

is an individualist could farm at the beck and call of authority all the time. If they were men such as some turned out to be after the 1914-18 war, they might rush into participation in soldier settlement for the mere sake of a home and some temporary occupation. As we saw in connection with the last war, when such individuals found that work on the land was not all milk and honey, they went elsewhere. That is what may happen this time if we have this type of soldier settlement. Although I hope that the long view will prevail with respect to the settlement of soldiers on the land, I cannot say that I hope, with any degree of confidence, that it will eventually prevail.

With a proper, sensible approach to the problem, much could be achieved of advantage to the country as a whole. I do not want it to be thought that I do not appreciate much that is embodied in the report of the Rural Reconstruction Commission, because I do. The weakness in the report, as I see it, is inevitable because it appears to make finance and supervision paramount. The members of the Commission have viewed the industry largely from an office chair, and I consider that, with more consideration and practical knowledge applied to the problems, the difficulties could be overcome. Before I conclude there is one other hope I would like to express and it is that now that the Referendum has been disposed of—I think we can take it that it has been disposed of—the State Government will depart from its attitude, or from what has appeared to be its attitude ever since I have been a member of Parliament, of abrogating practically all its responsibilities and allowing the State Parliament to drift along while all its authority is passed to the Commonwealth Government in respect of practically everything that comes before the Legislature.

Now that the expressed opinion of the people of Australia has been obtained—it must be realised that it was an expression of opinion respecting unification as well as in respect of the 17 specific points—the State Government will provide us, to a considerably greater degree than heretofore, with legislation to consider and work to do to advance the welfare and development of Western Australia, and that the activities of the State Parliament will not be confined quite so much to a bit of tinkering with exist-

ing legislation, largely industrial, as our experience has been during the last few years.

On motion by Hon. W. J. Mann, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.55 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 24th August, 1944.

Questions: Birth rate, as to encouraging increase	PAGE 247
Civil defence, as to terminating A.R.P. services	247
Address-in-reply, tenth day, amendment	248

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

QUESTIONS (2).

BIRTH RATE.

As to Encouraging Increase.

Mr. NORTH asked the Premier:

(1) Is the national need for larger families being handled exclusively by the Federal Cabinet?

(2) If not, has the State Government worked out any plans as yet?

(3) Has the State Treasurer analysed the possible public reaction to stiff taxation on prosperous bachelors and childless couples (as a post-war policy) for the benefit of parents with more than three children?

(4) Are State recommendations for altering taxation barred while uniform taxation is in force?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied:

(1) Not exclusively.

(2) The State Government has developed plans in connection with housing, water supplies and other essential undertakings for the purpose of increasing development and improving living conditions generally within the State.

(3) No, but it is thought the reaction would be very mixed.

(4) No.

CIVIL DEFENCE.

As to Terminating A.R.P. Services.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Mines:

(1) Whether he will consider giving instructions in order to ensure that A.R.P. per-

sonnel are not further called upon for exercises and other services, which at present have every appearance of being unnecessary, in view of the improved war situation and the consequent relaxation of lighting restrictions, the re-installment of glass shop windows, the abandonment of numerous air raid shelters, and the removal of fire-fighting equipment from a number of buildings?

(2) If not, why not?

(3) Is he aware that many A.R.P. war-dens are resigning from their positions and from the reserve on account of the foregoing, and the fact that they regard this step as the only escape from the present situation?

The MINISTER replied:

(1), (2) and (3) A.R.P. precautions generally are being reviewed. Already considerable reductions in same have been made.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Tenth Day—Amendment.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MRS. CARDELL-OLIVER (Subiaco) [4.35]: I join with other members in congratulating you, Mr. Speaker, on your re-election to the Chair. With regard to that position I would like to offer a few comments. In my opinion there should be compulsory nomination for the position from all parties in the House, and either a preferential or an exhaustive ballot taken. I consider, further, that the tenure of the position should be made permanent, and the salary increased to that of a Supreme Court judge. During the Committee stages of the Commonwealth Powers Bill in the last session it was regrettable to see the Speaker called into the Chamber by his Party to vote, when without the Speaker's vote—he of course not being in the Chair then—clauses of the Government Bill would have been lost on two or three occasions. I also consider it regrettable that the Chairman of Committees should be entitled to vote. I would like to see both the positions I have mentioned entirely outside the realms of politics, and especially of party. The answer to these contentions is that the Speaker and the Chairman of Committees are above all parties.

I do not wish to reflect in any way upon either the Speaker or the Chairman of Committees; I have the greatest respect for

them; but I feel it would be inhuman to expect you, Mr. Speaker, to vote against the interests of your own party. In England, I believe, though I may be corrected, the Speaker occupies his position almost permanently. I understand that as a rule his seat is not contested. Therefore in England the Speaker's position is practically permanent. Like the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe yesterday, I today am speaking only because I wish to exercise my right to speak, lest that right be lost through not having been taken advantage of. There are only two occasions in this House on which, during a short session, we as members can air our aspirations or express our views; and in these days of gradually dwindling liberty I feel it behoves us to beware and to take advantage of any privileges we now possess.

The new members have been warned by old members that they will be disillusioned as the years pass by. I wish to say quite plainly that the process of disillusionment regarding myself started with the first speech on the Address-in-reply delivered here. New members feel that discourtesy is shown to them when they make their first speech. I am speaking generally but I believe I voice the feelings of others. During such a speech other members are often not in their places. Some rise and go out of the Chamber; others come into the Chamber during the speech; some read. Members who have come recently to the Chamber from districts where they were attentively listened to naturally become nervous, and, if the speech made is not a written one, a fear complex grasps the speaker who imagines that in some way he has done something to displease the other members of the House. After a few sessions he realises that what was apparent discourtesy is merely the natural sequence of events. Members may be called to the phone or to see visitors. They may have to catch a train or go to another meeting, and those who appear tired may just have arrived in the Chamber after a night's journey without any sleep.

Mr. North: In some instances after having travelled hundreds of miles.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: Yes. With wider experience, a new member assesses his speech at its true value. He no longer wastes time in preparing a speech because he realises that the members of this House are not an audience. He realises, too, his inability to influence the House and under-

stands that the Government has a fixed policy and for him, as the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe put it, the House is one of frustration rather than of legislation.

Mr. North: Then the member for York must have been lucky with his library proposition!

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: If a member is wise he knows that there is only one thing he can do. He can work outside the House to accomplish what he could and should do inside the House. There are many directions in which members of this Chamber work outside in the interests of the people. There are various organisations to which they belong. There are kindergartens, homes for children, homes for the aged, house-keeper schemes, parents and citizens' associations, milk nutritional committees, and above all, unions in which members can take an interest. The unions were formed mainly to force the Government by direct action to legislate so that what had been gained might be kept. Other organisations are formed from time to time through which a member works and eventually forces the Government to undertake a task which he wished it in the first place to undertake. A member soon realises that he has a greater influence, working through these agencies, than he has in this Chamber. This, however, is a slow and costly process, and I suggest to the Government that Cabinet should be elected from the members of this House on a proportional basis, the number of electors that each member represents being taken into consideration. If this were done, electors and members would have a keener interest in politics, all the people would be represented by the Government and this Chamber would become one of legislation rather than of frustration.

My next point concerns the time during which the House sits. This was also mentioned by the member for Beverley. I consider our present system ridiculous and suggest that we should sit for eight months of the year. That would allow members who live in country districts four months in which to tour their constituencies. I further suggest that expenses for aeroplane travel should be allowed to members. Those living in the far North or in the South or in the East should be allowed such expenses because our railway system compares favourably with the worst in the world, and members should have an opportunity to reach their destinations in the minimum amount of

time. Again, I consider that members should be paid on an attendance basis with a liberal and fixed allowance for sick leave.

The member for Roebourne yesterday touched on a very vital question, namely, the supply of fresh food for the North-West. All members of this Chamber should be deeply concerned about outlying districts—those in the North-West, the South and East. It is most difficult for people in some of those places to obtain supplies, and it is up to us—not one member, but every member—to see that the member for Roebourne and others representing outlying parts are supported when they endeavour to get food for the people of their districts. We cannot hope to settle this country if we think of city interests only. Australians are very apt to think that Australia is a wonderful place to live in. I believe that many of our country towns and our outback homes are as primitive as anything I have seen in the world. The State Government should financially assist road boards to sewer all towns where there are a few hundred people or more, and should provide allowances for farmers to instal septic tanks in the outback. Only if modern conveniences are provided will women be persuaded to stay on the land. It must be remembered that nearly all of them have tasted the joy of living in modern towns, and they are not likely joyfully to return to farms if the homes there are to be as primitive as they have been in the past.

I was very much impressed by the speech of the member for Murchison. He hit the nail on the head when he spoke of girls waiting upon servicemen while hospitals and other institutions were understaffed. I do not blame girls for leaving the asylum. I do not blame them in the least. They left for better conditions, for glamour, for khaki and travel and to get away from the sordid atmosphere that prevails at Claremont. It is pitiable to see manpower officials going into shops and trying to force totally unsuitable girls to undertake the arduous work required of them at the Claremont Mental Hospital. What is required is the provision of better conditions and higher pay for the nursing profession generally and especially for nurses in asylums. I understand that the Minister will reply on that point.

Mr. Marshall: No!

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I do not care what he may say in his reply. I definitely

assert I would rather go to gaol than be forced to work at the Claremont Mental Hospital, because the conditions there are so bad. It is up to the Government to improve those conditions so that the right type of girl will be prepared to work there. The Commonwealth Government has endeavoured to maintain an Army out of all proportion to the size of Australia. I do not know how we could expect any army to defend 11,000 miles of coastline. During the 1914-18 war we had 300,000 soldiers fighting overseas and 100,000 men in reserve. The men overseas fought in bottleneck areas to keep the enemy confined there. During this war we have 90,000 men overseas and more than 100,000 men under arms in Australia. These latter men will never see a fighting front, and yet they have to be fed and clothed. Many of those men were taken from the land where they were engaged in producing foodstuffs. It is an old story but we know of the cattle that have been wantonly slaughtered.

In today's issue of "The West Australian" we are told that 3,500 farmers who formerly were engaged in producing milk have ceased doing so during the last two years. This at a time when Great Britain has been pleading for food! In conclusion, I wish to draw attention to a local matter. In Perth we have hundreds of old people, some of them ill, without any hope of being cared for or properly housed. Notwithstanding that, almost within the heart of the city we have one of the most efficiently run homes, one that is capable of extension, where hundreds of our aged sick could be housed and cared for if only the provision for extensions were made possible. I refer to the Home of Peace.

The Minister for Mines: There is the staff difficulty.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: Staff be bothered!

The Minister for Mines: They have had to shut up one ward at the Home of Peace because of the loss of staff.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: On Monday next we are to hold a meeting to consider the question of extensions at that institution. Under present day conditions the matron there has to refuse applications for admission to the home. Daily old people are being turned away. Those whose condition requires urgent attention are sent to the Perth Hospital. The cost to the Government

of a patient sent to that institution is about £3 a week. The Minister for Health can correct me if I am wrong in my estimate. The cost to the Government of each inmate at the Home of Peace is approximately 8s. a week. From the financial standpoint alone it would be wise for the Government to assist in any extension programme approved for the Home of Peace. The institution has plenty of land available; the parent house is well staffed and is replete with equipment.

We as Australians are very prone to tell the world that this is a wonderful place to live in. If we were to ask some of the old age pensioners who are sick and cannot find a home, perhaps they would have a different tale to tell. At present many of them have to find accommodation in the homes of their children. Perhaps the daughter is a mother with a young infant and it may be impossible for her to take care of the aged and sick parent. If the old people are in rooms, very often they are asked by their landlords to find accommodation elsewhere. Certainly if the housing problem is bad for the young, it is deplorable for our aged people. I ask the Government to come to the rescue of these old folk who have been good citizens and have rendered years of service to the State. Surely it is not a question of money but one of simple duty to our old and respected people.

HON. H. MILLINGTON (Mt. Hawthorn): I also take advantage of this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to congratulate you upon being re-elected to your present high office. My congratulations are also extended to the Chairman of Committees and to my young friend, the member for North-East Fremantle, who has been elevated to the position of Minister for Education. We are all new, or renewed, members of this Chamber because we are all of the 1943 group and are all fresh from facing our electors. To the new members I extend my congratulations and sincerely trust that they will not be disillusioned. They are all seasoned men. They have had experience in local government and I do not think they could be easily disillusioned. They came here knowing what to expect and they are men of the world. I cannot understand people expecting such a lot from membership of Parliament nor can I understand those who have been here so long being dis-

appointed. We have no complaints, no grievances. We have been elected with the advantage of the confidence of the people of our districts. I do not know why we need complain so long as they do not. The new members who have participated in the current debate have shown that they have had previous experience. I am sure they will constitute a most useful addition to the debating strength of this House and will advance fresh ideas.

In his opening speech the member for Nelson was refreshingly candid. He has independent ideas and I think rightly said what he wished to say about the Government and the Government institutions. I have never held the view that those who sit behind the Government must necessarily indulge in fulsome praise. If a man is a member of the Government he is capable of defending himself. Certainly my experience has been that those who sit on the Treasury Bench are quite capable of defending even their own errors. It will be found that when everything is balanced up the members of the Government can stand up to all the machine-gun fire from the Opposition and back benches—I hope not too much will come from the latter. The Lieut.-Governor's Speech was new to me from one angle. I have heard people criticise such Speeches. After all what does the Governor's Speech amount to? It is merely a record of departmental activities and sometimes an apology because those activities have not been quite so extensive as they might have been. That is all the document amounts to. No Government declares in the Speech any more than is necessary; it simply gives an inkling of some of the legislation that it is proposed to introduce during the session. The member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe said he had no complaint about the Address-in-reply because it helps to run this old machine in. I agree with him. By the time we get through the Address-in-reply, we are ready to settle down to the real business of the session.

There is no doubt about the number of subjects dealt with in the Speech, but fortunately we may also refer to matters not mentioned in the Speech, and there are two or three with which I wish to deal. Now that the question of the relationship between the Commonwealth and State Parliaments has been placed before the people

prominently, may I remind the House that this State has not been antagonistic to any Government of the Commonwealth. In fact, I believe we have been most considerate. I recall the Financial Agreement. No one approved of those proposals, but we accepted the agreement and in such a way that it afterwards received the support of a majority of the House and the decision of Parliament was ratified by the people. I am conscious of the courage displayed by another Government—I was sitting on the Opposition side at the time—in presenting the Premiers' Plan, which also was sponsored by the Commonwealth Government. I suppose that was the most objectionable and most unpopular piece of legislation ever introduced, but the fact remains that Parliament passed it at the instance of the Commonwealth Government and the Loan Council.

About seven years ago, two proposals were put before the people, namely, to give the Commonwealth marketing powers and control of aviation. They were turned down substantially by the people of Australia. I believe every State rejected those proposals. Notwithstanding that, every State Parliament introduced legislation to give the Commonwealth full control of civil aviation, I myself having introduced the Bill in this House. It became a matter of some contention as to whether the Commonwealth already had the power, but we gave it full power not only to revise existing regulations but also to issue new regulations, and I do not think any of the regulations has been the subject of complaint. I think some people entertain a fear that the State Parliament might be superseded if powers such as were asked for on Saturday were granted to the Commonwealth. They fear that had the Referendum been carried, State Parliaments would have gone out of existence, and nonsense of that sort. As I have pointed out, however, the State Parliaments have been more considerate to the Commonwealth Government than have the people of Australia.

I now come to the question of post-war work and rehabilitation. May I say that the Government of this State has already placed before the Commonwealth a list of very important works which it considers are worth while and would lead to the advancement and development of this State. Who knows better than the State Govern-

ment what is required in Western Australia? There appears to be an impression that enormous new works are likely to be put in hand. That is not the position at all. Practically all the schemes put forward are for extensions of existing works, such as water supplies. I emphasise that they are not new but are, in almost every instance, extensions of existing schemes.

Mr. Doney: Not in the one big instance, surely!

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: Yes, the one to which the hon. member refers will be an extension of country water supplies. In one instance there will be a link with the existing reservoir at Mundaring, and I do not know how that can be separated and called a new work. For such works we can reasonably expect to receive financial assistance from the great Commonwealth Government. I would never advocate the provision of a country water supply unless I was satisfied that the cost to the user would be brought within reach of the user. First of all must be determined how much he can afford to pay, because no country water scheme can be put in unless a majority of the users agrees to the scheme. I believe that such schemes can well be put in hand. At the same time, they must be provided on the basis that no financial burden which the users are unable to bear will be imposed upon them. A calculation has to be made of the overhead charges for head works, reticulation, interest burden and maintenance. Then the annual cost has to be calculated to determine how much the user can afford to pay. The other portion of the burden will have to be borne by the Commonwealth or the State, or both combined. I think that is the principle upon which we should insist in making all these extensions.

I have discussed with the Works Department staff, and especially with the Principal Architect, the problem of increasing costs for homes. When the workers' homes were first put in hand, I believe about 1914, a brick house could be erected for a cost of £450 to £500. A similar house built now would cost double the amount. Yet engineering methods have improved to such an extent that the cost of a big work would not be greater today than it was 40 years ago. I instance the cost of Mundaring Weir and of Canning Dam, the one built early in the century and the other nearly 40 years afterwards. Yet the actual cost

per yard of the concrete put into the Canning Dam was about equal to that of the Mundaring Weir, although wages at the beginning of the century were about 8s. per day less than they are now and other costs commensurately lower. When it comes to housing, in which we are all interested, it seems we have made no headway in the direction of adopting improved methods in the building of ordinary cottages. In respect of large buildings, new and better engineering practice has been evolved, but this does not apply to homes, and the consequence is that the cost is getting beyond the reach of the average man and certainly beyond the reach of the man on the basic wage. Therefore it seems to me that the architects will have to exert themselves to catch up to the engineers. The engineer has done his job; the architect has remained where he was 40 years ago in the matter of house building practice. The methods have not improved, notwithstanding that improvements have been effected in almost every other branch of industry. There is a challenge to the architect and the builder.

I am also interested in the housing of some of the poorer sections of the community, and I may say that I listened with interest to the member for Subiaco. The Premier recently placed me on the McNess Housing Trust with a dear old friend, Mr. Alfred Carson.

The Minister for Mines: I am sorry to say that he died this morning.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: I am very sorry to hear it. He was a kindly man, always engaged in charitable works, especially the Silver Chain organisation and the McNess Housing Trust, and he was loved by many of the tenants.

The Minister for Mines: He was a grand old man.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: The trust now has roughly £118,000. About 200 houses have been built, but there is £50,000 which could be invested in homes straight away if we could get permits to build. I think the McNess Trust idea is a splendid one. Old people are placed in these homes at a low rental or free of rent. I believe the highest charge is 5s. a week. Until recently, the policy was that the occupant should purchase the home, but what is required and is now the policy is to provide a home at no rent or a very low rent and have security of tenure. What more do they

want? They know that they have only to behave decently in order to have the home for life. With the £50,000 we shall be able to provide at least another 100 homes for old people as soon as permits, men and material are available.

There is another matter I wish to refer to, the much-discussed subject of motor vehicle third-party insurance. I am greatly interested in this matter. Earlier in the session I asked the Minister for Works whether he was aware that an assurance had been given on behalf of the Government that a comprehensive policy would be sufficient and that it would embody the third-party liability as imposed by the new law. During the passage of the Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance) Bill last session, I asked the Solicitor-General specially to draft a clause, which he did, and I think that both the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Nedlands were satisfied that it would overcome the difficulty and that one policy would be sufficient. However, the reply from the Minister was not too satisfactory. He agreed that the assurance had been given, but wound up by saying that the Premiums Committee raised several difficulties. When I asked whether the State office would issue one policy covering the whole liability, the reply was that a letter had been received from the manager of the State Insurance Office supporting the contention of the Premiums Committee that the matter was being actively investigated. I propose to carry on the investigation here this afternoon. The Premiums Committee had agreed with the insurance companies as to the rate to be charged. I have no particular complaint to make about the rate which was fixed, namely, 25s., although I think many people object to the additional 2s. 6d. stamp duty.

Mr. Seward: That was a bit hard.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: Yes. That is a matter upon which we can probably approach the Government. I am not concerned about that so much. I would not expect the Minister to be able to reform the insurance companies, as that would be rather a big task. Insurance companies do business in their own way. I have here an ordinary R.A.C. special motor vehicle policy, and we must bear in mind that the person insuring has no say in the terms and conditions contained in it. Those are determined by the company and we pay our premium. But in view of the assurance given on behalf of the Government, I did think that the

State Government Insurance Office had some responsibility; yet when I received a report issued by Mr. Taylor on behalf of the Premiums Committee I found that it contained this paragraph to which I take very strong exception. I consider it is misleading. It reads—

It was pointed out by the Government Actuary—

It brings in the Government Actuary—

that the policy in relation to "Act" liabilities and that covering other risks, such as damage to property and injury to passengers in private cars, represented two distinct and independent contracts, which have no logical or legal relation.

What a statement for the Government Actuary to make—that they "have no logical or legal relation." Every person who takes a vehicle on to the road, particularly a motor vehicle, at once assumes a liability, whether he knows it or not. He assumed that liability quite independently of the compulsory insurance legislation that was passed. The liability was always there. Consequently, to say that there is no logical or legal relation between the liability that always existed and the very meagre liability covered by this third party insurance Act, is ridiculous. Therefore the Government Actuary, who by the way is not the legal adviser of the Government, had better put up something more substantial than this as an objection. It certainly does not satisfy me.

We certainly cannot expect insurance companies to trouble about assurances given by the Government, nor can we expect the public to trouble about them for that matter, but nevertheless it would be a splendid idea for the Minister for Works, who controls the State Government Insurance Office, to set about devising a policy which will cover all liabilities. If people do not wish to surrender their existing policies, they can at least be issued with something in the form of an addendum. That would mean they would still hold one policy with an addendum covering the additional liability which I admit is imposed by the new law. The additional liabilities which the insurance companies are called upon to insure against are the hit-and-run motorist and the uninsured person. But surely it is not an insuperable difficulty to draw up one policy embracing all liabilities! I am told that the existing policies were drawn up long before the question of compulsory third party insurance

arose. Such policies contain reservations of which many people are scarcely aware. One such is as follows:—

Liability at law for compensation for death or bodily injury to persons caused by the use of such vehicle. In this clause "persons" shall not include—

- (1) Any relative or friend of the insured, ordinarily residing with the insured.
- (2) Any person engaged in and upon the service of the insured at the time of such death or bodily injury.

So the insurance companies always protected themselves. They are adepts at doing so and in giving a person only a limited insurance against legal liability. There is this to be remembered, too. I understand about 60,000 licenses were taken out this year, of which 50 per cent. were taken out compulsorily under the new law. The others were comprehensive policies. I point out that those who had insured against all risks are volunteers and that they are given no consideration at all. The 30,000 conscripts are all right, as they have got a policy that covers all they desire. The others have to take out two policies and therefore incur additional expense and trouble.

I am not complaining particularly about the additional rate which has been imposed. I scarcely think it generous. It is 25s., plus stamp duty of 2s. 6d. The rate is similar to that charged in the Eastern States, but one has to remember that in these times of petrol restrictions many people who have taken out licenses only get two gallons of petrol a month, and that will not carry them very far. Big cars get four gallons a month. Another objection that the insurance companies make is that they have no means of computing the rate to be charged for third party insurance if it is to be included in a general policy. I have already stated that of the 60,000 licenses taken out this year, some 30,000 licensees had already insured only against third party risk. I should think that should be quite sufficient to enable the insurance companies to compute what is a reasonable cost and to decide whether a rate is too much or too little. If they cannot determine the right cost per year with that experience, then I do not know how many more tests they would want. They have a very clear line to go upon if they so desire.

In any case, this is my proposal to the Minister. The mischief, as far as this licensing period is concerned, is already done. I agree that there is some difficulty in starting,

and we have to be reasonable in these matters, even with insurance companies. I would not like to do them an injustice. However, another licensing period will commence on the 1st July, 1945, and will continue till the 30th June, 1946. I suggest that for that licensing period—which is the licensing period in Western Australia, but not for all the States—the State Insurance Office should issue either one policy or an addendum to the existing policy, so that owners of motor vehicles could pay the whole premium at the one time, and so that the policy would be accepted by the licensing authorities throughout the State. That is not asking too much and it is giving the State office ample time in which to put the matter in order and honour the undertaking given to this House. I have always been under the impression that even opposing Governments honoured the obligations of previous Governments. I feel this matter personally. That something can be done I am as positive as I stand here. The member for Nedlands generously offered to draft a clause which would probably have avoided this difficulty and I regret that I did not accept this kind offer at the time. We could call him in to assist and then ascertain whether or not the State Insurance Office, with the help of the Crown Law Department and the undoubted ability of the members of the Premiums Committee—I am not belittling those gentlemen in any way—can draw up a policy which will meet the ordinary recognised liability, plus the liability imposed under the new legislation for compulsory insurance. I leave it at that.

The Government will have until the end of next June to collect its thoughts and ask the Premiums Committee and the Manager of the State Insurance Office, not to devise ways and means and excuses for not doing it, but to rack their brains to get it done. I was inclined to invent excuses myself when I did not wish to do something, but I suggest that the attitude of the State Insurance Office should be to set an example to other Government departments. Never let it be said that the State Insurance Office has joined the ring and has no ideas outside those of the private insurance companies! Under the new order, who is going to set the pace if it is not set by the State departments. Here is a department which is not skimmed for money. It can buy the best

brains in Australia as far as management is concerned. I am not too sure that it is not about time that the insurance companies had an example set them. They will not take any notice of the persuasive eloquence even of Ministers or of anyone else, but they would of an example. They would take notice of the State Office if it devised ways and means of doing this. They would fall into line so as to get some of the business that would go to the State Office. I leave it at that and feel sure that the Minister will issue a new set of instructions, not asking them whether this can be done, but telling them that it needs to be done. I am satisfied that it will be done because the men associated with the State Office, and the members of the Premiums Committee, are capable men who will do this and put the matter right.

I want to refer to one other matter. I have always taken a keen interest in local government. I am not one of those who belittle local governments. We have all heard people say that they cannot find as much capacity among the members of the local governing bodies as anywhere else. I have seen many who would outclass members of the Commonwealth Parliament, anyhow. We are all concerned with local government. These are times when we are trying to help people out of their difficulties. If there is one set of organisations that has been struggling in this country, in particular, for years, it is the road boards. That statement applies also to certain municipalities, although some of them are quite wealthy. The road boards are always having difficult times. Not only do they have to endeavour to collect a general rate, but also a vermin rate and a health rate, etc. So we have to do our utmost, since they get their authority from this House, to help them over their difficulties. What is their great difficulty? It is the amount of money that they are forced to borrow. I recently got the information as to the amount of loan liability of the road boards throughout the State.

We have 127 road boards, and 76 of them have raised loans totalling £701,000. That is a substantial amount. I wanted to find out what rate of interest they paid, and I discussed the matter with several road board officials. The rate of interest is the trouble, the annual cost. No one worries much about the amount of capital they have borrowed, but at the end of the year interest and sink-

ing fund payments have to be met. One road board has borrowed nearly £200,000, and has an average rate of interest of $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Now, $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. is too high for public bodies to pay.

Member: It is too high for anyone to pay!

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: We can talk and theorise as much as we like, but these road boards represent gilt-edged security. If the road boards and the municipalities fail, then the State fails. These loans can be classed as gilt-edged securities, just as are Government bonds. What does the Commonwealth Government offer to these road boards that are paying $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.? I think it is from $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. to $3\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. Here is an opportunity to do again what was done in the past. When the burden became too great for the Commonwealth and this Government we, in this House, repudiated the 6 per cent. and brought it down to 4 per cent., even in those days. There is one fine thing that the Commonwealth has done. It has reduced the rate of interest that banks can pay on fixed deposit. Savings Bank interest is down to 2 per cent. I want to know why these local authorities cannot participate in the lower rates of interest.

This is something that this Government can take up with the Commonwealth Government. It would apply not only to this State although, as I have mentioned, our road boards alone owe £700,000 and the municipalities, of which there are not so many, about an equal amount. In the case of the road boards a reduction of even 1 per cent. would effect a saving of about £7,000 a year, which is no small thing. The road boards are all right at the moment because they are receiving revenues which they cannot spend, but that is not usual. Most road boards are struggling and we have to remember the incredible amount of honorary and important work they do. Whatever else may be said about decentralisation, these 127 road boards truly represent decentralisation. Because of my association with them, and knowing the difficulties with which they are faced, I say that this is a matter that could well be taken up so as to relieve them of a proportion of their interest. It can be done and it would not be a complicated matter. They all deal with the State Treasury. Many of them have sinking funds at the Treasury and it would be quite a simple matter to make the

money available to them at the popular rate of interest today, which is certainly under $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Some of these loans still bear interest at 5 per cent. They were more than 5 per cent., but they have been pegged at 5 per cent. But that is too much for a local authority to pay.

Mr. Leslie: Did the hon. member take any action along those lines while he was a Minister?

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: My young friend must remember that the pegging of interest rates took place not so far distant in the past. It may not have been brought in by the present Commonwealth Government, but it is certainly quite recent. Since the State Governments and the Commonwealth Government are getting the advantage of the lower rate of interest, I am sorry that my friend should oppose the idea that the poor relation should participate. He will find plenty to object to, but he should never object when someone is trying to help him.

Mr. Leslie: You had the chance of doing it while you were on the job.

Mr. Cross: Your party would have objected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: I did many things. The hon. member's party will wake up bye and bye. This is a matter that we should take up with the Commonwealth Government. The State Government is not able to do it. Is the hon. member aware of that?

Mr. Leslie: Yes.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: The State Government could not peg rates of interest, or do anything at all. I am sure the hon. member will agree with me once he understands the full meaning of what I say. I discussed this subject for some time with members of road boards. I do not know that they have advocated it or agitated for it. The agitation should have come from them. I have never been a member of a road board. I have been associated with road boards, and my experience is that unless people ask for themselves they very seldom get helped. This is something I am suggesting for them. It will require, not an agitation by their Parliamentary representatives but by their own members and the Road Boards' Association. I am putting it up here for what it is worth. As for

what I did not do, well, there are many things I did not do. There are a few things I did do. I am not apologising. I am not here now to embarrass the Government which is not too easily embarrassed. This is something that we could take up with the Commonwealth Government, which is anxious, I find, to extend assistance to all and sundry. I know of no bodies more worthy of assistance than those which conduct the affairs of this State in an honorary capacity by way of local government.

If members go among the local authorities they will find that I have always endeavoured to assist them in every way. My main reason for rising was to air what I considered to be a just grievance in connection with this third party insurance. I have done that and placed before the Minister a proposal and he will have plenty of time to deal with it, because I know that Government departments must not be bumbled. This proposal would commence at the beginning of the next licensing period the 1st July next year. I conclude by thanking the many members who offered their kindly expressions of sympathy to me during the time that I was not too well and to say that I am feeling fit now still to represent Mt. Hawthorn. I have no regrets at resigning from the Ministry. I take occasion also, this being my first opportunity here, to thank the people of my electorate for their kindly treatment of me over a period of 20 years. I have no grievance; I feel that I have been well treated, and as long as my health holds good I shall be at peace with all men.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I desire to associate myself with the congratulations expressed by other members to you, Mr. Speaker, on your re-election to your high and honourable office. I can look back over many years to my first association with you. I have no doubt that when you were elected in the first instance you carried out your duties in the same efficient way as your predecessors did, and you have done so on each occasion that you have been re-elected. I desire also to congratulate the new members upon their election. I was rather interested to hear some of what may be termed the older members warning the new ones that they would be disillusioned so far as this House was concerned. No doubt that will be so; they will not be the only people who have become

disillusioned in this job, for even Ministers have found that out.

Mr. Leslie: Do not confess that.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am confessing it because that is the position. I remember being brought down from your illustrious position, Mr. Speaker, to this Bench. I had wonderful ideas of what I would be able to do for the health of the community, as I had accepted the portfolio of Minister for Health. I had not been in office very long before I found that whatever one wanted to do, irrespective of how bright the idea might be, one met with the same old story, "What are we going to do for money?" For the last 5½ years as Minister for Health I have only heard one man up to date giving any exposition of how to get money, and that was the member for Murchison. Whenever I have put his ideas before the Treasurer the hon. gentleman has failed to agree with them, so that I have not been able to get the money I required. After going through a period of war, when something like 1¾ million pounds a day has been spent for the purpose of killing people, I should be more disillusioned if someone says to me afterwards that so many thousands of pounds are required for saving the lives of people in this country, to assist in bringing the much required babies into the world, and I am then told that there is no money. If that time ever came I would think it was the occasion for me to find some other job. I should be properly disillusioned then.

I should be very bitterly disappointed and concerned if I thought the people of Australia were going to fall for that sort of story again. If some of them do they can only be regarded as chips of the old block. Last night one member said that soldiers would do this and would do that. That sort of story was told after the last war about the soldiers of that generation, but I should be very disappointed if such a story is told after this war. The member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe, who warned new members concerning what they would be able to do in this Chamber, also dealt somewhat trenchantly with what he termed the Executive of Parliament. I was somewhat disappointed in the hon. member, and sorry to see him take up such an attitude as he did last night. I have known him for many years. He is a man for whom I have had

a wonderful admiration, and I was the more surprised, therefore, at the tone of his speech. He said last night, as nearly as I can remember, that the Executive in his opinion was not elected from amongst the leaders of this House or of this side of the House.

Mr. Cross: The rank and file elect them.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I believe I can do this job reasonably well myself, Mr. Speaker. I wish to examine the position briefly. Prior to the election of any executive or Cabinet it would be somewhat difficult to take the 30 members on this side of the House and say that this half dozen or that half dozen comprised the leaders of this party. My contention is that the mere fact of Cabinet having been elected by the colleagues of those who comprise it, at least for the time being, they are in the position of the leaders from this side of the House.

Mr. Smith: I said leading men, not leaders.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member can have it either way. I am dealing with the members of this side of the House. I do not know that the hon. member can pick out many members from this side of the House who are the leading men from this side. I do not know how he would do that. He might, of course, take the leading men in the trade union movement or something of that sort. If he did that, then on his argument one of the latest additions to the House, the member for East Perth, who is president of the Metropolitan Council of the Australian Labour Party, would be one of the principal leaders on this side of the House. I do not think members on this side or the other side of the House elect their Executive from that point of view. The member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe also said, as it seemed to me, that executive members were elected because of two or three particular qualities, namely, popularity, personality, or ability to organise sufficient votes to enable them to secure office.

Let us examine that statement. I remember standing alongside the wall in the corner of the Chamber at the time I was Speaker, and alongside me was the present Agent General. The latter made this remark, "I have been looking around the front bench and am beginning to think we are getting old. I have also been looking at the cross-benches and have picked out a

good team there." It may be a coincidence but I point out that the only member on this front bench who was on the front bench that night was the present Premier. The remainder, with the exception of myself—I was then where you are now, Sir—came from the cross-benches. The hon. member was wrong in his deduction. I point out that this front bench, with the exception of the Minister for Education, was elected in 1939, and that in 1942, Parliament having decided to prolong its life, the Cabinet of the day again submitted itself to the party and the entire Cabinet was re-elected. Just after the last elections the Cabinet again came up before the party. The member for Mt. Hawthorn retired on his laurels, and plus the Minister for Education the same team was re-elected.

With all due respect to the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe, I say that a team that has been elected three times during that period must have been thought something of by its colleagues who elected it. The hon. member could not say they got in by a fluke, but if they did it was a fluke that occurred on three occasions. I am sorry he adopted the attitude he did last night. It puts me in mind of some of the old race-horses that have galloped on the track year after year, never winning a race, until they have become soured and commenced to savage the other horses around them. I hope he will not reach that stage. He is too good a man to get sore over things of that kind. He is big enough I think and sporting enough to take whatever comes his way. Whatever this front bench may be accused of it is at least the choice of those who have been elected to this side of the House.

Mr. Smith: I said something else which you have not dealt with, in connection with the election of the Executive.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member said many things with which I cannot deal now. I do not know what he is hinting at. He was a Minister himself for two years prior to 1939, but whether he was so because he came into the category of popularity, personality and ability, I do not know.

Mr. Smith: I mentioned another category.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: What the hon. member is deducing from the method by which the Executive is elected I do not know, but I point out that the same

results were obtained irrespective of how the members of that body were elected. I am not interested in any intrigue or anything of that kind; indeed I never was very keen to be a Minister. I think, Mr. Speaker, you have the better job of the two of us, and I will leave it at that. I felt a little worried last night because I thought that my old colleague and comrade was rather slipping back from where he formerly stood. The member for Beverley, the member for Mt. Marshall and the member for Subiaco have all mentioned briefly the necessity for doing something for the nurses. I am the proudest man in this State that here at least the nurses are coming into their own. I am also pleased that there are some people in Western Australia who appreciate that there is a section of the community that is doing most wonderful work. For some reason, during the last few weeks, those members have begun to appreciate the value of that work, and what the nurses have been through.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: That is not fair.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I was a member of the Perth Hospital Board and have been associated with hospitals for a long time. I tried at least 15 years ago to organise the nurses, and I was looked upon as a red-ragger from the Trades Hall.

Mr. Thorn: You still are.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I had the temerity to attend a meeting of the A.T.N.A. when the late Dr. Officer was in the chair. Since then I have been in chilling chambers at Wyndham and other places but I have never met with such a cold reception as I did that night. What I was told then was that I wanted to organise the nurses and get them into the Trades Hall so that they would be able to throw down their bandages and walk out. That is what some people at that time thought we were after. I am proud of the nurses who constituted the executive of that organisation. They had a long struggle, which I watched with keen interest from the outside, because I knew that if I entered the arena that would be the end of things. They lodged their claim in the Arbitration Court and then came to a dead-end because they had no-one to appear for them in the court. Incidentally I may say that one needs some experience to appear in that court, and I happen to have had some little experience. I went to the late Sister Jones and asked her how the nurses were getting on, and she explained that they were

up against a dead-end. The outcome was that I represented them in the court.

I know something of the B.M.A. and I know something of the nice people of the A.T.N.A., who looked askance at the idea of the organisation being mixed up in any common Arbitration Court proceedings. That case put the nurses on the map in the matter of the adjustment of their conditions. If there is any reason why they are enjoying better conditions now, it is because of the proceedings they took in the Arbitration Court. This applies to the general nurses. The mental nurses, of whom the majority are men, have been organised in a union for many years and have been working under an Arbitration Court award for many years. Today we are in the position of having wages pegged by the Commonwealth. Regardless of what this or any other Government may wish to do, unless the employees can prove an anomaly, there is no chance of their getting a rise in wages. This sudden and greatly appreciated interest in the nurses is all to the good and, if the nurses have any sense, they will use it to the best of their ability.

I wish to deal briefly with the position of hospitals and institutions generally. I am bitterly disappointed at the results of the Referendum taken on the 19th August. I am convinced—and I have already pointed this out—that as far as the health of the community is concerned, if we have to depend upon the State for finance, we shall never get any further.

Mr. Seward: Nonsense!

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member knows as well as I do that this State, in conjunction with other States, handed over the purse strings to the Commonwealth Government when it approved of the Financial Agreement.

Mr. Seward: But what did you do for the hospitals before that?

Mr. Thorn: Why not get some of the money back?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Since then, uniform taxation has been adopted. Does any member in his right senses believe that we shall ever get taxation back? This State has no right to tax its own people because the Commonwealth Government could then step in and tax them out of sight. We have to go to the Commonwealth cap-in-hand if we want any money for social services.

Four or five weeks ago I went to Canberra to a conference of Ministers for Health, the second of its kind I had attended. At the conference I sat back with great satisfaction when I heard the Commonwealth Treasurer, Mr. Chifley, talking about free hospitalisation. He was going to give £50,000 on a pound-for-pound subsidy basis to assist tuberculous cases, and another £50,000 on a pound-for-pound basis to do something else. I thought to myself it was the finest thing I had ever heard.

Mr. Thorn: There is nothing to prevent your doing it now.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member does not know what he is talking about. If we got the 6s. per day, calculating on the figures for 1942-43, we would make £39,000.

Mr. Seward: It seems to be your idea to make something.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member has tried to make something all his life and has never had the brains to do it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not mind interjections, but the hon. member must not squeal if he gets hurt.

Mr. Thorn: You are doing the squealing.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am not.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am simply saying that I am disappointed with the result of the Referendum. I will tell the hon. member—

Mr. SPEAKER: Tell the Chair instead, and then we shall get along better.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have abided by majority rule all my life; in fact, I was suckled on it. I have accepted the majority vote throughout Australia, but that does not make me the less disappointed. Now let me deal with the 6s. a day proposal. If the hon. member knows anything at all about hospital matters, he will appreciate that only indigent people can be admitted to the Perth Hospital. What is the position that arises? A man goes along there very sick, and is shown to the out-patients department. As long as he can sit up and talk, he is interrogated by a clerk as to his financial position, whether he has a home, or whether anyone is likely to leave him money. All this answering of questions has to be gone through before he can be admitted.

That is the position under our present social system.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Cannot you alter it?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, if the Commonwealth Government will assist us.

Mr. Thorn: Then why do not you alter it?

Mr. McDonald: The Commonwealth could assist.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I will tell the House what the Commonwealth offered. The proposal was that for every person entering a public hospital or ward, the Commonwealth would allow the State 6s. a day on condition that the means test was abolished. The daily average of patients in the Perth Hospital is 385.

Mr. Seward: There are other hospitals besides Perth.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Perth Hospital has double what the others have, but this applies to all the others. The Perth Hospital debits every patient with 10s. 6d. per day, which also applies elsewhere. The actual collections average 4s. 9d. per day for the Perth Hospital, and for the Perth Hospital and public wards throughout the State the average is 5s. 2d. If we were granted 6s. per day, on the 1942-43 figures we would make 10d. per day on every bed occupied in the State, and the people who seek treatment in the public wards would have no further worry about paying hospital expenses.

We have had a sad tale of tuberculosis in this State, but I am pleased to say that the incidence has fallen much lower. I am convinced that if we could get sufferers to enter the sanatorium as soon as the disease is detected and submit to early and proper treatment, there is a possibility of the incidence being much further decreased. This could be done if we had early and free treatment by expert medical men and provided we found some way of keeping the wife and family while the breadwinner was in the sanatorium. When a man today is found to have a spot on the lung and it is suggested that he go to the sanatorium, his first question, logically enough, is, "Who is going to keep my wife and family while I am there?" And so he does not go. Consequently, the disease progresses, and by the time he does reach the sanatorium it has advanced to a stage where we can do nothing for him.

The Commonwealth proposed to assist by paying 6s. for such patients and in addition a tuberculous man with a wife and children would be entitled to £3 5s. a week on entering the sanatorium. He would get free hospital treatment and, with salaried doctors in attendance, would have no medical expenses to meet. That in itself is worth something. An Eastern States expert told me that if this scheme is put into operation and people pick up quickly, there is a possibility of eradicating this terrible disease, tuberculosis, within the next 20 or 30 years. I want to make this very definite, for I am getting very, very tired of having to say "No" to people. A Minister's job would be a very fine one if he could say "Yes" to every request. As regards this war period, we have been told that neither men nor materials are available. I am very much afraid that if we do not move ourselves we are going to have another dearth besides men and materials—a dearth of money. I know the amount the Minister for Education wants for schools. I also know what I need for hospitals; and the Minister for Industrial Development knows what he requires. If I go to the Premier, he tells me, "All I have got from the Loan Council is £200,000, a mere flea-bite." A huge amount is needed in this State alone for hospital expenses and for putting nurses' conditions on a better footing. Unless a large amount of money is forthcoming, there is going to be a very bad time in front of hospitals and other institutions.

During the last week or two there has been a great deal of discussion about the Claremont Mental Hospital. The institution was one of the first places I saw after taking control as Minister. I came away from Claremont with a heartbreak, and I have had many heartbreaks since when coming away from the institution. It is overcrowded. It was built some 30 years ago, and therefore is now obsolete. The Government purchased 2,200 acres of land with a view to putting up a farm colony for the Claremont patients. Like the Perth Hospital, this project was caught up in the maelstrom of war; and the position is getting worse at Claremont. Moreover, what applies to Claremont applies to almost every public institution in Western Australia. It may be said of our hospitals that, like Topsy, they "just grewed." That was the case in

the wheatbelt, and similar hospitals were built for small populations elsewhere.

There is not one hospital in Western Australia today which could be called a first-class, up-to-date, efficient hospital. That is so because the hospitals simply "grewed" and "grewed," and today nobody has had any money to stop that sort of growth and put the buildings in proper condition. That is not much good to the people of this country. Dr. Hislop tells us what the Health Department ought to do. That hon. member, according to what I read in the Press, thinks that all that is necessary is to wave a wand and ample funds will be forthcoming. I read the "Sunday Times" article, "What I would do if I had a million of money." It was a day-dream. I too have had day-dreams of what I could do with a million pounds. But if we are to bring our hospitals and medical services up-to-date in Western Australia, it will cost more than a million of money.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Before tea, I was dealing with the staff position at the Claremont institution. When one thinks of institutions, one's thoughts naturally flow out to that grand old man, Mr. Alfred Carson, who passed away this morning. I had the unique experience of having been associated with him for some time, particularly as Minister for Health, and also with the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the National Party and Mr. Alex Monger, who were the trustees of the Silver Chain District Nursing Association and the Bush Nursing Association. It was a wonder to me at all times to see this very small, frail man, 85 years of age, but with a giant intellect and the heart of a lion, doing this good work. Less than a fortnight ago he called the trustees together and told them he had drawn up a new constitution for the Silver Chain Nursing Association; he said that he was fading away and felt that he had little longer to live and his desire was to leave the association, of which he had been president for 30 years, in such a position as to enable whoever followed him to take up the work and carry on. It was with profound regret that I heard this morning he had passed away. I pay this very sincere tribute to his memory; he was a man the State could ill-afford to lose. Although of great age he was still mentally alert. He had

celebrated the diamond jubilee of his wedding; he was married in 1884. He has had a wonderful record and his passing away will be, as I said, a great loss to Western Australia. I am sure all who knew him tender their deep sympathy to those who belonged to him.

Dealing with the Claremont institution, I wish to place on record an episode that occurred there a week or two ago, because all kinds of peculiar and ridiculous statements have been made concerning it. The institution, I want to say, is no credit to our present social system. Notwithstanding that the nurses walked out and left the institution in a very deplorable position, the female nurses had my sympathy and they knew it; because their number had dwindled from 90 to 45 and they had been working 12 and 14 hours a day without weekly or annual holidays. They were completely worn out. They issued an ultimatum, saying that they could not carry on the work any longer. I went to Claremont and discussed the matter with the executive of their union—it was a big executive—Dr. Prendergast, the acting Inspector General, the Under Secretary for Health and Mr. Stitfold. I pointed out that the whole question of staff was in the hands of the Manpower Board.

The outcome of the discussion was an endeavour to contact the Federal Minister for Health, Senator Fraser. I met him in the corridor here at lunchtime and he decided to go to Claremont to discuss the matter. The result of his interview was that he had a telephonic conversation with the Prime Minister, who is also Minister for Defence. I was notified by the Senator's secretary that he was calling a conference for two o'clock and he told me of a telegram which he had received from the Prime Minister. Brigadier Hoad, Mr. Stitfold, Senator Fraser and I attended the conference and we had read to us a telegram from the Prime Minister authorising the Senator to transfer 35 female personnel from the Army to Claremont. They were transferred and worked for about two days.

The next I knew was a ring from the Manpower Board to say that the female personnel from the Army were being withdrawn from the hospital. I telephoned the Under Secretary for Health and he said, "Yes, I have just heard it." I then telephoned the Premier, who also said he had just heard it, so I was about the last to hear it. However, I got in touch with the

Premier and we then got into telephonic communication with the Prime Minister again and he undertook to have the Army personnel restored. At this time the nurses had issued an ultimatum stating that unless the Army personnel were restored by four o'clock they would walk out. At ten minutes to four the Premier gave me an assurance from the Prime Minister that they would be restored and I conveyed that information to the union. It was not until I got to Parliament House at 25 minutes past four—in fact I was in my seat—that the Premier told me, to use his own language, "It has all come unstuck." I discussed the matter with the Secretary to the Prime Minister and he said that, although the Prime Minister was the leading Parliamentary man in Australia and Minister for Defence, General Blamey was one step higher and he had ordered the return of those girls. I am sorry for Brigadier Hoad; he seemed to have got into trouble because he had taken orders from civilians instead of from his chief. Members can imagine my feelings; because of my assurance the staff had continued work instead of going out at four o'clock.

I made every effort to find the secretary of the union and ascertained that he lived at Osborne Park. It was about seven o'clock before I could get a letter sent to him. I got it typed by one of the staff at Parliament House. The secretary had gone to Perth and did not receive the letter until he got home late at night. The first that the workers at the institution heard of the matter was when they read the news in "The West Australian" newspaper the following day, when they learnt that the military personnel at the hospital were being returned to their quarters. I had been associated with trade unions long enough to know what would happen. I therefore jumped into a car and at nine o'clock was at the institution and meeting the organisation. The members were very savage. I may say I used all the pleas in the world and put on my best snile, but it was of no avail. The staff were going out at 12 o'clock and they went out at 12 o'clock, lock, stock and barrel. I then had 800 odd mental male patients on hand with three doctors and two or three inebriates to take some food to them.

A suggestion was made to me that an appeal might be made to the staffs of the three chief hospitals, the Perth, Fremantle and Children's, for some of their members to take over for the time being until we

found our way out of the difficulty. The matrons had already been contacted. The superintendents of the Perth, Fremantle and Children's Hospitals met me at 12 o'clock at the Perth Hospital. I put the whole facts before them. They were sympathetic and prepared to help, but two points were raised. One was put by the Superintendent of the Perth Hospital who said that under the award trainees had to work a straight eight hours. On his quota of 32 nurses he had to find 18, and he could not possibly carry on unless permission were granted for the working of a broken shift if necessary. The other point was raised by the Superintendent of the Fremantle Hospital who asked whether in the event of the nurses going to Claremont for one month—that was the maximum time we were asking from any individual—would that time have to be made up?

We got in touch with the President and Acting Secretary of the union and discussed the matter at a quarter past two. They had no objection and further contact with the President of the Arbitration Court facilitated matters in that connection. We then met all the members of the Nurses Registration Board who were available. The board consists of Dr. Henzell of Wooroloo, Dr. Park, Commissioner of Public Health, who was in the North-West at the time, and three ladies. Dr. Henzell was unable to come to Perth but agreed to the proposition. However, the three ladies said that under no circumstances would they agree. That meant we had to postpone matters so far as the board was concerned until the full board met. All three hospitals rang to say they had their full quota of volunteers prepared to go down to Claremont immediately. When the block occurred we had to get in touch with them again. I gave my undertaking that in the event of the board's not agreeing to the month spent at Claremont being accepted as part of the training, I would appeal to Parliament to protect the trainees in a Bill of which I had already given notice.

A meeting took place on the Monday and the three ladies were evidently too good for the two men. They did not agree. I got that information at a quarter past five on the Monday and on Tuesday went to the Asylum again and explained every item to the 32 nurses who were already working there. I explained exactly what was going to happen. I said they had to trust me and my efforts in Parliament. If Par-

liament disagreed with my suggestion, then they would have to carry on and work that extra month. That is how matters stood on the Tuesday. Irrespective of what anybody else says, there was never any intention to work any of them for one month. We left the girls to think it over and when they called me back they said they had agreed to carry on. Somebody else went down and talked to them and I was quite pleased that happened. The whole 32 sent a signed letter asking me not to introduce legislation because they believed they could be relieved in a fortnight, and there would be no occasion to work the extra time. Consequently there was no need for the clause that had been drafted by the Crown Law Department.

Although those girls went there, only 13 are left. The rest have been relieved by others who have gone to work there. Thirteen have only just started, and none was there for more than a fortnight. All that has been said about the Minister and the department trying to work the institution from the inside as a training school, was so much nonsense. I am pleased to say that was the first time in my career that any person or set of persons had been let down after an assurance given by me. That occurred because General Blamey was much higher in the Army than I am ever likely to be. It is as well to know what we are up against so far as securing nurses and domestic staff for hospitals is concerned. Undoubtedly the Fighting Forces rightly come first. Particularly should that be so at a time when things are as bad as they were a couple of years ago. I unhesitatingly say, however, that in view of the numbers in the services in Australia at present, there seems to be no reason why there should not be some let-up and why some of these nurses should not be made available.

General nurses who have been taken by the Army from ordinary hospitals in the State number 293. In the Air Force there are 51, so this State has supplied no fewer than 344 fully trained nurses for the Army and the Air Force. I submit that in view of our small population and the limited number of nurses being trained, to take 344 nurses of necessity makes a very big hole in the nursing fraternity. Whether all the nurses so taken are fully employed I am not in a position to say and it would be very difficult to obtain the information,

even if one set out to do so. It seems to me, however, that civilians have as much right to expect reasonable treatment as have men who are not at the moment doing very much fighting so far as Australia is concerned. The question has been asked: Why do we not train more? It is said that if we did this or if we did that we could get more trainees. That is not our difficulty at all.

Applicants for training are always in excess of the demand for trainees. At the moment all the hospitals have a waiting list. Attached to the hospitals are trainee schools which the trainees attend for six weeks. They are taken ten at a time. I obtained figures today to show that at the Perth Hospital there are 20 waiting to be called in for training, at Fremantle there are 20, at the Children's Hospital four and under the departmental scheme, four. These have been examined educationally and medically and are ready to be trained as soon as the matron calls for them. It is not a question of getting a sufficient number of applicants. The difficulty is to keep the trained nurses once they have been trained.

Not only has there been a gigantic drain on the Army, but there is always a tremendous wastage through the marriage of nurses. The girls have three years' training and soon afterwards get married and that goes on all the time. People do not seem to appreciate the drag that the Fighting Services have been on the trained nursing staff. If they have taken 344 trained nurses, members can imagine what has happened to the domestic staffs! The Manpower Board has all my sympathy. The task of that board to try to keep these institutions at anything like a reasonable standard so far as staff is concerned, must be tremendous. We receive a good deal of cheap advice as how to do things. I can assure members we do not want advice, but practical assistance and unless that is forthcoming the ward will have to be closed. Let me give an idea of what occurs. At Claremont we erected a £32,000 hospital ward with 60 beds. As soon as we had it finished the Army took it over pending the completion of Hollywood Hospital. When that was completed the Army walked out and we now have a ward with 60 beds available for sick people—T.B. cases or cases of any other kind—but no staff for it.

That ward is completely locked up, but immediately staff can be found it will be opened, and will relieve some of the crowding that is taking place. I have listened to two speeches directed at the other part of my job. They were made by members representing mining districts. One was by the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie and the other by the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe. I have carefully read these speeches and, strangely enough, they are not exactly co-operative. The member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie was rather critical of what we should have done but have not done as a Government, and particularly as a department, to facilitate starting on the mines when the opportunity occurs. On the other hand, the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe rather threw a damper on mining, generally, in Western Australia.

I want to assure the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie that the State Government has endeavoured, as far as possible, to preserve our goldmines. He will remember that when the first call was made for men from the mining industry, a delegation left here and went to the Eastern States. It was successful in obtaining from the Commonwealth Government a promise that at least 4,500 men would be retained in the industry. As a matter of fact, the number has never been below 4,500. It would be a shade over if all the prospectors and mine owners were taken into consideration. At that time we were given a grant of £100,000 for the purpose of keeping the mines ready. I can assure the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie, and other members, that that £100,000 has been wisely spent, even though we still have ghost towns here in places like Reedy, Big Bell, etc.

Mr. Marshall: Reedy is creeping along.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is so. The mines have been kept open and unwatered and, as far as possible, timbered, so that immediately the opportunity arises they can be worked. As the member for Murchison says, the Triton mine at Reedy is already creeping along with a few extra men. While I was at a conference in the East a few weeks ago, I took the opportunity of discussing, with whoever would listen to me, one of our worries, namely, the fact that the munition works have taken certain machinery from some of the mines. They took some motors from Big Bell, and one and a half engines from Tindal's.

Mr. Kelly: Three!

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I did not know that. It is obvious that it is no good getting men for our mines if there is no machinery on the surface. I saw the authorities in Canberra and Melbourne, and was given a definite assurance, particularly in Melbourne, that a committee had been appointed which had ordered from America and England the machinery that could not be manufactured in Australia, so that prior to demobilisation it would be placed on these mines, ready for any work that had to be done. The Mines Department welcomes any criticism, even from the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie, or anyone else.

Mr. Marshall: Or even from me.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member only wants to find money. I do not know that he is too keen on gold; he wants to get it some other way. Turning to minerals, I am pleased to say that some of our minerals that have been lying dormant have been given a fillip during the war. The Commonwealth Government appointed Mr. Newman Controller General of Minerals. Mr. Newman appointed deputy controllers in each State, and he was wise enough to appoint in Western Australia the Under Secretary for Mines, Mr. Telfer. I want to pay a tribute to the Under Secretary for the energy, ability and excellent work he has done in producing the minerals from this State.

Mr. Marshall: And any other job he takes on.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes. We take great pleasure in the projects that have been started. At Wodgina we have been producing tantalite in fairly big quantities, together with beryl, which is a very valuable mineral. It is so valuable that not more than 15 tons is taken in any one shipment. At Greenbushes we have produced tin and tantalite. An extraordinary amount of tantalite has been discovered there. At the Edna May wolfram is being produced; at Norseman people are producing pyrites and blue asbestos is being obtained from the Hamersley Ranges. An important feature in connection with all this new production is the fact that these mines have not been opened up in such a way that the minerals will be dragged out of them and the mines then closed down as soon as the war is over, but so that they will be able to compete in the peace-time markets. That is not the case in

the eastern part of Australia, where they have simply torn out what minerals they could and then apparently allowed the country to revert to its original condition. We are very hopeful that the mineral position in Western Australia will be such that after the war we shall be able to carry on with our production.

Mr. McDonald: What is the prospect of sulphur production?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is particularly good. We are obtaining a certain amount of pyrites from Norseman. There was difficulty for a while because the company that used it was prepared to pay only on the trucks at Guildford or Bassendean, where it was being used. On occasions it took as long as a fortnight for the pyrites to come down, so that as much as £2,000 worth of material was sometimes on the rails. This difficulty has been overcome by the State Government advancing up to 85 per cent. of the value of the raw material, and later getting a recoup. The firm has changed over its plants, at fairly considerable expense, for the purpose of roasting the pyrites to produce its sulphur. It is extending its works as it is believed that the body of ore is a huge one, with no likelihood of falling away.

I just want to deal briefly with the argument put forward by the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe. It seemed to support the idea that we were promising the soldiers work in the mines. I do not know of any such promise made to the soldiers. I think members will agree with me that the goldmining industry is important to the economy of this State, and I believe that, whatever else I might think about gold, it is my job, as Minister, to do everything possible to have these mines ready to absorb any men, soldiers or anyone else, who are prepared to go mining. I suggest to the hon. member that he made rather an unfortunate reference to the men who may have been on the Kokoda Trail with their lieutenant or captain who, to use his language, kept telling them, "Cheer up, boys, you are having a rough spin, but there is a good job for you at the 2,000-ft. level at Kalgoorlie!"

Mr. Smith: I did not say at Kalgoorlie.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is the only place in this State where there would be a 2,000-ft. level. As one who sat

in heaps of mud in France, I want to tell the hon. member that had the C.O. come along and called for volunteers to go into mines at the 1,500 or 2,500 ft. levels for the duration of the war, he would have been killed by the rush of applicants. The boys on the Kokoda trail—and two of mine are among the number—have said that had they been called up to go to Kalgoorlie or any other mine from that malaria-infested place, someone would have been killed in the rush to get away.

Mr. Smith: They were anxious to get out of the industry when the war broke out.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not agree with that statement.

Mr. Smith: We have been told how many left the industry.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That only serves to emphasise the adventurous and patriotic spirit of the men who were working in the mines. During the 1914-18 war men enlisted from very shallow mines from which there was no occasion to rush away owing to bad air conditions or anything of that sort. I say the miners in the industry in this State are as fine and patriotic a body of men as will be found anywhere. When the war broke out I was approached by General Lloyd to try to stop the goldminers and coalminers from enlisting, and what the men said about my trying to prevent them from engaging in a patriotic job is too bad to repeat.

The member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe quoted certain figures cited by me in 1942. Perhaps I should have corrected the report, but that is a thing I have never done. The figures I have before me show that in 1938 and 1939 the totals were 16,418 and 16,199.

Mr. Smith: What about the relief fund figures?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member said that I had stated that there were so many men working in the industry and he contended that there were fewer than 10,000. If the hon. member looks at the report of the department, he will find that a large number of men who work in the industry are not employees but are prospectors, small mineowners or prospect-area holders. Those men not being actual employees do not come under the Mine Workers' Relief Fund. There are thousands of men working in the industry who have not been

in the employ of a company, and they represent the difference between the 10,000 odd mentioned by the hon. member and the number actually working in the industry. At one stage no fewer than 2,000 men were engaged under the Government prospecting scheme alone. Whatever mistake I might have made, the difference between 17,000 and 16,000 is not much.

Mr. Smith: How many of this class are in the 4,500?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I should say nearly 400. The actual number of miners today would total about 4,100. The hon. member also dealt with the conditions of mining generally. No one would suggest that mining is a job that any man would want, but I do know that when men have once gone into the mines, it is difficult to drag them away. I have even found it difficult to get men suffering from early silicosis to leave the mines. The reason, of course, is simple. The wages are high and the hours are reasonable. When a miner finishes his shift, he has 16 hours to himself and is at no man's beck and call. Notwithstanding the statement of the hon. member, very few of the men want to leave the mines.

Mr. Leahy: That is the unfortunate part about it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I agree. Some of the members sitting behind me have worked in the mines and they know that men will continue in the industry as long as they can. In the Fingall Mine when men aged between 35 and 40 died like flies, the others continued to work on contract. I have had experience of mining unions and I know there have been many resolutions passed unanimously and enthusiastically with a view to abolishing contract work in the mines. But has contract work been abolished? Of course not. The men would not agree to it. They want the full results of their labour. If they can make £25 or £30 a week, they are not going to Fremantle to make 9s. or 10s. a day at carting bricks or something else. It is the big money that is the attraction.

I have some interesting figures to quote to show how the incidence of silicosis and tuberculosis has been reduced in the gold-mining industry. This is a comparison of results of the periodical examination of mineworkers from the inception of the examinations in 1925—

First Examination (1925-1926).				%
Normals	..	..	3,239	80.5
Silicosis early	..	..	459	11.4
Silicosis advanced	..	..	183	4.5
Silicosis plus tuberculosis	..	..	131	3.3
Tuberculosis only	..	..	11	.3
Total number of men examined				4,023
				100.0

Second Examination (1927).				%
Normals	..	..	3,116	83.6
Silicosis early	..	..	381	10.2
Silicosis advanced	..	..	93	2.5
Silicosis plus tuberculosis	..	..	128	3.4
Tuberculosis only	..	..	10	.3
Total number of men examined				3,728
				100.0

Eighth Examination (1933).				%
Normals	..	..	2,920	86.5
Silicosis early	..	..	379	11.2
Silicosis advanced	..	..	60	1.8
Silicosis plus tuberculosis	..	..	15	.4
Tuberculosis only	..	..	3	.1
Total number of men examined				3,377
				100.0

Fifteenth Examination (1940).				%
Normals	..	..	7,023	96.218
Silicosis early	..	..	257	3.521
Silicosis advanced	..	..	11	.151
Silicosis plus tuberculosis	..	..	4	.055
Tuberculosis only	..	..	4	.055
Total number of men examined				7,299
				100.000

Eighteenth Examination (1943).				%
Normals	..	..	3,932	91.47
Silicosis early	..	..	325	7.57
Silicosis advanced	..	..	32	.75
Silicosis plus tuberculosis	..	..	5	.12
Tuberculosis only	..	..	4	.09
Total number of men examined				4,298
				100.00

This examination took place after the cream of the men—the fellows of fine physical development—had enlisted to enter the services.

Improvement since first Examination (1925) to Latest normal Examination Figures (1940).

	1925	1940
	%	%
Normals	80.5	96.218
Silicosis early	11.4	3.521
Silicosis advanced	4.5	.151
Silicosis plus tuberculosis ..	3.3	.055
Tuberculosis only .. ..	.3	.055

The figures since 1940 are not a true reflection of normal conditions due to the enlistment of the healthy normal mine worker, thus affecting the ordinary proportion of normal to other than normal mine workers. It may be stated that the reduction of the incidence of the diseases associated with goldmining was due to a combination of factors, including:

- (a) regular medical examinations;
- (b) improved ventilation methods;
- (c) appointment of special ventilation inspectors;
- (d) benefits of Mine Workers' Relief Fund enabling workers to leave industry on compensation earlier than otherwise they would have been able to do.

Recent amendments to the Mine Workers' Relief Act provide for added benefits including free treatment for the disease of tuberculosis, which is not an industrial disease at all. The mine worker suffering from tuberculosis is prohibited from further employment in the industry not because he necessarily contracted the disease in the industry, but to prevent him from infecting his work-mates.

Concerning the hon. member's comments that there were never at any time 10,000 men paying into the fund, I would point out that from 1937 to 1942 there were never less than 9,000 subscribers, the peak being reached in 1941, when there were 9,928.

With reference to the statement by the hon. member that the amendment of the Mine Workers Relief Act foreshadowed by the late Hon. J. Scaddan had never been carried into effect, I would refer him to Section 56 of the Act. Comparison of the remarks of the late Mr. Scaddan with this section will show that they agree almost word for word.

The number of miners receiving benefits under Section 56 is as follows:—

31/1/1934	3
31/1/1935	5
31/1/1936	3
31/1/1937	12
31/1/1938	10
31/1/1939	10
31/1/1940	10
31/1/1941	10
31/1/1942	11
31/1/1943	11
31/1/1944	13

It will be noted that compensation for these cases can be granted only where the mine worker becomes incapacitated or where earning power is materially prejudiced by a disease or malady which may be legitimately attributed to the nature of his employment as a mine worker in the mining industry of Western Australia. Failure to obtain compensation usually arises from inability on the part of the mine worker to establish that his complaint arose out of and was caused by his work as a mine worker. What Mr. Scaddan claimed has been put in operation; and the board, on which the Ministers are represented, has authority to use Section 56 of the Act. Consequently I think the Mines Department has done, and is doing, everything possible in the circumstances to keep the mines in such a condition that they will be ready to work. I have no doubt as to what will happen when that time comes along. I have heard the member for Murchison say on more than one occasion, and I entirely agree with him, that upon the opening-up of several new mines, big mines, they should be opened up right from the start with proper ventilation and proper sanitation, so that they will be decent to work in.

I have told the people in the Eastern States that Western Australia does not want to be associated with any panel to deal with the mining industry. Mr. Jenson told me in Melbourne that if there was a panel, there would be a general survey of mining and minerals throughout Australia. I told Mr. Jenson that Mr. Brinsden could represent the Chamber of Mines if he liked, but that so far as the Government and the Mines Department of Western Australia were concerned, we wanted our own representation. Mr. Jenson agreed that as far as goldmining was concerned Western Australia had at least 78 per cent. of the goldmining carried on in the Commonwealth, and that it would be far preferable, in the event of

a panel being constituted, for us to set up our own committee and give advice to members of the panel. I told him we were not prepared to accept advice from anybody regarding the operation of the goldmining industry in this State. So far as I am concerned—and I believe the Government and Parliament will support me in this—we will stand to our guns.

Mr. Marshall: Will that deal with other minerals?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Mining other than goldmining depends largely on markets, but there is always a market for gold. Mining of other minerals in Australia has depended upon the Commonwealth for markets during the war. I shall mention another matter referred to by the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe, in regard to workers' compensation. I do not know whether the hon. member was of the opinion that we as a Government were responsible for not having a better system of workers' compensation. However, I can assure the hon. member that so far as I am concerned, and on behalf of the other members of the Government, we are always prepared to go as far as he will go with us.

Mr. Smith: It depends on what you do.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: When a member rises here and criticises the Government and the Minister, surely we have a right of reply. In his very first sentence the hon. member, after saying something about Mark Twain, told young members that he was surprised Ministers did not get up to reply to what he had advanced.

Mr. Smith: I did not express dissatisfaction with the Government as regards workers' compensation, but only drew attention to the matter.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Workers' compensation is a very important plank of the Labour platform, and the hon. member knows that. In conclusion I wish to reiterate my hope that the future of Western Australia will be all for the benefit of the people of Western Australia. Like the member for Murchison, I am very worried about what is going to happen in Western Australia or any other part of the Commonwealth. Like the hon. member, I do not care where the money required comes from. I am not going to be told any more that we can find millions of pounds for fighting purposes but are unable to find any money for social services in Western Australia. I hope that will never come about; if it does, all I can say

is that not only will State members of Parliaments not be very popular, but that State Parliaments and Commonwealth Parliaments also will be very unpopular so far as the people of this country are concerned.

Mr. SEWARD (Pingelly): I desire first of all to join with those other members who have taken part in this debate in congratulating you, Sir, on your re-election to your high office. You have worthily carried out the traditions of your predecessors and I sincerely hope you will be spared to occupy your position as long as your colleagues have a majority on the other side of the House. Precedent, of course, will not permit me to say more than that. I also offer my congratulations to the new Minister on his promotion to Cabinet rank. When congratulating him first personally after his election I did express regret at his elevation, because I thought his enthusiasm and energy might infuse some activity into the Ministry and probably prolong their occupancy of the Treasury bench. To the new members I also offer my congratulations. Unfortunately, I was called away and did not hear all their speeches. I had the pleasure of listening to the new member for Nelson. His speech was particularly pleasing to me from the point of view that he gave utterance to something which we on this side of the House have been trying to tell the Government for some considerable time, but so far it has not assimilated the information. Coming from him, it may carry more weight and bring about the necessary reform in the particular institution to which he referred.

Before proceeding to speak on one or two items mentioned in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech, I would like to say a word or two on a question that I asked in this House a few weeks ago. On the 1st August I asked the Minister for Railways whether he or his department had supplied the Commonwealth Government with information to the effect that the Western Australian Government would transport all wheat in this State to ports by the 31st October. The Minister answered no; he said that an assurance was given. Well, possibly the Minister can tell us the difference between information and assurance, but the difference is so small that it is hardly worth talking about. He then went on to say that the assurance was conditional on sufficient coal being made available to the Railway Department; if it were

the department could transport 17,000 tons of wheat weekly. The quantity of wheat transported from January to December last per week was 6,600 tons, so that if the Minister's estimate—if we may use that term—is correct, the department would transport nearly three times as much per week as it has done for the 12 months ended last December.

The Minister for Justice: The railways would have done so had the coal been available.

Mr. SEWARD: In the season 1938-39, when we had the largest crop for ten years, the Railway Department transported 14,500 tons of wheat per week, so the Minister proposed to better that achievement by 2,500 tons per week. What the department actually did was to shift a weekly average of 8,478 tons for part of the year that has expired. That is just about half of what the Minister promised; and in some weeks the quantity was as low as 3,500 tons. When the railways shifted 14,500 tons weekly in 1938-39, of course the department had the use of the rollingstock that has since been made available to the Commonwealth Government. But that was not the cause of the department's failure to live up to its guarantee this year. As the Minister himself said, it was because sufficient coal was not available. According to the report of the Commissioner of Railways, which was laid on the Table of the House a few days ago, the consumption of coal for train running purposes last year was 347,000 tons, which was 8,000 tons more than the department had had in any year for the past ten years. The previous highest quantity was 339,000 tons.

Turning to the tonnage which was carried, we find that last year the department consumed the largest quantity of coal in the last 10 years and transported the smallest goods tonnage, namely, 2,988,000 tons.

Mr. Cross: The power house uses a lot more coal now.

Mr. SEWARD: In 1938, when the greatest quantity of wheat per week was shifted, the railways consumed 3,532,000 tons, which was an increased tonnage of 544,000 tons over that transported last year.

The Minister for Justice: What rot! Do you mean those figures are nonsense?

Mr. SEWARD: I am quoting the Commissioner's report. The Minister can turn up the figures for himself. Possibly the Minister may fall back on the excuse that

ships would not have been available to transport the wheat after it has been shifted to the coast. But even that excuse cannot avail, because on two occasions—the last occasion only this week—the British food representative, Sir Bankes Amery, has pointed out that ships were available at any time that there was food for them to take from Australia.

Mr. Cross: That has been denied.

Mr. SEWARD: Not authoritatively.

Mr. Cross: Did you not see the denial in the Press?

The Minister for Justice: There has been an average loss of 1,500 tons of coal a month.

Mr. SEWARD: The position is that, owing to the inability of the Railway Department to shift the wheat, the wheatgrowers of the State have been heavily penalised. Had all the wheat been transported to the ports this year and the bins emptied, the bins could have been made use of again this year, but that is not the case. The result is that additional bins will have to be built at the expense of the wheatgrower. There is another disadvantage that is suffered by the wheatgrowers in this State. In the Eastern States the growers are being guaranteed a minimum price for oats. No such guarantee is available in this State because of our surplus of wheat. So I again say that the reply given by the Minister to my question was not accurate.

The Minister for Justice: It was accurate.

Mr. SEWARD: Because, as I pointed out, the coal was available, as he can see from the Commissioner's report. The Railway Department has not lived up to its responsibilities.

The Minister for Justice: I tell you definitely that the coal was not available.

Mr. SEWARD: Turning to the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech, I wish to refer to the paragraph dealing with firewood. It reads—

The quantity of firewood supplied through the Forests Department during the past six months was 85 per cent. greater than for the corresponding period last year.

Strangely enough, we were not told what it cost to get that extra supply of firewood. Last year the sum of £34,505 was spent in providing firewood for that period, but the estimated expenditure for this year was £75,000. So if that money has been spent, it means that we have an 85 per cent. increase in firewood supply for 100 per cent.

increase in expenditure. But that is not the worst feature of this matter. There is another feature, namely, that for months past hundreds of tons of firewood have been burnt weekly in various sawmills in the State.

The Minister for the North-West: Where have they been doing that?

Mr. SEWARD: In four mills situated between the Forrest and my own electorate.

The Minister for the North-West: I do not control those mills.

Mr. SEWARD: No, they are private mills. I did not suggest that they are State mills. But those mills had to burn that wood because railway trucks were unprocurable to take it away. I had a statement in the Press to that effect last December, and it was not answered by the Premier or by anybody else. I have seen heaps of firewood burnt, yet one place where firewood is being obtained is within ten miles of the mills I am referring to. Some £75,000 is being spent to employ aliens, conscientious objectors and others to cut firewood, when not far away hundreds of tons are being burnt. Not very much foresight or statesmanship is being exercised in that connection. The firewood cut by these people has to be brought to Perth, and I take it that railway trucks are bringing it down. In previous years, references have been made by different speakers to the need for the appointment of a public works committee. As a matter of fact, several speakers during this debate have mentioned the advisability of appointing various committees. The need for the appointment of such a committee as a public works committee is very well exemplified in the case of the proposed erection of a power station at Fremantle. All we know about it is that tenders have been called for the erection of the power station at a cost of something like £70,000.

The Minister for Justice: At a cost of £1,500,000!

Mr. SEWARD: Evidently I have got the wrong figure, but that makes it worse still, and the figure does not affect my point, which is that Parliament's sole responsibility will be to agree to pay the money when it is expended.

Mr. Cross: You do not suggest that we are experts in these matters, do you? You are not, anyway!

Mr. SEWARD: I do not suggest the hon. member is an expert at anything, but I say it is only right that when a project involving the expenditure of so much money is brought forward, Parliament should have some say in the matter or an assurance that it has been investigated by an independent authority, such as a public works committee representative of all sides in this House.

The Minister for Justice: It has been thoroughly investigated.

Mr. SEWARD: We do not want the assurance of the Minister. By whom has it been investigated?

The Minister for Justice: By experts.

Mr. SEWARD: That is all very well, but we have no report. My point is not so much that it has not been investigated. Surely we can trust the Government that far! My point is that Parliament has no control over or say in the expenditure of this money. That is a serious matter.

Mr. Watts: It must have been investigated while Parliament was sitting last session, because it was announced in the papers immediately afterwards.

Mr. SEWARD: Yes. The Government waited until Parliament was out of the road. The announcement was made shortly after we adjourned.

The Minister for Works: It was made soon after the committee presented its report. The Electricity Advisory Committee investigated the matter.

Mr. SEWARD: At all events, whoever made the report, I do not know on what grounds the recommendation was made. But the view I take is that it is not a year or it is little more than a year, since we had an investigation into the question of a power scheme for the South-West. I imagine the success of any power scheme in the South-West would depend on the consumption of electricity available to it. Here it is proposed to cut off a huge amount of the consumption, because obviously if the power station is to be erected at Fremantle, its greatest consumption must come from the metropolitan area.

Mr. Cross: Are you aware that the East Perth power station is grossly overloaded?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. SEWARD: Its greatest consumption must come from the metropolitan area, and for the life of me I cannot see what is the use of having an investigation now into the

prospects for a South-West power station when a Commission that investigated the matter a few years ago, without knowing anything about the Fremantle project, recommended that it was not a feasible proposition.

The Minister for Works: You are on the wrong track.

Mr. SEWARD: I have to be convinced of that. All that members on this side of the House have to guide them are the newspaper reports. I would like information from the Government why this committee was appointed to review work done so recently.

The Minister for Works: That has already been explained six times.

Mr. SEWARD: I have yet to be convinced that it is economical to drag train-loads of coal from the country to Perth to be turned into electricity. Now it is proposed to convey extra train-loads to Fremantle to feed that power house. Why is not electricity generated at Collie or at the pit's mouth and electricity sent over the wires?

Mr. Cross: You have not read the report on your desk.

Mr. SEWARD: I know perfectly well that in the report made by the last Royal Commission it was stated there would be a wastage of electricity by sending it over the wires for that distance. It was not explained why electricity can be transported over long distances in other countries, and even in Victoria, where it is generated at Yallourn. If that is done in other places, I cannot see what particular obstacle there is in the way of its being done here. It should be far better than dragging the coal all that way and occupying so much of the rolling-stock of the Railway Department.

The Minister for Works: More power is generated in Melbourne than at Yallourn.

Mr. SEWARD: That does not mean to say that some of it is not generated at Yallourn. I am aware that the project to establish a power station at Yallourn was held up for years because of the fierce opposition from an influential Melbourne daily. It advanced all sorts of excuses and delayed the introduction of the scheme which, however, is operating now. It is high time we had a public works committee because in the immediate future, I suppose—and hope—there will be many projects put in hand by the Government of this State, with or without Commonwealth assistance, and a

committee would be of inestimable value to this State in dealing with those matters and making recommendations to Parliament. In that way Parliament would have information before it when it was asked to authorise the expenditure of such a large amount as is indicated will be required for the Fremantle project. I have a word or two to say about the Education Department.

I am sorry the Minister for Education has had to be called away and is not in his seat. He having been a teacher, I hope that he will infuse more new life into this backwater department than has been evident in recent years. I have already had indications that the Minister is going to do that, and I sincerely hope he will not let any influences deter him. I wish to say something about a new branch of education that has been developed recently. I refer to the physical fitness branch. If anybody imagines we have so much money that we can afford to waste—and I use the word deliberately—£9,833 a year on physical fitness, I entirely disagree with him. As a matter of fact I view this matter very seriously. It seems to me that in launching out on this new physical fitness scheme we are simply falling into line with our present enemies. We had pictures shown to us of the youth of Italy and Germany doing physical exercises far more than anything else. There is no need for this business in our glorious climate. It would be far better if the members of the teaching profession were to do more teaching and less physical fitness work.

The Minister for Works: The Army records may prove otherwise.

Mr. SEWARD: I am glad to hear that interjection from the Minister. If he casts his mind back a few years he will recollect that one of the attributes of the first A.I.F. was that it was considered by other countries to be an outstanding body of men. Those men were not stripped to the waist as little children are now in the middle of winter.

The Minister for Works: They received a lot of attention before they were 100 per cent. fit.

Mr. SEWARD: I would flog the man who takes out these little children stripped to the waist in the winter months. There is no need for it. It is a new craze started by some crank. I hope the Minister for Health will do something about it. The soldiers of the first A.I.F. used to do this training in

shorts and singlets, not stripped to the waist. Today you see soldiers travelling in trucks through various towns without any clothing on the top part of their bodies.

The Minister for Justice: The troglodites had nothing to wear.

Mr. SEWARD: I have no objection to the Minister being a troglodite, but not here. However, we are not dealing with troglodites but with the rising generation. It is about time this craze stopped. We are simply following the example of the people with whom we are at war. There would, in a climate like that of Germany, be an excuse to get out and do physical exercises, but not here. Recently in a country town I was walking along the street with a friend and as we passed a house, I said, "Who lives here?" He said, "That is the school teacher. You saw him last night at the physical fitness meeting." I said, "I thought as much; I can see his wife chopping the wood." There is nothing glamorous about chopping wood. You do not need to be half naked to do that.

The Minister for Mines: I have heard of a champion woodcutter who gave his wife a small axe.

Mr. SEWARD: These people can get all the exercise they want without going in for this physical fitness business. The teachers should train the minds of the children properly, and give them more training in connection with nutrition. I was told of a case of a little boy who was sent to school in the morning after having had only an apple for breakfast. His mother was working and did not get up until five minutes before the child left for school. I suppose the teachers gave him physical training to build him up into a fine man. If they fed him properly they would be doing a better job.

Mr. Marshall: And saw that the mothers got better food before the children were born.

Mr. SEWARD: Yes. The Minister for Mines, when speaking tonight, made some mention of the fact that the Government was short of money. I am pleased to have evidence from the new Minister for Education that that is not going to deter him. He has undertaken to build a new school for which there was previously no money. If he is so desperately in need of money I draw his attention to the fact that there was a surplus last year of £38,000. In addition, there is the amount of £9,000 being

wasted on the physical fitness craze, and the Government is asked to give more money to the University, so that in all there is the best part of £50,000 to start with. I hope the Minister will fight for his rights.

Mr. Marshall: The Licensing Board has nothing to do today.

Mr. SEWARD: We might save a lot of money on a few of the heads of departments too. One would naturally think that the policy of the Education Department would be to place the welfare of the child first and the teacher second, but I find that this is not so. I know of a teacher who has spent 12 years at a particular school. During that time not one of his pupils has won a scholarship from the school. If any suggestion is made to bring more children to the school by bus he strongly opposes it because it might mean that he would be removed from where he is, and his desires are that he be allowed to remain in the town where he is stationed till he retires and draws his pension. When children from that school have gone to other schools their education has been adversely criticised. I have asked for this man to be removed—not to be disrated—to another school. The department says it will not move him. That is not fair.

Mr. Doney: Do you say he should be removed to another school under another headmaster?

Mr. SEWARD: He is the headmaster. He may have just got a bit stale because he has been too long in the district. But the welfare of the child should come before the convenience of the man. He does not want to leave that town. I have seen both the Director of Education and the Minister and they have said, "We will shift him," and then changed their minds. I hope they will again change their minds and give that town a new teacher. I will not mention the town; it is known to the Minister. The only other matter I want to touch on is mentioned in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech. I would like to congratulate the Government on the Speech this year. It is a much more businesslike document than usual. Instead of having a lot of statistics we have a very concise statement of what the Government intends to do during the coming season. I want to refer to the paragraph which states—

As a first step towards meeting the acute housing shortage, a programme of 75 houses has been approved for Western Australia.

This is a matter about which we have heard a lot, but of the details of which, outside, possibly, the ranks of the Ministry, very few of us know anything. In an endeavour to obtain some information I asked a question of the Premier on the 2nd of this month. I asked him if he would lay on the Table of the House copies of plans and specifications of each type of house it is proposed to erect, together with the cost of each type. The Premier replied that there would be many types of houses built; that types to be built in the country would vary from those erected in the metropolitan area, but that he would lay on the Table of the House a plan of each of those two types of house. As I said, this question was asked and answered on the 2nd August. This is the 24th August, and no plans have yet appeared. Consequently, we are going through this debate with only a meagre knowledge of this housing scheme.

If the scheme were a matter only for the Commonwealth there might be some excuse, although I do not say that I would agree with that, but the State has to bear a proportion of the cost of these things. I have here a booklet issued by the Commonwealth Department of Post-war Reconstruction in which it states that the Commonwealth has to bear three-fifths of the loss involved. The remaining proportion of two-fifths is to be borne by the States. If the State is going to bear some of the loss, and apparently a loss is anticipated, we are entitled to know the full details. Apart from this phase, we ought to be given the details of any scheme for erecting houses for residents of this State. The Speech states that a programme for 75 houses has been approved. I believe that a commencement has been made with the erection of some of the houses in country districts and that the foundations at all events have been laid for some in the metropolitan area. Therefore it appears that the work is going on and that public money of this State is being expended, and yet Parliament is given no say in the matter.

An effort was made by the Leader of the Opposition to get some information. He asked the Premier a series of questions, and so far the honourable gentleman has not seen fit to make any reply to them. It might be as well to remind members of those questions and I hope the Leader of the Opposi-

tion will not mind my mentioning them. The questions were—

1. As the tender prices are so much higher than anticipated, what steps are being taken to reduce costs to a more reasonable figure than an average of about £900 for a four or five-roomed weatherboard house?

2. Are the facilities provided in the homes concerned of a standard superior to those hitherto existing in good class workers' homes and if so to what extent are they better. Do they incorporate the reduced minimum ceiling height of 9ft. 6in. mentioned in Press reports, and is this desirable?

3. What will be the rentals for the homes costing an average of £863 and £900 respectively?

4. In regard to homes to be purchased what will the terms be and what rate of interest is involved? Over what period of years will repayment be asked?

5. Have any representations been made for the lifting of National Security restrictions which prevent farmers and others from erecting a dwelling to cost more than £450? If so, are these restrictions likely to be relaxed in the near future?

6. Has the Commonwealth directed the State to erect homes of any particular type? If so, and this involves the State in any loss on account of the obvious necessity of keeping the rental within the ability of the tenant to pay without hardship, or for any other reason, has the Commonwealth agreed to indemnify the State against loss?

7. If the rates of interest involved are comparable with present public loan rates—will steps be taken to reduce the rate of interest on workers' homes contracts entered into pre-war?

8. If not will this not create a state of affairs under which the proprietors of workers' homes will be divided into two classes—one at higher pre-war rates of interest and the other at lower rates and is this desirable? Will he endeavour to have the necessary equalising adjustment made?

9. Do contemplated housing schemes provide for homes greatly superior to their present dwellings for fettlers and other railway employees at country sidings, and if not is it expected that early provision will be made?

Those are very pertinent questions; yet so far the Premier has made no response to them. I repeat that Parliament is entitled to have this information. Another interesting feature I learned from the statement of the Commonwealth Treasurer is that the standard of accommodation in these homes is not to be less than that adopted by the Victorian Housing Commission. What is the standard adopted by the Victorian Housing Commission? Are we not satisfied that our Workers' Homes Board is capable of drawing up plans for homes in this State that we should have to take the plans of

another State, of which I at any rate know nothing? We should not do that. The question of design should be left to the States, if only because the climatic conditions differ so greatly. In fact they differ greatly even within this State. Surely we would not allow, say, a Tasmanian to draw up a plan for houses in this State! The Minister for Mines spoke about the absurdity of allowing an Eastern States mining man to dictate the mining policy of this State. The same argument applies to the erection of houses. We have the workers' homes authorities who have been operating for years and are competent to draw up designs for houses in this State.

Some of those houses are to be built of brick and some of wood. The Premier, in referring to the matter the other day, pointed out that the supply of bricks in the State is very low and that it has been necessary to obtain the release of men from the Armed Forces in order to get bricks made. If there is one thing of which we have a surplus in this State, surely it is sand, and excellent cement blocks can be made with sand and cement. Often these cement blocks can be made on the site where the house is to stand.

Mr. Cross: There is a shortage of cement, too.

Mr. SEWARD: I instance a house erected in my electorate. It was built of cement blocks and a better house could not be found anywhere. We have any quantity of sand, and if cement blocks were made on the spot, the question of transport difficulties would not arise. Bricks, however, cannot be made anywhere. The whole matter is one that should be closely examined by an expert commission. In a book I was reading recently was a chapter referring to Japanese houses. I would not say that they would be at all suitable for this country. The point I want to make is that the fashion in houses has changed very rapidly in the last few years. In the days of my youth it was the practice to build large and substantial houses, excellent structures that would stand for years. Such houses nowadays, however, are a drug on the market. They cannot be let, and if they cannot be converted into flats, they are usually let as boarding houses at an absurd rental because the owner has to take any rental he can get for them.

I mention this to show how the fashion in houses has changed. With the houses in Japan, it seems to be a common practice to

take all the walls down on occasion and erect them in a different position, which gives a completely new house. As fashions in houses change, it might not be advisable or economical to erect strongly built brick houses. The member for Murray-Wellington spoke of pre-fabricated houses. I have an interesting illustration of a pre-fabricated house that appeared in a New Zealand paper. I do not say that the actual design would be suitable for Western Australia but this house was erected in 10 days for a cost of £675. The cottage is equipped with a coal-cooking range, hot and cold water, porcelain bath and basin, copper and tubs, and is connected with the town sewerage. New Zealand is not a country where cheap labour or cheap conditions generally obtain. There is no reason to assume that what can be done in New Zealand for £675 cannot be carried out in Western Australia for a somewhat similar sum.

This is a subject that could well be investigated before we find ourselves landed with a great many of the houses that have been suggested, which are likely to prove more expensive than need be and will possibly take longer to construct than should be necessary. I have particulars of two very interesting cases to cite to the House. According to the Federal Treasurer's statement, he estimates that the cost of a brick house containing two bedrooms will be £950 and one with three bedrooms, £1,200, while for houses constructed of timber the prices are estimated at £850 and £1,000 respectively.

I have had two examples of houses constructed in this State brought under my notice. The first refers to a house that was constructed at Katanning in about 1936. It was put up by contract—it was a brick house built on the time-payment system—and the total cost was £900. The lounge was a room 18ft. x 18ft., with a recessed brick fireplace. It had a jarrah grille and a beam ceiling. There were lead-light doors opening into a drawing-room, the dimensions of which were 16ft. x 14ft. The kitchen was 12ft. x 12ft. and the principal bedroom was 16ft. x 16ft. with a bay window which was lead-lighted. The spare bedroom was a room 12ft. x 12ft. The bathroom had in it a sunken porcelain bath, a large hand-basin and a bath-heater. The back verandah was a large one and there was a laundry attached. The house had a tiled roof, which was gabled, and the ceilings of the

room were 11ft. 6in. high. In addition, there was a stone wall erected in front of the block. It was a splendid house constructed at a cost of £900 on the time-payment system. Yet under the Federal Treasurer's scheme, the people here may be asked to pay £1,200 for a house with three bedrooms!

Mr. Cross: Did the man pay union wages?

Mr. SEWARD: As he was a contractor there would be no doubt about the wages. I have another instance to cite. I was paying a visit to the eastern part of my electorate and spent a night with the farmer who had erected the cement brick house to which I made reference earlier in my remarks. The centre I was visiting is 250 miles from Perth and 20 miles from the railway. The cement block house had a bungalow roof and a 10ft. verandah all round. It contained two bedrooms, the dimensions of one being 16ft. x 12ft. and of the other 14ft. x 12ft. The lounge was 18ft. x 16ft.; the kitchen 19ft. x 12ft.; the pantry, 6ft. x 12ft.; the bathroom, 9ft. x 12ft.; and the laundry, 12ft. x 10ft. The laundry was included in the building itself and if an additional bedroom were required as the family increased it could be converted into another bedroom. The height of the walls was 10ft. That house was constructed at a total cost of £800. Although it was a cement brick house, it had a jarrah dado about 8ft. high all round the lounge. The doors opened outwards so that on a hot night the house could be opened up to allow the free passage of air. Members may be interested to know that the cost of the dwelling, namely, £800, was made up of the following items: Timber, iron, cement, etc., £350; railage, £75; labour building, £265; cartage, sand, stone, gravel, and materials, etc., from siding and sundries, approximately £110.

The Minister for Works: Did the farmer include something in the price for his own labour?

Mr. SEWARD: I have given the House the total cost of the building. I wish it was not situated so far away for I would like to issue an invitation to members to inspect it. It is a type of house that could very well be erected throughout our country districts. It provides a maximum of comfort, being warm in winter and cool in summer.

The Minister for Justice: Where was that home built?

Mr. SEWARD: At Graham Rock, which is 20 miles from Hyden. There is another feature of the Commonwealth Housing Scheme to which I take the greatest exception. It is that no provision has been made in the scheme for erecting houses for farmers. Only yesterday I made inquiries and was told that the scheme made no provision for that phase. There is a kind of hodge-podge arrangement. I know that because of an experience I had with one of my constituents. He is a farmer who was tired of living by himself and wanted to get married. He had a shack on his property but it was not suitable from the standpoint of repairing it, and he asked for permission to build a house. I secured the necessary forms for him and in due course the following reply was received from the Workers' Homes Board—

I have to advise that in order to conserve building materials and labour the cost of dwellings in essential and necessitous cases has been restricted by the Director General, Department of War Organisation of Industry, to £400.

Mr. Watts: Disorganisation of industry.

Mr. SEWARD: That is more like it. Here we have it made clear that homes for city people can cost £1,200, but the home for the unfortunate farmer must not cost more than £400. The reply continued—

As it appears impracticable to renovate or repair the existing structure, the application could be submitted to the Deputy Director, War Organisation of Industry, for consideration if the applicant is prepared to modify his needs on the basis of a dwelling costing £400, excluding freight. It is suggested that he give consideration to the erection of a dwelling of say, three rooms, costing approximately £400 at the present, with provision for the additional rooms, verandahs, etc., to be erected at a later date when conditions improve.

That is not satisfactory to me nor do I think it would appeal to other members on the Opposition side of the House. We are willing to assist in any scheme to improve the housing conditions for our people. They are entitled to decent conditions, but we are not prepared to support any scheme that favours one section only of the community. Any such scheme should apply equally to all sections. Then I have a reply from the Workers' Homes Board dealing with another application—

With reference to your application for approval to obtain a building permit, I desire to advise that the proposal has been given full consideration, but I regret the Deputy Director, War Organisation of Industry, is unable to ap-

prove it. He has suggested, however, that you renew your application in six months' time when it will receive further consideration.

That reply was received by a man who had taken over a farm and intended to be married. There was no building on the place and he was particularly anxious to utilise his spare time between shearing and harvesting in making cement bricks for a new house. His application could not be approved; he was told to renew it in six months' time! The manner in which these applications has been dealt with seems to indicate that proper consideration has not been given to the matter and certainly adequate information has not been made available to the public regarding the details of the housing scheme. In view of these circumstances, I move an amendment—

That the following words be added to the Address-in-reply:—“but regrets that this House has not already been placed in possession of complete details of any post war housing plans that have been agreed upon between the Commonwealth and State Governments specifying the types of houses to be erected, together with the estimated cost and rental of each type—

- (a) in the metropolitan area;
- (b) in country towns;
- (c) on farms

together with the priority allotted to each class.”

On motion by the Minister for Works, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.10 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 29th August, 1944.

	PAGE
Question : W.A. Barley Board, as to tabling balance sheet	276
Motion : Fremantle Harbour Trust Act, to disallow bagged-wheat charges regulation	276
Address-in-reply, ninth day	281

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

QUESTION—W.A. BARLEY BOARD.

As to Tabling Balance Sheet.

Hon. G. B. WOOD asked the Chief Secretary:

Will the Chief Secretary lay on the Table of the House an annual balance sheet,

showing all figures relating to the W.A. Barley Board's activities?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

Yes. Audited statement of accounts will be available in the near future.

MOTION—FREMANTLE HARBOUR TRUST ACT.

To Disallow Bagged-Wheat Charges Regulation.

Debate resumed from the 22nd August on the following motion by Hon. C. F. Baxter:—

That new regulation No. 148 made under the Fremantle Harbour Trust Act, 1902, as published in the “Government Gazette” of the 24th December, 1943, and laid on the Table of the House on the 1st August, 1944, be and is hereby disallowed.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY [4.36]: I am afraid that Mr. Baxter, when moving the motion, omitted to give to the House a full picture of all the circumstances connected with the disallowance of the regulation. Therefore, in opposing the motion, I deem it necessary to furnish the House with certain details which I gave on a previous occasion when the House did disallow a regulation dealing with this subject. In the first place I consider it necessary to point out that there has always been a special schedule for the handling of bagged wheat, and that in the early days, before the advent of bulk-handling, all wheat exported from Fremantle was despatched in bags. Upon the advent of bulk handling and the gradual increase in the number of railway sidings equipped with bulk handling facilities, the quantity of wheat exported in bags from Fremantle gradually decreased; so much so that at one time the quantity exported in bags was only a few hundred thousand bushels.

Although during this period there has been a consistent loss on the handling of bagged-wheat, the Fremantle Harbour Trust believing that bagged wheat would be exported in smaller and smaller quantities, was prepared to carry the loss involved in connection with the charge then operating. A few years ago, however, a change came over the situation, and instead of the exports of bagged-wheat being further reduced, the quantity shipped from Fremantle rose to very large proportions, with the result that the Fremantle Harbour Trust in one year showed a loss of