

# Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 1st August, 1950.

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

## AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT.

### Section "B," 1949.

The PRESIDENT: I have received from the Auditor General a copy of Section "B" of his report on the Treasurer's statement of Public Accounts for the financial year ended the 30th June, 1949. It will be laid on the Table of the House.

## QUESTIONS.

### FREMANTLE HARBOUR.

#### As to Extension and Railway Deviation.

Hon. G. FRASER asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) Is the reported acceptance by the Government of the Tydeman harbour extension plan correct?

(2) If so, when is it intended to commence surveys for the route of the proposed deviation of the railway through North Fremantle to the proposed new rail bridge near Point Brown?

(3) How long is it anticipated these will take?

(4) Will the Government give those persons who are to be affected by the deviation the longest possible notice of its intention to resume their properties?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) The proposal is to employ consulting engineers for the location and design of the Point Brown rail and road bridges and negotiations are in progress to obtain the services of such consultants. The location of the railway deviation from North Fremantle to the railway bridge would be undertaken at the same time either by the same firm of consultants with the advice of railway engineers, or by railway engineers only if the services of such officers can be obtained in time.

(3) The total survey may take eighteen months from the date of commencement.

(4) Yes.

## HOUSING.

### (a) As to Hilton Park Contracts.

Hon. G. FRASER asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) How many houses are in course of erection at Hilton Park?

(2) Have any contracts been signed for houses to be built when those mentioned in (1) are completed?

(3) Will the Government endeavour to prevent any lag in home construction in this area?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Sixty-eight by the State Housing Commission.

(2) Fifty-six contracts signed; 60 awaiting signature.

(3) Yes.

### (b) As to Rental Homes and Permits.

Hon. H. K. WATSON asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) In respect of the Housing Commission's rental housing activities, what is the total number, and estimated total cost, respectively, of—

(a) houses completed to date;

(b) houses in course of erection;

(c) houses to be commenced between now and the 30th June, 1951?

(2) What is the total number of applications at present on hand from applicants for such rental homes?

(3) In respect of applications for permits to build houses of over 12½ squares—

(a) how many permits have been issued since the 1st July, 1950;

(b) how many unapproved applications are at present held by the Housing Commission?

(4) In respect of houses of up to 12½ squares, what is the number of permits to build which have been issued each week since the 1st July, 1950?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) (a) Commonwealth-State rental homes completed to 30/6/1950, 3,566; estimated total cost, £4,900,000.

(b) Houses in course of erection, 1,016; estimated total cost, £1,400,000.

(c) Houses to be commenced between 1/7/1950 and 30/6/1951, 2,500; estimated total cost, £3,500,000.

(2) Applications for rental homes on hand at 31/7/1950, 11,183.

(3) (a) Permits in excess of 12½ squares issued since the 1st July, 25; approved and awaiting issue at rate of 25 per month, 61.

(b) Applications for permits unapproved at 30/6/1950, 5,907. (No information is available as to squarage required by these applicants.)

(4) Permits issued weekly for homes up to 12½ squares since the 1st July, 1950:—3rd to 7th July, 443; 10th to 14th July, 271; 17th to 21st July, 162; 24th to 28th July, 137; total, 1,013.

These figures do not include permits issued by local authorities, returns for which have not yet been received.

### RAILWAYS.

*As to Reinstating Kalgoorlie Express.*

Hon. G. BENNETTS asked the Minister for Transport:

Is it the intention of the Government to reinstate the Tuesday night's express trains from Kalgoorlie and Perth, respectively, in the near future?

The MINISTER replied:

It is the intention to re-introduce these trains as soon as passenger traffic improves sufficiently to warrant their restoration.

### MINING.

*As to Assistance to Prospectors.*

Hon. G. BENNETTS (for Hon. E. M. Heenan) asked the Minister for Transport:

How many prospectors are now receiving assistance under the Government prospecting scheme—

- (a) in the whole of the State;
- (b) on the Murchison;
- (c) on the Eastern Goldfields?

The MINISTER replied:

- (a) Eighteen.
- (b) Three.
- (c) Twelve.

There is also one prospector assisted at Marble Bar and two at Ongerup.

### MOTION—CONDOLENCE.

*Late Hon. C. F. Baxter, M.L.C.*

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT  
(Hon. C. H. Simpson—Midland) [5.8]: I move—

That this House place on record its sincere appreciation of the services rendered to the State by the late Hon. Charles Farquharson Baxter who, at the time of his passing, was a member for the East Province, and express its deep sympathy with his widow and the members of his family in the irreparable loss they have sustained by his decease; and that the President be asked to convey the foregoing to his widow and family.

The late Charles Farquharson Baxter was born at Penshurst, Victoria, in 1878, and now his widow, four sons and a daughter mourn his loss. He arrived in this State in 1896 and for some time worked on the overland telegraph line between Esperance and Eucla. He later returned to Victoria

and established a successful business. He came back to Western Australia owing to ill-health and settled on a property at Quairading.

In 1914 he was elected to the Legislative Council as a member for the East Province, continued as a member until his decease on the 2nd March, 1950, and was never opposed after the original election. He established a Dominion political record by being unopposed in six normal Council elections and two ministerial by-elections. He was a member of Cabinet for seven years—from the 28th June, 1917, to the 13th June, 1921; and from the 24th April, 1930, to the 24th April, 1933. He held the positions of Minister without portfolio, Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Country Water Supplies and Trading Concerns, and Chief Secretary; and for a time he was the sole Minister in the Council in charge of the Council business. He was Leader of the Legislative Council in 1930, 1931 and 1932. He was interested in pastoral, farming and business activities, and was a pioneer member of the Country Party.

That is a formal recital of a distinguished record of service, of which those near and dear to our late colleague may be justly proud, as I would say the whole of the members of this House are proud. It was in some respects a unique record; and not the least of his claims to distinction is the fact that his son has taken up the tools to carry on a long and honourable task. Unfortunately, the late Charlie Baxter was not to know this; but to his son, who is now carrying on, we extend our very sincere sympathy and also our good wishes. Mr. Baxter was a forceful debater and a firm upholder of the traditions of the House, which he always maintained with dignity. We have many things for which to thank him. He was always kindly and courteous, particularly to new members. Some of us were present at the graveside and were deeply moved by the eloquent tribute paid to him by the Rev. Laurie Ford.

During the short time it has been my privilege to be a member of this Chamber we have lost several distinguished members. Death issues its edict and we must obey; but I think that death, though it may be a time for sorrow, may be also a time for pride and affectionate remembrance. I would present to the House a somewhat unusual but, I believe, a very helpful thought, finely expressed by the late Joshua Loth Liebman in his book, "Peace of Mind"—

I often feel that death is not the enemy of life but its friend, for it is the knowledge that our hours are limited that makes them so precious. We are like children privileged to spend a day in a great park, a park filled with many gardens and playgrounds and azure-tinted lakes. True,

the day allotted to each of us is not the same in length, in light, in beauty. But whether our life is a long summery day or a shorter wintry afternoon, there is enough beauty and joy and gaiety in the hours if we will but treasure them. Then for each of us the moment comes when the great nurse Death takes man, the child, by the hand and quietly says, "It is time to go home. Night is coming. It is your bedtime, child of earth. Come, you are tired. Lie down at last in the great nursery of Nature and sleep. Sleep well. The day is gone. Stars shine in the canopy of eternity."

**HON. E. H. GRAY (West)** [5.13]: I desire to support the motion moved by the Minister and to express my regret at the passing of Mr. Baxter and my appreciation of the wonderful work our late friend did in this Chamber. I came in contact with him first some 25 years ago. He served as a Minister right through the worst part of the depression, which was a very heavy load for the then Government. It is a remarkable record that a man should have been elected to Parliament and served for 36 years without being opposed by any citizen of Western Australia. It is a remarkable tribute to the work he did as a public man, as a business man and as representative of the East Province in this Chamber. That will stand for all time.

I agree with what the Minister said with regard to our late colleague's son taking his place. I wish his son long years of service and impress upon him that his father did his job according to his political opinions and public duties. He was always fair in debate during the many arguments that took place in this Chamber. We all respect and uphold any man who has the grit to fight for his constituents, express his own political beliefs and yet still be able to remain friendly with his opponents. The fact that he was a foundation member of the Country Party is also a tribute to the late member. I, too, express my sincere regrets to his widow and the members of his family.

**HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM (Central)** [5.16]: I would like to associate myself with the remarks already made this afternoon because I knew the late member over a very long period. In 1911 the late Charles Baxter contested the York seat for the Legislative Assembly. That was the only time he contested a seat in Parliament and was defeated. It was his fortune, in 1914, in company with the late Mr. Carson, to stand in the interests of the Country Party as a candidate for the Legislative Council. Both those men were elected in May, 1914.

I was closely associated with Hon. Charles Baxter from that time onwards. In those days he was a member of the board then known as the Greenhills Road Board and I was living in the territory controlled by that body. The late member made a great contribution, personally, to the development of this country. As well as the personal contribution, he also assisted very many settlers who came after him, not only by advice but also in many other ways. The electors, who after all are capable of expressing themselves, paid a very fitting tribute to our late member because time after time he was granted the privilege of being elected to this Chamber without opposition.

The late Charles Baxter had a very pleasant personality and was a sincere friend to many people; not only to members in this House but also to people everywhere. Even when he was out on the hustings, he was always able to say anything he wished in a friendly manner. That is a great trait in one's character—to be able to criticise without hurting a man's feelings. The late Charles Baxter was very capable in that respect. It was painful to me to see him lingering, as I unfortunately saw him, in the last few weeks that he was here. It deeply impressed me when I saw him at the hospital.

The election of his son, Mr. Norman Baxter, is a great compliment to the father and our new member will have something to live up to. However, I believe he is made of the right material which will enable him to carry on his father's work, and I hope he will be spared to serve this State for as many years as his father was. To his widow, whom I have known for many years, and the members of his family, I join with the Minister, and Mr. Gray, in expressing my deepest sympathy.

**HON. W. J. MANN (South-West)** [5.20]: I wish to be associated with the remarks made by the Leader of the House and other speakers regarding the work of our late colleague, Hon. Charles Baxter. We all knew of the outstanding interest he took in the political life of this country. We were impressed with his knowledge of its rural side, of its industrial development and of its social activities. There have been few men in this Parliament to whom we could look and say, "He was a man of State-wide knowledge; a most dependable man and a very delightful colleague."

It was my privilege to sit close to Mr. Baxter for a good many years and I always felt that, as an exponent of Standing Orders and the privileges and customs of this House, he stood alone. He was always a champion of the rights of this Chamber and was at his best in

times of a crisis or when a hard fight was in progress. Many of us have been with him in the House on occasions, when, to use an ordinary expression, the "going was pretty hard." We have been with him at other times, too, as managers and we have seen the magnificent efforts that he made. Without any hesitation I say that this country, and this House, is the poorer for his passing. He was an ornament to Parliament and one whose name will always be highly spoken of and praised in this Chamber.

I also desire to add my condolences to the members of his family and to extend a word of welcome to his son. There is not much more that a father could wish for than to have his son follow in his footsteps in the legislative halls of the country in which he lived. The late Charles Baxter has set a wonderful example to his son, and I am sure that the knowledge of his father's work will be an incentive and inspiration to him in the future.

**HON. R. M. FORREST (North)** [5.23]: I wish to support the motion moved by the Leader of the House. Perhaps I knew the late Mr. Baxter longer than most members of this Chamber. When I was a young man of 17 I went to Cubbine Station, near York, and Mr. Baxter had the adjoining farm. I came to know him very well during that period and when I entered this Chamber, a short while ago, no-one gave me a finer welcome than did the late Hon. Charles Baxter. I do not intend to say any more, but I felt his passing very keenly.

**HON. H. HEARN (Metropolitan)** [5.24]: I desire to associate myself with the motion so ably proposed by the Leader of the House. It was my great privilege to know Hon. Charles Baxter long before I came into this House. Over the last 20 years I was associated with him in different organisations and for many years he was a competent liaison between the State Government, this Chamber, and the associations in which I was interested. During the entire period the hon. gentleman proved his sterling worth. He was an amazing man. Not only did he become a foundation member of the Country Party—and during those years play his part in building up that very powerful organisation—but he also engaged in city business and was freely recognised as one of the competent commercial men of the city block. He was a man of many parts and his kindness was always in evidence to the newcomer in this House.

I very well remember the welcome he extended to me; not only the welcome but also the help he gave me on many occasions during the past two years. I extend my sympathies to his widow and family

and welcome his son, Hon. Norman Baxter, trusting that his association with this House will be as long and as pleasing as that of his late father.

**HON. G. BENNETTS (South-East)** [5.26]: I, too, would like to support the remarks of the Minister. I knew the late Charlie Baxter for a period of 45 years. In those days as a young man he had a bicycle shop on the Goldfields and I was a boy. We used to go along to his shop to have our bikes repaired. I also came in contact with him when he became a member of Parliament and I was head conductor on the Commonwealth Railways. He made many trips over that line and I met him on several occasions. To me he always seemed a genuine type of fellow and a particularly fine man to meet. We were very friendly and I always enjoyed talking to him.

It is good to see one of the family step into the late member's harness. I have never met the family before but I feel sure that in our new member, Hon. Norman Baxter, we have the same type of man as we had in the late Charles Baxter. I support the remarks of the Minister.

**HON. H. S. W. PARKER (Suburban)** [5.28]: I wish to say a few words on this motion because I knew the late hon. member over such a long period. At one time I sat with him in Cabinet—although I regret to say for a short time only. I realised then the careful way in which he carried out his duties, particularly as Leader of this House. The arduous job as a Minister of the Crown, which he undertook from 1930 to 1933, caused him to have a breakdown in health. The late hon. member went for a trip to Africa and as a result carried out excellent work there. It was always pleasing to be in the same Chamber with him and to find that later he still retained his energy and keenness, despite his ill-health.

I am sure we will miss him and had it not been for his state of health no doubt he would have been Leader of this House with the present Government. For some years his health had been far from good and it was to his credit that he carried on under most adverse circumstances. I would like my remarks to be joined with those of earlier speakers.

**THE PRESIDENT:** Before submitting the motion, I desire to identify myself with all that has been said in regard to the late Hon. C. F. Baxter. I was associated with him for 31 years during the time he was in Parliament, and I have seen his work and the interest he took both in the country and in the work of the House, especially his discharge of responsibility during the critical period of the history of this State—the depression. I associate

myself with the motion of condolence to his wife and family and trust they will be sustained in their great loss.

Question put and passed; members standing.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

#### *Second Day.*

Debate resumed from the 27th July.

**HON. E. H. GRAY:** (West) [5.32]: We have made reference to the loss of the late Hon. C. F. Baxter, and I should also like to mention the loss to this Chamber by the retirement of Hon. A. Thomson and Hon. G. W. Miles. Speaking of Mr. Thomson, I have known him, I think, for 29 years and met him while I was a farmer. As a matter of fact, I remember taking the chair for him in a country centre. I was able to do that conscientiously because we had no Labour candidate—

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: You were a wise elector.

**Hon. E. H. GRAY:** We did a good job for Mr. Thomson. He was a straight-out opponent. He had no hesitation in fighting for his political beliefs over the years and in both Houses of Parliament. He was a remarkably good fellow. I regret he has resigned. The fact that two sons are taking their fathers' places in this House should, I think, constitute a record, and I believe both Mr. Baxter and Mr. Thomson have a big fight before them if they desire to emulate the splendid example of service set by their fathers. I should like to give them a very hearty welcome and wish them many years of service to the State—until, of course, we put up Labour men to beat them!

Members will agree that Mr. Miles was also a fair opponent, open in his criticism and a fighter for the North. All of us will miss his presence very much. Mr. Miles used always to extol the pastoralists and the residents of the North, and thought they were the finest people in Western Australia. He was a man who did real work. A remarkable thing has happened as a result of Mr. Miles laying down his position—for the first time in the history of Western Australia the people of the North have elected a Labour representative.

**Hon. G. Fraser:** They are getting more educated.

**Hon. E. H. GRAY:** Personally, I feel very proud of the fact, and extend to Mr. Strickland a very warm welcome. Among the other new members, whom we all welcome, is Mr. Jones. The fact that Mr. Strickland won the North Province seat and that Mr. Daffen was defeated for that province, will not give the Liberal Party very much encouragement. Two defeats in one election campaign must go very hard with that party.

**Hon. H. Hearn:** They are not down-hearted.

**Hon. E. H. GRAY:** We are all very sorry that Mr. Daffen was defeated. He was a fighter for the Liberal Party. We extend to his successor, Mr. Jones, a very warm welcome and trust he will fight for his electorate as keenly as possible. I express my congratulations to all the old members who were successful in facing their electors and masters, and give them a warm welcome back to this Chamber.

This session opens with great tension and a perilous situation in the international sphere. The cold war carried on by the Soviet Union has been brought to a head by the tragic happenings in Korea. A very deadly power faces the free nations of the world. It has quickly brought unity to the nations and Australia is speaking and acting with one voice in support of the United Nations and the U.S.A., which has taken a big part of the load. I am sure I am expressing the sentiment of every member in this Chamber when I say that we hope for quick success for the United Nations against the Communist offensive in Korea. Whatever our station in life may be and whatever political opinions we hold, it is our duty to do everything possible, whether we hold high or low positions, to assist in sweeping away all international misunderstanding, and strive for the establishment of international peace and progress for generations to come, and forever. I think we all hoped for that.

The Address-in-reply debate gives members an opportunity to criticise the Government, to bring forward urgent matters affecting their provinces and to request also that definite matters of policy be referred to them. There is grave uneasiness in the ranks of workers respecting the policy of the Government in encouraging private enterprise in preference to solidly supporting the development and the extension of already established State industries. For example, complaints come from the Midland Junction workshops, where there is great dissatisfaction with the present policy, that private enterprise is receiving preference in the rehabilitation of the railways. It is contended that there are skilled tradesmen in this big undertaking. With regard to railway administration, the Government could well emulate the policy of the big English railway companies. As far back as 60 years ago, it set up its own railway construction works. This was done successfully and only minor railway concerns in the Old Country have relied upon private enterprise for construction and maintenance requirements.

**Hon. J. A. Dimmitt:** That was private enterprise, was it not?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: It was private enterprise, but they did not go outside to encourage private enterprise to do jobs they could do better themselves.

Hon. H. Hearn: Still it was private enterprise.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The authorities there not only insisted on developing their own works and doing everything possible to push them forward, but they also provided all kinds of encouragement to the employees in those works—not by wages because wages were very low—

Hon. W. J. Mann: Sort of incentive payments.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: —and their hours were long. But they did see what anti-Labour Governments had missed for many years, namely, that it was necessary to make the workers as comfortable as possible and to provide amenities for them. Therefore, I stress the fact that the Government has proved that it is considerate of vested interests. It is absolutely essential, if the railways are to be rehabilitated successfully, to do everything possible to encourage the workers in that industry, to concentrate on doing big jobs and to extend the Midland Junction workshops. I know that the Government has a big task in front of it with regard to railway rehabilitation. To do this represents a tremendous job owing to the strain of the depression years and the war on our railways.

I protest against what the men allege the Government is doing, that is, placing the big jobs outside and having the small jobs done in the workshops. What is wanted in Western Australia is an extension of the workshops in order to make them one of the best enterprises in the Commonwealth. The same argument has occurred with regard to the tramways, and there are other industries operating in Western Australia where the tendency has been to neglect them and to encourage private enterprise to the disadvantage of our already established undertaking. The Liberal-Country Party Government also has the responsibility of establishing industries and doing everything possible to further them. It is the duty of the Government to enlarge them as quickly as possible and by so doing assist other branches of development. Private enterprise and Government enterprise should march together, but private enterprise should not be given preference.

A most important problem is that of housing. Questions on this subject were asked this afternoon by Mr. Fraser and Mr. Watson. I realise that no matter what party may be in power, the housing problem is a major one, and it confronts the Government not only in this State but also throughout the Commonwealth and in every country of the world. We

have the difficulty associated with the shortage of building material and the shortage of labour, and the problem of the Government and the State Housing Commission is to deal with the huge number of applications, particularly for rental homes. I was astounded to hear the Minister say this afternoon that there were over 11,000 applications for rental homes.

What is worrying the representatives of West Province and the people of the Fremantle district is an uneasy feeling that they are not receiving their fair share in the allotment by the State Housing Commission of new homes, particularly the rental homes. This is a matter that could be cleared up quite simply. The Minister, in his reply, could give the total number erected in the State since the present Government took office and the number built and in course of erection in the Fremantle district, as well as the percentage erected in proportion to applications received, particularly from people in the industrial areas. This information would clear up a lot of misunderstanding. It should be set out in four sections—firstly, rental homes under the Commonwealth-State scheme; secondly, war service homes; thirdly, workers' homes; and fourthly, private homes.

I wish to express dismay and alarm—and in this I am voicing the feelings of a large section of working people, particularly young married people in the industrial centres—at the reported announcement by the Minister for Works implying a discontinuance or slowing down of building under the Commonwealth-State rental scheme. The Minister might have been misrepresented or misreported, but his remarks certainly did convey the impression that the State was the largest landlord and that it was time a halt was called. I should be very glad if that impression were removed. If there were any intention of calling a halt to the Commonwealth-State rental homes scheme, it would be a colossal and tragic mistake. This is one of the most important problems, affecting as it does thousands of people in Western Australia. If there are 11,000 applications for homes, it follows that there are 11,000 families in difficulties. The statement by the Minister has created much dismay and uneasiness, and I hope that some explanation will be given.

The next question with which I shall deal is the location of the Fremantle Hospital. During the last 25 years, the people of Fremantle have certainly been hospital-minded. They did a wonderful job, before the present method of finance was adopted, in supporting the Fremantle Hospital by their contributions. A portion of the hospital was paid for out of subscriptions raised by appeals in the district. For some time, practically nothing has been done to extend the hospital.

Here again, the housing problem intrudes. I can appreciate the difficulties confronting the Government in this direction, but extensive publicity has been given to the proposals to extend the Royal Perth Hospital, and yet no indication has been given to the board or the people of Fremantle regarding the extension of their hospital.

It is absolutely necessary that something should be done. Plans should be prepared so that as early as possible extensions can be made, because the institution cannot continue as it is. I understand that the Government intends to take over another large house with a view to alleviating the difficulty, but we have a right to demand from the Government that plans be prepared and an indication given of what is proposed to be done. An unofficial statement has been made that Government experts consider the present site of the Fremantle Hospital to be unsatisfactory, and that there was no intention of making any additions to the existing buildings.

In this connection, I remind members that the Fremantle City Council engaged an expert in the person of Mr. Harold Boas to recommend a town planning scheme for the district. I attended the public meeting called to hear the report of Mr. Boas, and was much impressed with the energy, enthusiasm and skill brought to bear by that gentleman. He certainly deserves considerable credit for the great assistance he has given to the Fremantle City Council. Mr. Boas, in his report, recommended the establishment of a civic centre, which would include a new town hall, sports ground, public hospital and other amenities, taking into consideration also the proposed extensions to the harbour.

He anticipated that the Fremantle Prison would be removed. I think it is the opinion of Government officials that the prison must be moved sooner or later, and we think the sooner the better. Its removal would make available a large area of land. The report indicates that the Fremantle Hospital should be retained in its present position and that additions should be made. At the rear of the hospital is vacant public land which would be ideal for carrying out extensions to the buildings.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Take it away from that locality altogether.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I do not agree. We must heed the advice of experts. I am always prepared to study the opinions of experienced men who recommend improvements in the lay-out of a city. The Commonwealth Government owns a large block of land in the same locality and, with the removal of the immigrants' home and the taking over from the Commonwealth of the large corner block adjacent

to it, plus the removal of the Fremantle Gaol, a large area would be available to make an ideal civic centre.

It is only fair that the Government should announce its policy regarding the extension of the Fremantle Hospital. During the years of the depression and the war, we were remarkably fortunate in our hospital superintendents, but it is heartbreaking for the medical superintendent and the other officers to be so cramped and to have no idea of what is going to happen. I appeal to the Minister to make an announcement of the Government's proposals at the earliest possible moment. It is not fair to the large population of Fremantle that the hospital should remain as at present with the reasonable requirements of the district unmet.

Another important question confronting the people of Fremantle is that of harbour extension. Naturally, the Fremantle people are keenly interested in the report and recommendations of Mr. Tydeman for harbour extension. I understand that the Government has adopted the recommendations and, as I have already stated, Mr. Boas anticipated that the recommendations would be adopted. Mr. Boas naturally based his town planning recommendations to the Fremantle City Council on that assumption. I do not wish to say anything in criticism of the report by Mr. Tydeman, which has certainly made a deep impression on the local people. On page 32 of his report, he gives the stages of development and recommends a basis of 5 per cent. annual extension. Provision is made for the number of berths to be increased from 19 to 29 and constructed at an additional cost of £2,200,000. In the list of improvements there is a note as follows:—

Some of this work may have to be undertaken soon owing to the life limit of the existing rail bridge, i.e., between 1950 and 1955.

Thus, something will have to be done almost immediately.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: A portion of that bridge was once washed away by floods.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I am aware of that. Stage 3 provides for up-river extension, 11 berths, and continues—

- (a) Rehousing of resumed dwellings, factories, etc.;
- (b) Re-erecting road and rail bridges;
- (c) Re-erecting North Fremantle railway station.

This is work which must be done during the next five years. The people of North Fremantle are vitally affected by this report because many of them have their homes there, and industries which will be

removed under the plan are also vitally affected. Recently, a public meeting was held at North Fremantle at which the proposed up-river extension was condemned and seaward extension was supported. A deputation intends to wait up the Minister for Works to voice these views. I do not propose to discuss the matter at this stage, but I think it imperative that the public should be enlightened as early as possible, firstly, as to the number of homes to be resumed; secondly, the number and names of the industries to be removed; and, thirdly, the number of homes to be resumed under the plan for the extension of Leighton Beach railway sidings.

On the merits of the question of the outer and inner harbour, I would not pit my opinion against that of qualified engineers but, whatever the Government intends to do, ample notice should be given to the people who are affected, as most of them have been living in their present homes for many years. The number of houses to be resumed is possibly not large, but the Government should assure those concerned that they will be treated generously and that other homes will be provided for them before their present dwellings are resumed. Members will agree that the occupants of these houses are entitled to ample notice and consideration.

People in the affected area are alarmed at the prospect that within five years action will be taken to remove the railway bridge. I would like the Minister, when replying, to give an assurance that the people to whom I have referred will be treated generously and justly. The undertaking that is given will be honoured, no matter what Government is in power, but I think that the occupiers of these homes are entitled to an announcement as to what is going to be done. A survey should be made and notice given to the residents and those working in the industries that are to be affected.

Hon. G. Fraser: If they do not hurry up, there will be no railway bridge there.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I have made a fair request, which I do not think the Government can cast aside. Mr. Tydeman's report indicates that the up-river extension and the work on the proposed eleven berths will not be commenced until 1972. The qualifying reference implies a life of the existing railway bridge till 1955, so work on the new bridge will have to be commenced in the near future. Some people—including myself—are puzzled, because the report implies that the present road bridge will have to go. That bridge was opened on the 5th December, 1939, and is a well built structure. It must have been the intention of the then Government and its engineers that that bridge would last for a long while, and that implies that they envisaged a limit of the

up-river extension of the Fremantle harbour. Therefore those who oppose the up-river extension—

Hon. H. Hearn: That Government may have been shortsighted.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The people at North Fremantle are vitally affected and would like information as to why the plans have been changed. Whatever is essential must be done in the best interests of the State, and radical alterations must be made if they are necessary. I hope there will soon be an announcement as to what is to be done. The present railway bridge is 75 years old, but the road traffic bridge is a comparatively new structure, and there must be a reason why the original plans have been altered to provide for the up-river extension of the harbour. I believe the best course for the Government to take would be to publish the facts. I come now to a bigger question.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Bigger than the bridge?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: More important, at all events.

Hon. W. J. Mann: About bread, of course.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: That will come up later. I refer now to the plan of the Commonwealth Government to provide school children with free milk. From reports published in the Press, I understand that the Commonwealth Government will pay the cost of supplying school children up to a certain age with free milk, and that the State Governments are to organise and implement the scheme. I do not know when the plan is to be put into operation, but I understand it is to be done during the coming year. Wherever the distribution of free milk to school children has been tried it has proved to be an unqualified success.

Experience everywhere, including some parts of our own metropolitan area, has shown that a daily ration of pure milk improves the physique and general health of children. This is a question above party politics. The records in Great Britain, where the Government during the recent war provided milk and a well balanced meal for school children, show that the results were amazing. The plan was implemented by the Coalition Government and has been carried on by the Atlee Labour Government. The weight, height and general physique of those children have improved remarkably; so much so, in fact, that the manufacturers of children's clothing have had to discard their old patterns and make new ones in order to cope with the increased weight and stature of the children.

Hon. H. Tuckey: That is a good one!

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: As if the sizes of children's clothing did not alter with various stages of growth!



Hon. E. H. GRAY: I am quoting from the official records that cannot be questioned. The weight and height of children in the schools of any country can be checked to see whether there has been an increase or a decrease. In England there has been an increase.

Hon. H. Tuckey: Is that due to the ration of milk?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I will go further and say that wherever the scheme has been tried in Australia, the same results have been achieved.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Statistics for the South-West show that the children in that area are anaemic.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: This scheme should appeal to farmers, as it will expand the dairying industry. I have been in politics for over 50 years and believe that laying sound foundations for the health of our children is one of the finest things that any Government or individual can do. The Commonwealth Government must have had a great deal of information about the scheme in Great Britain when it decided to put this plan into operation, and I think the State should add to the scheme, apart from merely organising and implementing it.

I do not advocate that school children should receive a free meal at dinner time, but I believe that sooner or later the Government must pay attention to this problem, particularly now that the housing position is so acute. The Government should provide the necessary accommodation and organisation so that children in Kalgoorlie, Boulder, the other larger towns of the State and the metropolitan area may be provided with a well-balanced meal daily, at noon. That would be a wonderful step forward.

Hon. G. Bennetts: They have not been able to get milk or fresh fruit on the Goldfields lately.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: We must face up to the position.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Does the hon. member think it is the responsibility of the Government to feed the children?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I am not advocating that, though in the long run that may prove the cheapest course. If the Government did provide a free midday meal it would be making a wonderful investment in the future of the State, through our children.

Hon. G. Bennetts: The Government should see that there is plenty of food for the people in the country.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The scheme should be implemented in every school where it is possible, in order that a well-balanced lunch may be provided for the children.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: It is being done in many cases, by means of Oslo lunches.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I think Miss Harbeck should be given great credit for what she has done in this regard. She has been one of the most enthusiastic supporters in this State of a proper midday meal for school children. She started a free milk scheme in Fremantle many years ago and I was pleased to be able to be of assistance to her. In spite of the present apparent prosperity, many children are not being properly fed. If a free milk scheme were organised, I am sure the Parents and Citizens' Association would gladly agree, if requested, to do the necessary work under the direction of the head teachers of the schools concerned.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: They are doing it in many schools.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: That is so.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: We should educate the mothers.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I wish to save the mothers much useless expense and toil. The position is terrible today, with many children living with their parents in rooms—

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: That is a different subject.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: It is not. It is impossible, with the existing accommodation, for many mothers to cut proper lunches for their children, particularly in the hot weather. For nearly nine years, when in the Ministry, I had an office in James-street, and saw the terrific waste of food in the school there through children throwing their lunches away.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Before the suspension, I was advocating the establishment of an organisation that would provide a well-balanced vitamin meal at the schools. There is one person in the metropolitan area who is extremely well qualified to organise such a scheme, I refer to Miss Hardbeck, headmistress of the Mt. Hawthorn school. In co-operation with the mothers, she has successfully carried out such a scheme to the advantage of both the children and the parents. I am making this plea on behalf of the mothers, because it will cost the Government nothing except expense incurred on the preparation of the necessary accommodation.

Why should the thousands of mothers in the metropolitan area and in the Goldfields and other big country towns have to go to the trouble of cutting and wrapping, for their children, lunches which, in the hot summer months, become dry and unpalatable and thus encourages waste? If it has proved successful to provide canteens and other such amenities in workshops both in Government and private enterprise to the advantage of the workers employed in such undertakings, why

should not the mothers be considered? The drudgery caused to the mother in the home every school day by preparing lunches could be turned into pleasure by rostering her for service for a half-day or two now and then in the school.

I have been informed that, under Miss Hardbeck's direction, there has been no difficulty in rostering the mothers for such a scheme, and I am assured that there would be no trouble in any other school where a parents and citizens' association is in existence. I suggest to the Government that the co-operation of such associations be enlisted, through the Education Department, to provide for the scheme. I wish to stress the valuable work which the parents and citizens' associations are doing all over the State. I am given to understand that in many centres they have no trouble in financing their activities and therefore I consider they would welcome a scheme of this nature with open arms.

Then again, I acknowledge that shortage of teachers and lack of accommodation at schools are serious difficulties to be overcome, but this is so important a matter that I think the Government should appoint an officer such as I have indicated. I stress the unfortunate position—and I challenge contradiction on this—of thousands of children in the metropolitan area, and members of all grades of society, who do not receive a sufficiently well-balanced vitamin meal to build up their resistance against disease and to improve their physique, weight and general health.

Hon. A. L. Loton: Who will correct that?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: All medical authorities stress that a certain amount of milk and, particularly, the Oslo lunch are highly suitable in summertime and produce wonderful results in maintaining the health of the children and increasing their height and weight.

Hon. A. L. Loton: Why do you want the mothers assisted?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Is it not a fact that the mothers are doing more work than anybody else in the community?

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: They are having smaller families than ever before.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Notwithstanding all the improvements that have taken place in amenities and working conditions, the mother is still doing too much work in the home and she is entitled to every possible assistance, provided it will benefit her children; and this scheme will ensure that her children will benefit.

Hon. W. J. Mann: You are not so keen on the mothers now.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I am.

Hon. W. J. Mann: You said, providing it benefited the children.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Well, it should! As long as it will help both mother and child, that is the best that can be done.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Now the hon. member is right.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The argument can be summarised in a few sentences. Firstly it will reduce the cost of living which everyone is growling and groaning about. With millions starving, I consider that our people do not realise that they should not waste a crust of bread or any other particle of food. There are huge quantities of food being wasted as a result of children taking their lunches to school, particularly in the summer months. Therefore, it will, firstly, reduce the cost of living in the homes; secondly, it will save the mother the drudgery of preparing lunches for the children.

Thirdly, it will prevent the children buying unsatisfactory food at the tuckshop in those instances where the mother provides money for the youngsters instead of preparing their lunches and, fourthly, it will improve the physique, weight and height of young Australians and build up resistance against disease later on in life. Finally—and this should appeal to the business men in this House—it will pay 100 per cent. dividends in the long run.

Hon. H. Hearn: I thought I saw a glint in your eye when you said that.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I am very serious about this. In years gone by, I have been a great advocate for youngsters being properly fed. During the depression years I saw the excellent results that accrued from families being fed on a well-balanced diet and if we could afford to do it then, we can afford it now. However, I will leave that to the Minister. I know there is a shortage of teachers and all kinds of difficulties have to be overcome, but if an investigation were made by the Education Department and the Parents and Citizens' Association consulted, the result, in a very short time, would be that we would follow the example of all progressive countries and provide a well-balanced vitamin midday meal for the children at the schools.

For some time now I have inflicted myself upon members of this House and perhaps have bored them on occasions with my keen opinions as to the wheat and flour position in Australia. I am just as keen as ever. What has occurred since we last met in this Chamber gives me the right, I think, to voice again my opinions and to urge further action in this State. I would like to request the Honorary Minister for Agriculture to supply all information possible to the House as to any developments that have taken place resulting from negotiations conducted since last session respecting the establishment of a better standard in determining the quality of wheat in preference to the

present antiquated and inadequate method known as the f.a.q. standard established in 1880, over 60 years ago. I sincerely trust that the Honorary Minister has some good news to give us.

Since the last session, there have been extremely important developments in New South Wales. The Wheat Research Institute and the Bread Research Institute of that State, established at a cost of £70,000 to the Australian bread manufacturers, with whom the bread manufacturers of Western Australia are affiliated, have made remarkable progress. As a result, the standard of wheat and flour in that State has greatly improved and there is a reason for it. Dr. Kent-Jones, whom I have quoted frequently in this Chamber and who is a world famous cereal chemist, paid a visit to Australia a few years ago at the invitation of the Bread Manufacturers' Association of New Zealand. He was, last November, honoured by the Royal Society of Arts in Great Britain by being invited to deliver the annual Cantor lecture before the members of that society. The subject was "Bread."

To stress the attention which is being given to the importance of raising the quality of bread in Great Britain it should be noted that that was the first time a lecture on that subject had been delivered per medium of the Royal Society of Arts for over 60 years. At the outset when dealing with wheat Dr. Kent-Jones said—

Although numerous varieties of wheat are said to exist—authorities quoting the number as from 10,000 to 30,000 varieties—the principal wheats of commerce can be divided into:—

(a) *Triticum Vulgare*, the main type and used for bread production, confectionery, etc.

(b) *Triticum Durum*, largely used for the manufacture of macaroni.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: We know about that. It is a whiskery wheat.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: To continue the extract—

(c) *Triticum Compactum* (Club wheat), normally too soft for ordinary bread-making purposes.

I have many farmer friends in this country and I am worried about the quality of the wheat grown in the State. I refer to the Glueclub variety. However, he continues—

Wheats are classified according to their strength and it is important to appreciate what is meant by the term "strength" in this connection. A strong wheat is one the flour from which is strong, and Jago defined strength as the measure of the capacity of a flour to produce a bold, large-volumed and well-risen loaf. The definition broadly adopted by

British and, indeed, all millers is similar, namely, that a strong wheat is one which yields flour capable of making large well-piled loaves. A loaf is said to have a good pile when the texture of the crumb shows a silky and finely vesiculated nature . . . The difference is not only in the size but in the crumb texture.

I confess that Dr. Kent-Jones deals with the theoretical side and I have had experience in the practical side.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Being practical, you can explain the position to the House.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I can. As Dr. Kent-Jones says, this improved standard of flour provides the bread with a better flavour if the loaf is properly baked and if it piles satisfactorily when it rises in the oven. It is far better flavoured bread compared with the ordinary loaf. He goes on to say—

It was not until the latter half of the 19th century that British millers had the chance to mill imported strong wheats. It is of interest to remember that the yield per acre of strong wheats—as, for example, those grown in Canada—is much lower than the yield of the weak wheat grown in Great Britain.

The remark there about Great Britain applies to Western Australia as well. The fact remains that in Great Britain the growers do not have the opportunity to produce the strong wheats that are available in Western Australia. He continued—

Although many factors may be concerned in the production of popular large-sized loaves, yet, in general, the principal factor determining strength is the presence of sufficient protein in the special form of gluten and for that gluten to be in the proper physical condition.

I hope members will remember that.

Hon. A. L. Loton: You must remember that this is a big State.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: At any rate, he did not think fit to come here.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: To whom does the hon. member refer?

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: To Dr. Kent-Jones.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Last session the New South Wales State Parliament passed a Bread Bill, the object of which was to improve the quality of bread and to provide more satisfactory conditions for delivery. I was amazed when I read the provisions of the Bill. I realised that some parts were good but others were questionable. When he introduced the Bill, the Minister, Mr. Finnan, provided members with some interesting information. Great advances

have been made in the quality of the wheat grown and the bread baked from the flour thus produced since the Wheat Research Institute was established in New South Wales. That was emphasised when the Bread Research Institute was inaugurated. In view of the importance of the subject, I propose to read portions of the Minister's speech. In the course of the report of the debate, it states—

Opening the second reading debate on April 18, the Minister described the introduction of zoning during the war and said it has since been kept in existence with the help, apparently, of the Bread Carters' Union. The Government, however, was concerned not only with zoning, but with the quality and lack of variety of bread.

Several inquiries had been made into the bread industry, the most important being the Kinsella Commission of 1945.

Members will remember that I read extracts from that report. To continue—

The Commissioner had recommended, amongst other things, the establishment of a Wheat and Flour Research Institute, the encouragement of farmers to grow better wheat, and the compulsory labelling by millers of their flour with details of its constituents. The Government had made available £50,000 to set up the recommended institute at Wagga. It had been proposed to levy all the industries concerned to maintain this institute but it was found to be impossible for the State to impose any such levy—though the associated interests concerned were quite willing to be so levied.

Members will remember that a movement was inaugurated in Western Australia, with the result that I introduced a Bread Bill the object of which was to set up an advisory committee whose functions would include the making of recommendations for improving both the quality of wheat grown and the loaf available to the public. Unfortunately this House would not accept the Bill, and it was accordingly rejected. Fortunately in New South Wales the members of both Houses of Parliament adopted a very different attitude, with the result that excellent work has been carried out in that State. Mr. Finnan went on to say—

Although the Bread Research Institute is financed by the Associated Master Bakers, its work is independent so far as the sampling of bread made and baked by members is concerned. I will be quite candid in saying that the director has fully co-operated with the department in the quest to improve the quality of bread. Many very badly baked loaves of

bread, some of them with distinct evidence of mould, have been sent to my office and many complaints have been received. There is a definite understanding that on every complaint, particularly if a bread sample is forwarded to the department, the institute is to be consulted and it has always been ready to test samples, to ascertain who was the baker who baked the loaf, and to investigate whether there was some deficiency in the preparation of his dough or his method of baking. If any fault is found, the institute goes to great trouble to explain to the baker why the loaf was faulty.

I would remind members that I am quoting from a Labour Minister's speech. He continued—

Therefore, I give nothing but credit to the institute and to the association that formed it.

Hon. H. Hearn: That result was obtained through private enterprise.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Private enterprise plus Government enterprise, and that is what we want here. I am drawing attention to these matters because the position in Western Australia is very unsatisfactory. It will be of interest to country members particularly to know that in New South Wales a research institute is in course of erection at a cost of £52,000. The foundation stone was laid by the Minister for Agriculture, Mr. Graham, on the 26th May last. I desire to give great credit to Mr. Graham for his support of, and co-operation in, the campaign for the improvement of flour and bread in New South Wales.

The object of building this particular institute is that all the experts will be grouped together in the one building, so that more effective work can be accomplished. It should not be imagined that no work of this nature had been undertaken before. The Government there has a wonderful organisation that has accomplished much in connection with the breeding of suitable wheats. The institute is being established in the Riverina, which is a portion of the State where soft wheats are grown.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: That is no so, because hard wheats are grown in the western portion. I know, because I lived there.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Well, I will withdraw that statement, but I was under the impression that soft wheats were grown there.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I not only lived there but I grew wheat in that part of New South Wales.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: My impression was that the premium wheats grown in New South Wales, for which the farmers are

paid 1s. per bushel extra, came from the drier parts of the State. However, this is what the Minister had to say—

The New South Wales Wheat Research Institute is designed to help all sections of that great industry—the farmer, the miller and the baker as well as the consumers of bread.

The primary task of the institute will be to develop better varieties of wheat, especially varieties which combine the highest yield with the high baking quality and also disease and cold-resistant varieties. This will entail the close co-operation of the plant pathologist and necessitates the use of modern laboratories and equipment.

Never before in the history of this State has any Government made provision for such a group of scientists engaged in wheat breeding to be brought together under one roof and to carry out their tasks in laboratories situated right out in the country among the farmers they are trying to help.

Another major problem which will be tackled is the study of soil fertility, the effect of various types of crops upon it, the length of pasture and how intensively land can be cropped, and the different rotations and farming systems.

Flour millers will be directly helped by the more regular deliveries of grain of better milling and baking qualities; advice on the quality of wheats of different types grown in various localities will be available; and where special problems are encountered the institute will be able to carry out investigations and give the necessary advice on the spot.

The needs of bakers and consumers will have the same special attention. The advice and assistance made available, however, will in no way cut across the valuable services already being provided by the Bread Research Institute in Sydney; rather will the two co-operate. The New South Wales Wheat Research Institute will be concerned mainly with the soil, wheat varieties and grain qualities and the Bread Research Institute will be concerned primarily with problems of checking flour quality and the making of a more nutritious loaf.

The reason I read that is to show that although we have not achieved much success in Western Australia, we have the experts on our side. I am reading and talking about this subject because last season's wheat and the flour manufactured in Western Australia from that wheat were of poorer quality than usual. The bread manufacturers of Western Australia regularly send samples over East for analysis. Only recently three or four were

sent and the report received was that the flour was not of good quality. That is why I am so anxious to do everything possible to alter things.

The bread consumers in Australia, and particularly in Western Australia, are entitled to receive the best quality bread it is possible to make, and that can only be done by the farmers growing the most suitable wheat for the production of flour for bread-making purposes. In Western Australia, if it is necessary for a given number of bushels of wheat of premium quality to be grown for the local mills to produce high quality grain for making flour, the farmer should receive an increased price to make that economically possible. I do not say that has to be done.

I have studied this question for a long time and I am convinced that with co-operation between the farmers and the department and its experts, together with advice from the Bread Institute, it will be possible to produce flour without compelling farmers or asking farmers to grow special wheat of premium quality. If it has to be done, if we must have premium wheat to mix with the ordinary wheat grown in Western Australia, I think the farmer is entitled to be paid for it. I have quite a number of farmer friends and they argue that they want to grow wheat that will give them the biggest crop and the paltry extra price offered for premium wheat does not make it worth growing.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Would the consumer pay extra for it?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I will deal with that later on. I am of the opinion that, working in close co-operation with the experts in our State and taking advantage of the advice available from other States, we are all the time endeavouring to improve the quality and strength of the wheat at the various experimental wheat stations, and in that way a vast improvement in the quality of our wheat can be achieved. It may be news to most people that Australia consumes less flour per head than any other white nation in the world, and that embraces Europe, Great Britain, Ireland and the United States. I think there are two reasons for that. The first is the comparative cheapness of meat. I am not speaking of the present position but of what existed before the war. Meat could be bought comparatively cheaply at that time and the people of Australia achieved the reputation of being the biggest meat eaters in the world.

The scarcity and prohibitive prices of mutton and beef to workers must now compel them to turn to cheaper food. The answer to that is an increased consumption of bread. But to achieve this it is imperative that the quality of bread should be improved. In Western Australia it can be done only by improving

the quality of flour, and that can be achieved only by growing wheat of greater protein strength. I say this deliberately: It is a reflection on the capacity and wisdom of all farmers in Western Australia that they are not producing wheat of the same quality as that produced in New South Wales. That is a statement of fact with regard to which I challenge contradiction. It must be remembered that according to experts the climate and the breed of wheat are the chief factors—of course, soil is a big factor, too—in producing wheat of high protein value for the manufacture of bread. Those aspects and the type of soil are the major factors.

Hon. A. R. Jones: It is more the millers that do the damage than the farmers. We grow good quality wheat but when it is milled the goodness is taken out of it.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I think the hon. member is barking up the wrong tree. I do not blame the millers one iota for the quality of flour made in Western Australia. The hon. member is speaking of the low extraction of flour. That is another question. But with regard to the low extraction of flour, we cannot get away from the fact that no matter where we go, people do not like bread made from high extraction flour. In the course of a lecture recently, Dr. Kent-Jones was asked that question, and he said that the people of Great Britain will be glad when the extraction is lowered, because no matter how nutritionists and doctors and all faddists have tried to persuade people to eat brown bread, wholemeal bread, the verdict is unmistakably that the majority of people like good white bread and will not eat wholemeal bread if they can get the other.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: Did you say doctors and all faddists?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I did not mean it in that sense.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: You can reply to that tomorrow.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Let us say, some doctors. I noticed the other day that our own Minister for Health was thrashing the public of Western Australia for ruining the teeth of youngsters and practically advocating the consumption of wholemeal bread.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: I thought you wanted support.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: We want to do what the British Government has done—increase the fortification of flour, the calcium content. It only costs ninepence per head per annum. That is the answer to some of the medical profession and the faddists who say we should live on brown bread. I unhesitatingly say that in Western Australia we have the climate, plus the soil, plus the economic breed of wheat, plus the capacity and skill of the farmer

necessary to produce breadmaking wheat of a quality equal to, or better than, that obtainable in any other State in Australia. But we are not doing that today.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: You do not blame the bakers for any of it.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Yes, I do.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I am glad to hear that.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The hon. member could not have been listening closely. In New South Wales—unless he is a rebel, and we get rebels in every industry—with every baker making inferior bread a member of the staff of the Bread Research Institute gets in touch, inquiring into his method of baking and giving him sound technical advice as to the reason.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Do you not think machine-made bread is worse than hand-made bread?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Machine-made bread, when first introduced into the industry, was terrible, but the difficulties have been overcome.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: We have got more used to it, you mean.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The difficulties have been overcome and in America—Dr. Hislop could talk more about that—and Great Britain and big cities like Sydney and Melbourne—

Hon. N. E. Baxter: We are dealing with Western Australia.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I am discussing the question of machinery. Machine-made bread should be more attractive to customers than hand-made bread because obviously it is manufactured under much better hygienic conditions. I am very sorry that when negotiations were taking place with us, such as took place in New South Wales, we did not agree to the appointment of an advisory committee. The bread manufacturers are men of no politics. A good baker is out to make the best loaf possible and does not care whether there is a Liberal or a Labour Government in power. I think the example of the Sydney bakers was a wonderful instance of co-operation with the Government and has achieved wonderful results.

In the course of his lecture to the Art Society, Dr. Kent-Jones mentioned the improvement in wheat in Australia and particularly in that grown in New South Wales. So they are slowly going uphill. Here, however, we are stationary. I have said as much as I want to say about bread, but there are successful farmers in the House who understand the business. I have personally discussed it with many farmers, and the big drawback is that the farmer argues that he is going to grow wheat that gives him the best result. If he takes that attitude, he is doing an injury to his profession as a farmer and an

injury to the coming generation of farmers who will carry on the work in Western Australia. How can we ignore the experts who are continually telling us to change our system of f.a.q. grading? We cannot ignore them!

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: There is another story to tell about that.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I know there are many difficulties, but the same difficulties were met in other countries. In Canada no result could be achieved until they passed legislation insisting upon a system of grading, with the result that Canadian wheat has rapidly come to the front and farmers in that country who previously did not care about their industry but considered their own personal gain, were stopped at once. The majority of farmers in Western Australia are proud of their profession. Why should they be kept back by a section of the farmers who in the past have been lucky enough to grow the lowest-quality wheat, which is good only for the making of biscuits and other food-stuffs, but is no good for bread? Why should the good farmers be held back by these men? It is an impossible position. Therefore, I want the Government to do something about it.

There is no need for members to take any notice of what I say, but I speak with the practical experience of a baker who has had experience of bread-making. However, when we get men like Dr. Kent-Jones and Dr. Sutton, we cannot ignore their recommendations. I think there is only one man—I have forgotten his name—who has come to Western Australia and patted the farmers on the back and told them that it did not matter about altering the grading of their wheat. He was blowing in their ears. Dr. Kent-Jones, who is an authority on this subject, said that the farmers of Australia are losing money by the dumping of this bad wheat with the good and selling it on f.a.q. standard. Dr. Sutton, who is one of the most experienced wheat men in Australia, says the same. We cannot ignore those people.

I want to point out another side of this argument, and that is the important question of studying the potential markets for our flour, particularly in Malaya, Singapore, Indonesia, China and the adjoining islands. We used to dominate the Malayan market at one time, and every decent citizen, irrespective of his party politics, looks forward to the day when the Asian and coloured peoples, who are close to our shores, will overcome their troubles, and permanent international understanding will be reached. Whether that will take one year or many years, we do not know, but we hope that it will quickly resolve itself. As a young man, I had some experience with these people, and I know what I am talking about. They are striving for better conditions, and anybody with any knowledge of these people knows

that they like the white man's food, particularly the white man's bread. The Chinamen, the Malaysians and all the coloured people who have an opportunity of buying our bread, do so.

Hon. H. Hearn: Will the Seamen's Union carry it?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: This is too serious a question for such remarks. In years past, owing to poor economic conditions—for which we were in part to blame—they could not afford to buy our bread. They are gradually overcoming their troubles, and soon there will be tremendous markets available. As I have often stated in this Chamber, it is impossible to make good bread in tropical countries with inferior flour. If we do not improve the quality of our flour—which means our wheat—then Canada and the United States will capture those markets. Wheat will not always be at the high price it is today. However, I will admit that there is a reason why the Canadians were able to sell good flour in Singapore cheaper than we could; the people in the United States paid the extra price for their offal, which our people will not do. Unless we move upwards and improve the quality of our wheat and flour, these countries may, in a few years, capture all the markets. It is our duty to the farmers to look ahead and plan for the future.

We must improve the quality of our flour in order that the people to whom I here referred can make bread in tropical countries; otherwise we will lose those markets to Canada and the United States. The peoples of these Asiatic countries will progress and eventually overcome their troubles. It may take five, ten or even 20 years, but they will overcome them, and try to assume the same economic standard as the white man. When that time arrives, they will not be worried about buying inferior flour, or inferior wheat. They will build their own flour mills and buy their wheat on the world's markets. If that is done, and we still have inferior wheat, we will never be able to sell it. In such circumstances, our wheat will be used for fillers, as it is known in the trade. They will use the good wheat and use our Australian wheat as fillers, and we cannot afford to take that risk.

Western Australia depends to a large extent on its farmers, pastoralists, dairymen, poultry farmers and everybody connected with those industries. We are short of fodder today because we do not export sufficient flour. We must prepare for the future, and I appeal to the primary producers in this Chamber to abolish the f.a.q. standard and carry out the recommendations of the experts. If that is done, it will be not only in their own interests but also in the interests of young Australians in years to come. I am sorry to have detained the House talking about

this subject, but all members know that I am keenly interested in it. I recognise the difficulties that have to be solved by the wheat farmers, but we cannot afford to be old fashioned any longer, and some change is absolutely necessary. Experts say that there should be two or three classes of wheat in this State, and I consider it would be possible to have one class in the Great Southern, another grade in the good wheat areas, and another grade if necessary between the two areas. That is a question for the experts to determine. The division of wheat into two grades would be a tremendous advance. That could be done without putting the farmers, and the wheat industry, to any great expenditure. I stress the point, and my remarks are supported by experts. The farmers are losing money by sticking to this old-fashioned system of grading. I support the motion.

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

*House adjourned at 8.25 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 1st August, 1950.

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

### ELECTORAL—SWEARING-IN OF MEMBER.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am prepared to swear-in the member for North Perth.

Mr. Needham took and subscribed the oath and signed the roll.

### AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT.

*Section "B," 1949.*

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received from the Auditor General a copy of Section "B" of his report on the Treasurer's statement of the Public Accounts for the financial year ended the 30th June, 1949. This will be laid on the Table of the House.

### QUESTIONS.

#### HOUSING.

*As to Outstanding Applications.*

Mr. NEEDHAM asked the Honorary Minister for Housing:

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

- (1) War Service homes;
- (2) Commonwealth-State tenancies?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied:

Applications outstanding on 30/6/50—

- (1) War Service homes, 4,572.
- (2) Commonwealth-State rental homes, 11,123.

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

#### TIMBER.

*As to Quantity Exported.*

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

(1) What quantity of Western Australian sawn hardwoods, including sleepers, was exported from Western Australia, both overseas and interstate, for the year 1949-1950?

(2) What was the value of such export?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) Interstate, 39,518 loads; overseas, 18,874 loads.

(2) Interstate, £548,516; overseas, £450,638.

### SERVICEMEN'S LAND SETTLEMENT.

*As to Areas Submitted to Commonwealth and Withdrawn.*

Mr. ACKLAND asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) Is it a fact that at the 28th February, 1950, the State Government submitted 1,805,358 acres of land to the Commonwealth Government for approval for Soldier Settlement?

(2) Is it a fact that 201,914 acres were subsequently withdrawn by the State?