spare parts and replacements for agricultural machinery, portions of houses that will have to be built, and parts for the railways that will have to be reconstructed. I have been informed by engineers that the machinery already installed could be easily, inexpensively and quickly converted for the purpose of employing those men on work to supply civilian requirements. There are numerous Commonwealth agencies in the State and the Government must exert itself to compel the Commonwealth officials to co-ordinate their work with the policy of Parliament in the interests of Western Australia.

MR. McLARTY (Murray-Wellington) [5.41]: I, too, should like to express my gratitude to the ex-Premier for the many courtesies I received from him during the time he held that office. He was always willing to give one a fair hearing and I consider he was just in the decisions he made. I hope that he will be fully restored to health and that, as a result of laying down the burdens of office, his health will improve rapidly. I congratulate the member for Gascoyne on his accession to the office of Premier. I have watched his rise in politics with considerable interest, and I have no doubt that he will live up to the expectations of his party. I should also like to congratulate the Deputy Premier. He entered this House some time after I did. I have not had the opportunity of seeing him in Opposition, but I believe that if we could arrange for him to have a term in Opposition, he would be all the better for it. I compliment the member for Murchison on his elevation to Ministerial rank. I have good reason to remem-

ber him when he was sitting on the Opposition side of the House. He certainly was a critic and a very active critic.

The Minister for Lands: There is no need for him to be in Opposition today.

Mr. McLARTY: He was more active when he was in Opposition.

The Minister for Lands: We all are.

Mr. McLARTY: But I cannot say whether he was more effective. As he was such a candid critic, I take it he will not object to criticism from us, and I hope he will be able to stand up to it. He has two departments to administer—railways and transport—against which criticism will assuredly be levelled. Undoubtedly there is room for improvement in the matter of transport. However, I believe that the new Minister will make a very close study of railway problems. It is in his nature to make a close study of problems in which he is interested, and there is need for close investigation of the workings of our railway and transport systems generally. I have no doubt he will devote considerable energy and study to the problems confronting him and I wish him luck.

The member for Victoria Park has made a very practical speech this evening. He has dealt with subjects in which he is well versed, and I feel sure that his future speeches will be listened to with respect by all sections of the House. I was most interested on Saturday to see the allotment of the portfolios in the new Ministry. I regret some of the changes, while some, I think, will be for the good of the country. I was sorry to see that the Premier had to lay down the offices of Lands and Agriculture, but I realise that it would not be fair to burden him with those two important offices, together with the Premiership, the Treasurership and the important work of Housing. I was also sorry to see the Minister for Lands give up the portfolio of Health. I have always regarded him as one who has made a close study of health matters, and he has accumulated a considerable amount of knowledge. However, he has now gone to the Lands Department and he will not find that an easy job. But I am sure we will give him what help we can and I hope he will take any advice that we tender.

The Minister for Education also takes in the portfolio of Agriculture. I think those two portfolios will go together, because

Agriculture is a portfolio in which education plays a most important part. So, the Minister in taking this new branch of education, should be at home, and I feel that his interest in education, generally, will fit him for the new position. Here again it might be necessary for him to seek and take advice from this side of the House. I am sure we will give him advice on agriculture by which he can profit. I hope that the Government—the new Government—will co-operate fully with members on the Opposition side.

The Minister for Lands: We always have.

Mr. McLARTY: Not always! There is scope for co-operation. When all is said and done, the Opposition parties represent a very large volume of public opinion, and if we look at the figures of a general election in this State, we find that they are fairly evenly divided and, in a democracy, it is only right and just that the opinions of the Opposition should receive full consideration. That is not the position in some Parliaments that I know of. I am aware of one where the opinions of the Opposition receive scant consideration. But I repeat that in this Parliament there is plenty of scope for co-operation with the Opposition. I suggest that we should co-operate in regard to future planning. Since I have been in Parliament I have had the privilege of serving on a number of Select Committees. I recently served on one that was turned into an Honorary Royal Commission. I have found that as a result of the work of those committees much good has come about. The reports have come to this House and have been of benefit to the country. The committees, as I have just said, consisted of representation from all sides of the House. I feel that such a committee could help in regard to the housing problem. I think also that it could help in connection with the planning of public works.

In the post-war period it will be necessary to plan public works in conjunction with works which will be carried out by private enterprise. I know that there are certain public works which are essential and urgent, and which must be put into operation as soon as possible. But we should not attempt to put into operation public works unless they are essential; rather we should encourage private enterprise to carry out

its part of the job, and the Public Works Department should prepare to carry out public undertakings when the necessity arises—that is when there is unemployment. If we could do something to co-ordinate public undertakings with the work carried out by private enterprise we would be doing something well worth while. A committee such as I have mentioned could make suggestions in connection with the relationship of agriculture and public works.

We are planning for a vigorous public works policy for the time when we reach the post-war period. There is no doubt that wages and conditions will be attractive, or as attractive as financial and other conditions will allow. I feel that the thousands of men returning from the battle areas and from other defence areas will not want to be engaged as farm labourers when better conditions are offering elsewhere. But we all realise the absolute necessity of keeping the agricultural and pastoral industries going. We are assured of a demand for all we can produce in the next four or five years, at least. It is in the interests of the country that we should produce every ounce of food possible, but we cannot produce it unless we have the labour to do so. Again I stress that there is a danger of the agricultural labourer wanting to leave the farms and engage in these public works. We should give serious consideration to that matter, and that consideration should be given during this session while Parliament is sitting.

Mention was made by the member for York to the present high rate of taxation. There is no doubt that it is having a detrimental effect upon all industry. Today far too much depends upon the Government; too many people are expecting something for nothing! Quite frequently I have heard men say, "The Government can keep me when this war finishes!" It used to be quite a common thing, when the late Prime Minister was alive, to hear people say, "John Curtin can keep me when this is all over." There is no doubt that these people are building up false hopes and they should be made to realise that as soon as possible. The high standard of living that we hear so much about, and the new order, can only be obtained through work.

Mr. Fox: If you give those people the opportunity they will not shirk it.

Mr. McLARTY: I hope the hon. member is right. In connection with the great majority of men he is right, but there is a limit to the number of people that any country can keep without work.

That brings me to the question of our social services. We all want to see an improvement in the condition of our people in regard to social services, and I am satisfied that the proper way to do that, and the most efficient way looking to the future, is by having a contributory scheme and abolishing the means test. I feel if this were done we would have a more self-respecting community and further, it would be for the good of the country generally.

Mr. Cross: Do you not think a contributory scheme would cost too much for the collections?

Mr. McLARTY: No.

Mr. Cross: Do you know what—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. McLARTY: People submit to high taxation in wartime and, on the whole, they have done it very cheerfully during this war, but I do not think for a minute that they will be prepared to submit to the present high rates when we come to the post-war period, particularly when they look around and see the waste that is going on. We are told that in all wars waste is inevitable. I think that is so. I do not think a war could be fought without waste, but there is a great deal of waste at home, which we can see taking place, but which could be avoided. Every member of this House has seen that waste. That does not give our people an incentive to work and do their best to produce all that is necessary. It does not give a farmer an incentive to work long hours—from daylight to dark—to produce food. Neither does it give a worker an incentive to work long hours and overtime.

I believe that even now a reduction could be made in the rate of taxation, and when we reach the post-war period there should be a further reduction. Loan money will not be available to the Government in the post-war period as it has been during the past few years. It certainly will not be available at $3\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. and $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Of that I am certain, particularly in the case of the individual. When we remember the hundreds of thousands of men and women of all classes who have felt it their duty to subscribe to the war loans, we must

realise that they will not have the same feeling when we reach the post-war period. In addition to all this, costs are rising. We can see that all around us, and people will not lend their money at the fixed rates of interest ruling today.

Mr. W. Hegney: What will they do with it?

Mr. McLARTY: They will look for other avenues in which to invest it. I want to say something about housing. I notice that four houses are to be erected in the district I represent, and I am very grateful for the allotment of those houses but I think the rents being charged of 27s. 6d. for a five-roomed house, and 25s. for a four-roomed house, are too high. Particularly is that so as those who occupy the houses are not going to own them. I do not think it is necessary to charge those rentals. We are borrowing money at $3\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. and $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. A five-roomed house costs £950 today. The rental charged is 27s. 6d. per week which runs out at over seven per cent. A lesser amount—about £900 or a little less, I think—is the cost of a four-roomed house, and the 25s. rent for such a house works out at something over six per cent. I know allowances have to be made for insurance, administration, depreciation and perhaps some other items, but even so, I think the margin is too great and a reduction should be made in the rents.

Some vigorous representation should be made to the Military authorities to make material available for building purposes. Today there are hundreds of military huts unoccupied in Western Australia and many other Military buildings as well. They should be made use of. People are crying out for galvanised iron and timber. What is to be done regarding those buildings? I think they should be released. I suggest to the Premier that he should make energetic representations to the Commonwealth Government with that end in view, so that the buildings may be devoted to civilian purposes. We should do everything possible to encourage private enterprise to play its part in dealing with the housing problem. We must look to that phase of industry for help in that direction.

I notice that the A.I.F. is to be reduced to a strength of three divisions. I presume those divisions will remain on active service in the Islands. I certainly hope the men will not experience

too rough a time. They are fighting under the worst conditions in the world. I doubt if any army has ever experienced worse conditions than those our soldiers are facing today. There is much talk about repatriation now and I think it is perfectly justified. Certainly it is good to see so much interest taken in that problem, and I suggest to the Premier and also to the Minister for Lands that the rights of our soldiers who are still engaged in the battle lines must be fully protected—and that applies particularly to land settlement. Those who receive their discharges now should not be allowed to get all the plums.

Mr. Seward: They are not getting the plums by any means.

Mr. McLARTY: The men still in the Fighting Forces should have their interests fully protected.

Mr. Cross: We could make a start by cracking up some of the big estates in the Pinjarra district.

Mr. Thorn: It is a pity someone does not crack you!

Mr. McLARTY: The member for Pilbara referred to the problems of repatriation and I thought his remarks were very helpful. I hope members generally will take notice of them.

There are one or two matters concerning soldier settlement that I wish to bring before the notice of the Government. Some of the returned men have found that their homes have been broken up. If a thief entered a home and was caught, he would, very rightly, be sent to gaol; but here we have the homes of men broken up and nothing done to protect them. I believe that when a soldier returns from oversea and has that experience, with the result that he has to secure a divorce from his wife, the co-respondent should be forced to pay back to the soldier all the allotment money that the man's wife received while he was away on active service. I do not think the innocent should be made to suffer. I would go further! I would not permit a soldier's wife, who has been unfaithful, to re-marry until the allotment money she had received had been paid back by the co-respondent.

Mr. Watts: That is summary justice.

Mr. McLARTY: A good deal has been said about migration, to which the member for Victoria Park referred earlier in the debate. I do not think we should consider any large scheme, particularly one relating

to land settlement, until we have provided holdings for our own soldiers. Even so, it is necessary that we should secure the right type of migrant, and I do not know where such migrants would come from.

The Minister for Lands: What do you regard as the right type of migrant?

Mr. McLARTY: I should say a young man or young woman who is capable of hard work and of rearing a family in this country. I believe, too, that the younger we get the migrants, the better it will be for the future of this State. The Fairbridge Farm School at Pinjarra is a good illustration in support of that contention. Many young boys and girls have passed through that school and have grown to manhood or womanhood. Over 600 of them have served in the Fighting Forces. They have proved themselves good and useful citizens of the State. They would be a good type of migrant. In the rush to secure suitable migrants after the war young children will be most favoured. I hope the Government will see to it that the Fairbridge Farm School secures its due share of the young people. To a large extent the institution is inactive; if it had children to deal with, it could carry out very useful work in the interests of the State.

In my opinion, the time is ripe for the appointment of a Select Committee to overhaul the provisions of the Superannuation Act. The superannuation that is provided is not a very satisfactory form of pension, and I have been told that it does not even carry the basic wage adjustments. I do not regard that as just, and certainly some provision should be made in that respect. Another matter I wish to refer to is the opportunity to recruit the Police Force. Many of our young men are now returning from the Services, some of them being in the five-year category, and the time is opportune to bring the Police Force up to the mark. This opportunity should be availed of. The member for East Perth referred with pride to the socialistic legislation which is being introduced by the Commonwealth Government. I take it that considerable importance attaches to anything the hon. member says on account of the position he occupies as president of the A.L.P.

The Minister for Lands: He has not been promoted to that yet.

Mr. McLARTY: Well, the Metropolitan Branch of the A.L.P. Doubtless he is on the way to obtaining the higher position. I consider that the Commonwealth Government has no right to socialise anything unless it has a mandate from the people, and it certainly has not received a mandate. The only way in which a real mandate can be given to a Government is by referendum. Mandates cannot possibly be given at general elections when important questions are clouded by all sorts of side issues. Hundreds of people vote on personal considerations only and the main questions are not considered by them. Consequently I repeat that there is no justification for the introduction of the socialistic measures referred to by the member for East Perth.

The hon. member took exception to assurance companies sending out circulars to their clients. I am a client of an assurance company, just as is the member for East Perth, and I have not the slightest objection to the directors putting their views before their clients. In fact, I consider it their duty to do so. If they fear danger from certain legislation, surely it is the duty of the directors to inform their clients of it! That is all they have sought to do. The hon. member also stated that employers had brought pressure to bear on clients and had adopted a threatening attitude in connection with the Commonwealth banking legislation. I do not know who those employers are, but I would not be prepared to believe that anything of the sort had happened unless definite proof were provided.

I was interested to read the statement of the Minister for Works regarding the South-West Power Scheme, but was disappointed to find that it would take so long to put the scheme into operation. I believe that secondary industries will be looking for openings early in the post-war period, and they will certainly establish their premises in places where power is available. If they knew that power would be made available in some of the country districts in the near future, I believe they would establish industries away from the metropolitan area. Under present conditions, however, I cannot see very much hope of their doing so. I trust that the great irrigation works in the South-West that are unfinished will be put in hand again as soon as possible.

The Minister for Lands: There is a good deal of water in the South-West at present.

Mr. McLARTY: Yes. In Victoria I understand that operations on the construction of irrigation works were not retarded as a result of the war. Apparently Western Australia has suffered more than have other States in the matter of shortage of manpower. I conclude by repeating the hope that these works in the South-West will be brought to completion as soon as possible.

On motion by Mr. Watts, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.13 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 8th August, 1945.

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

QUESTIONS.

MUNDARING WATER.

As to Cost of Delivery at Norseman and Coolgardie.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS asked the Chief Secretary:

1, What is the actual delivery cost of water per 1,000 gallons at Norseman from the Mundaring scheme?

2, What is the actual cost of delivery at Norseman from the Coolgardie take-off?

3, How is the cost computed (give details)?

4, What is the actual cost of water per 1,000 gallons delivered at Coolgardie reservoir from Mundaring scheme?

5, How is the cost computed?