

Mr. CORNELL: It was conceived in a frenzy of despair at having all this money and in a determination that the local authorities should not participate in any direct grant. The sooner it aborts, the better. Throughout the negotiations in regard to the plant pool the Commissioner of Main Roads seems to have been determined that he would be the be-all and end-all of the scheme.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: He is very conscious that he is in charge of a fund.

Mr. CORNELL: He is using powers that were given him and which it would require an amendment of the Act to remove, in order to deprive the road boards—I quote the remarks of a certain friend of the member for West Perth—"of what should be their birthright" and what was given to them by the Commonwealth for a specific purpose. I think the fund should be distributed to the road boards in the manner that was intended.

That brings me to a suggestion made in this House some sessions ago for the establishment of a parliamentary standing committee on public works. Had such a committee been set up there would have been more expedition in the progress of public works in this State. Such a committee would have given attention to the question of plant pools and any sensible set of men would have ironed out the difficulties and put the money to the use for which it was intended.

With such a committee we would not be witnessing the present spectacle of the study in still life that is represented by the inactivity on the new Causeway, and that project would have been nearer completion that it is now. I admit that a Bill for the setting up of a parliamentary standing committee on public works was introduced without a great deal of enthusiasm. Certain clauses were inserted in the Bill which meant that it was more or less born with the stamp of death on its brow. While it was not stillborn, it was so nearly so that it did not matter and what would have been a necessary and desirable adjunct to Parliament, went overboard.

There is nothing further I have to say. At this late hour I do not think you, Sir, would wish me to say more and I conclude by expressing to you my keen appreciation of your indulgence to me. I wish you well in the future and, in making my maiden speech for this session, I again desire to thank the officers of the House for the courtesy and consideration extended to me during the rather brief period that I have been here. At the recent elections, after figuring in a photograph three years before and winning by a short head, hard ridden, I was given the rather rare tribute of a walkover. I do not anticipate that will happen again. I think one in a parliamentary lifetime is all that anyone can expect.

Mr. J. Hegney: How about the emus and grasshoppers up there?

Mr. CORNELL: I think I have spoken for a good deal longer than I originally intended.

Mr. Hoar: Tell us more about them.

Mr. CORNELL: If the hon. member wants me to enlarge on the emus and grasshoppers, I will do so, but on another occasion. I support the motion.

On motion by Mr. Rodoreda, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 11.12 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 12th September, 1950.

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

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

#### *Thirteenth Day.*

Debate resumed from the 7th September.

HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM (Central) [4.35]: Like others who have already taken part in the debate, I offer my congratulations to the new members. I am sure they have taken up politics seriously, and no doubt they will find it a full-time and interesting task. One of the very great privileges in life is to serve one's country, but there are some who discount the value of the services we render to the people. Nevertheless, my experience entitles me to say that extremely good service is rendered by our political representatives, and I am sure that the new members will add to that reputation.

I also add my expressions of regret, to those of other members, that the time arrived for two of our number to retire from active participation in parliamentary work. Mr. Thomson served this country in a political capacity for a long time, much longer even than the period I have been in politics. He represented the people of Katanning in the Legislative Assembly and later the South-East Province in this House. It is pleasing to know that he has been succeeded by his son. Mr. Miles, who has also left us, was a member of this House for about 37 years. Nobody knew the North-West better than he and, further, no-one has done more for that part of the State. I am sure that he will be missed, for the knowledge and advice that he could impart will be lacking in our debates.

In speaking to the Address-in-reply today, I think that there are few of us who take an interest in public affairs, more particularly in a much wider sphere than that relating only to our own State, and who cannot be other than alarmed at the grave turn of events in the world. We do our best to try to bring about a satisfactory solution of the differences between nations, and yet we have hardly finished one costly war than we seem to be facing an extremely disturbing element in another direction. To me it seems remarkable for nations to be friendly with us in one war and then, at a later stage, to be our enemies. I cannot help remembering that Japan was our ally in World War I and did its best to assist us, but then turned against us in World War II. The same thing applies to Russia. That country was forced into World War II and no doubt did its share of cleaning up the disturbance at that time. I should not like to say that Russia is at present at war with any part of the British Empire, but it is causing a good deal of concern, and anyone in public life must admit that we are facing a future presenting a very dark outlook indeed.

This casts a great responsibility, not only upon those who represent the people in Parliament, but also upon every one of us. It is dreadful that we should be called upon to defend Australia, and there is quite a possibility of this being necessary when we see the communists overrunning China as rapidly and successfully as they have done and then turning their eyes in other directions. Once they move outside the present boundaries and feel inclined to come to Australia, no country could be more enviously regarded than ours to a land that is overpopulated. The possibility is that Australia might appeal to the communists as an asset to provide an outlet for surplus population.

Whatever the future might hold for us, we can be successful only by exerting true co-operative and co-ordinated effort. This is not a question involving only the people in possession of land or wealth; it is the responsibility of all of us to face the future and I hope that, if needs be, we shall do so with the same equanimity as we displayed on the last occasion and with equally successful results.

During the last few days I have been asked to accept a responsibility in this State—and I propose to accept it—and hope I shall be as successful as I have been informed I was on a former occasion, but I cannot be successful without the aid of everybody in the State. Consequently, if I am absent from the sittings of the House at various times, I hope members will appreciate the fact that my duties require service of me in that other capacity.

Our problem today is to try to satisfy the wants of our people. Since 1946 we have been endeavouring to overtake belated building requirements, belated re-

pairs and belated everything else, and up to date we seem to be still as far off from reaching the clearing point as we were at the beginning. I have been trying to puzzle out why it is we have not been able to erect more buildings than we have done during the years we have been making special efforts in this direction. We are importing, or are about to import, prefabricated houses from countries that need buildings, not only to meet the requirements of increased population and for other reasons, but also to make good the destruction caused by war. It is a most extraordinary position and one that needs explanation, why Britain should be able to provide us with building materials in view of the fact that so much destruction was caused in that country and that she must have, on a population basis, as much leeway to make up as we have.

We ought to examine the cause of this and, if we do, I believe it will be found that we attempted to do something at a very unsuitable time. We reduced the hours of labour when our people should be working more, though I do not say they should work increased hours without receiving additional pay. Instead of restricting hours to 40 per week, however, we should have increased them until we were able to make up the leeway. It does not matter in which direction we turn, whether our need be materials for farms or for housing—a lot of things coming on the market might well be termed luxury lines and we could do without them until times become more normal—we seem to find it impossible readily to get these materials that are so urgently required.

I have never been able to agree with the contention that a man can do as much work in a week of 40 hours as in 44 or 48 hours, and I believe there is a limit to which a man can stand up to toil, particularly hard toil. We are living in a mechanical age and have relieved the men who used to do the very arduous work—I refer to those known as navvies—who had to handle every bit of ballast for the railways and shovel it into trucks, but today we have mechanical devices to do this work much more cheaply and thus relieve the men of much of the hard and tedious work they used to do. Although we have these devices, we do not seem to be able to overtake requirements, and some investigation should be made to ascertain how we can bring about a better understanding with the people responsible for doing this work so that we may overtake the arrears.

Looking to the future, immediate attention should be given to building up food supplies and not only for ourselves, who are fairly well provided for, but also for other parts of the world. At the moment the price of wool is the subject most discussed by the public, but it is of no use saying anything against the men who are producing the wool. They do not fix the

price; it is a competitive price. The world seems to be so short of wool and so fearful that opposing peoples will obtain the supplies that many buyers are prepared to outbid others to an unreasonable extent in order to obtain the article they feel they must have. Yesterday a price of 200½d. was paid for a special class of wool. That is a terrific price. I do not know who paid it, but there is no doubt that competition is now between nations rather than between individual buyers.

I am not blaming the pastoralists or the producers for accepting the money. They have had their bad times, and if buyers consider it a businesslike proposition to offer such high prices, the responsibility is theirs. It is our responsibility to increase the output of food supplies in order to help satisfy the world's requirements and also to produce any other materials that we can export. I am a believer in the contention that we should feed and clothe our own people first. Undoubtedly that is our first responsibility. No country can remain great unless it trades with other countries, and Australia generally and Western Australia in its smaller way have the responsibility to do everything possible in that direction.

I listened carefully to Mr. Hearn's speech, which was rather interrupted, and I think he tried to suggest a solution to some of our industrial problems with the idea of securing a better relationship between employers and employees. For many years there has been a feeling that the employer of labour is someone to be despised by the employee, and that the employee is someone to be despised by the employer. After all, I know that in some factories—I have in mind places I visited when I was abroad, particularly Cadbury's and Lever Bros.—there is an ideal system operating as between employer and employee. We do not hear of industrial troubles in those establishments. Everyone seems to be happy and giving of his best. Why cannot we apply that system in Australia? I appeal to the Minister to try to introduce it into the Midland Junction Workshops. I believe that two or three representatives of the workmen could be brought into such a scheme and difficulties could be ironed out in that way. We will always have the born agitator, and any heartburnings or ill-feelings that may be apparent from time to time, are engendered a great deal by the man who happens to be fluent in his speech. He gets a great hearing, and any trouble becomes greatly magnified in no time, resulting in an industrial upheaval, whereas such a result is quite unnecessary. I believe in the establishment of conciliation committees for bringing about a better understanding between labour and capital. I saw it functioning in the places that I have previously referred to where there were homes and recreation grounds provided. All were as happy as boys on a beach.

Hon. G. Bennetts: That is the system the Western Mining Company is working under at Norseman.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I hope we can spread it further, because I feel that unsavoury agitators would then have very small fields for their operations. It is up to us to do what we can in that respect. Take those employed on farms. In most cases a good feeling prevails so that there is generally a happy relationship between the employees and the employer on a property. There always has been on my farm. I believe the Government could make a start to spread that system. There are places where probably a good deal more satisfaction could be given to the people employed. I am told that a good deal of industrial unrest occurs from time to time in parts of the Midland Junction Workshops. There must be a reason for it. Instead of glossing it over and saying it is the work of agitators, we might get together and see where the trouble lies. I am perfectly satisfied that the employees are amenable to reason and can understand, if it is put to them clearly, why certain things happen. I make that suggestion to the Government to see if it can take steps to create a better feeling.

I want to have a word about the price spiral, or inflation. We have to give some consideration to the cause of it, and how to stop it. We cannot have price increases that cannot be passed on, because only one thing would happen. The people who have just recently made an application to the Federal Arbitration Court for a £10 a week basic wage must know, in their own hearts, that industry cannot pay that amount without passing it on to someone. Therefore, such a move is only a continuation of the spiral. We have called it all sorts of names—a dog chasing its tail, and so on. If we are to have price-fixing, then we must have wage-pegging. The Imperial Government realised that that had to be. Because of the pressure that has been brought to bear on that Government, I am waiting to see what action is to take place there. We cannot have even £1 a week increase without its being passed on. Immediately a man running a business gets to the stage where costs are higher than his revenue, one thing only faces him, and that is bankruptcy. These defects cannot be remedied by simply increasing the salaries or wages of the employees.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Wages are pegged on the cost of living.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Yes, but immediately one level reaches the other, there is a further increase. The basis is wrong. I admit that there has not yet been a genius—not even our professors of economics—to provide a solution.

Hon. H. Hearn: Wages are not pegged, but are being constantly revised.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Mr Bennetts did not quite mean that, but that the basic wage was fixed according to the cost of commodities. There is no pegging of the basic wage.

Hon. H. C. Strickland: It is based on prices.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Yes, on the prices charged for certain goods. Immediately additional prices go on because wages have been increased, then up go the prices again, so we do not get very far. We have to face this, too, that besides wages and salaries, there are other costs to be met. I have taken out a few such items but as they are all known to members, it will, as far as they are concerned, be just painting the lily, to quote them, but we have taxation, which is a pretty heavy charge on industry, and then we have the old-age and invalid pensions, child endowment, free hospital and dental treatment—not free to everybody, but to quite a number of people—baby bonuses to all people, maternity payments to all women having a family, unemployment relief, and other indirect taxes such as customs and excise duty, and sales tax. All these are charges against industry and, of course, add to the cost of goods. The man on the basic wage probably receives the greatest relief when he gets to the retiring age as he receives a pension which, of course, is not very high. The man who has been thrifty and has saved some money or is in receipt of a small income, does not get the same consideration. Generally speaking, I think that the balance is in favour of the workman rather than the employer. All these charges have to be added to the cost of goods. There is no such thing as free services, and we know it. Even we in this House do not give our services free. All the services I have mentioned have to be paid for by some means or other. When the papers, and different people, talk of free services, they are misleading the public. Everything we get has to be paid for, either directly or indirectly.

I do not believe that control of prices is helpful. Talking now from my farming experience, rather than anything else, when certain goods became fairly cheap I started to produce a little more of them, and whether I was right or wrong I cannot say, but I always seemed to be fairly right. I found that the farmers who produced poultry, pigs, wheat or oats ceased producing those goods immediately the prices dropped, and, in consequence, the prices soon increased again because, after all, the law of supply and demand operates with respect to those commodities as well as with anything else. I believe that if we stopped price-fixing, there would be an inducement for people to produce more, and that the prices would find their own level.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: How did you get on producing more wheat in 1930?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: We went on producing more wheat.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: And got further into debt.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: We did for a time, but we recovered. We certainly found that it was profitable to produce more oats and other fodder for our sheep. We produced sidelines but we were always producing. There was no falling off on our farm. I will tell the Minister, without skiting, there was not one year that we did not make a profit off the farm.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: I am referring only to wheat.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I will admit that I did not sell one bushel of wheat at the low price. I am one of those who believe in co-operative marketing. The year when the price of wheat dropped to about 1s. 6d., our average price was 4s. 6d. because of the sales effected at the higher price through the pooling system.

Hon. G. Fraser: You do not have to go back to 1930. What about the cauliflowers sold last week or the week before.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Immediately products like that rise in price, everybody produces them. That bears out my argument when I said that because of over-production prices fall and the commodity produced becomes cheaper.

Hon. G. Fraser: They buried them in this case.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I do not think they would do that.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: They buried cauliflowers.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: In any case, that is exactly how markets operate. I have listened to the cry in this Chamber that if we removed control from the price of motor cars and tractors, it would be an absolute calamity. Has any member heard of any trouble about it since? The only people who have been affected are members of Parliament. We are greatly relieved because we have not had the worry of people asking us, "Can you get a car, a tractor, netting or something else for me?" These things adjust themselves.

Hon. H. Hearn: We might even get some for ourselves now.

Hon. G. Fraser: But the prices rose.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I think the prices rose proportionately with everything else.

Hon. G. Fraser: With motor cars?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Yes, I say that because I know what I paid for my car. The tendency to increase in price was because of economic circumstances.

Hon. H. Hearn: Because of devaluation.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Yes, and the international monetary system. America today is unable to supply us with dollar goods. We are not allowed to purchase goods from America if it can be avoided. Therefore, there has been some reason for those increases. I believe that if we said to these people, "Go on, there is a free market," the position would adjust itself in no time.

Hon. G. Fraser: Can you tell me of one item over which control has been lifted, that did not rise in price?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: No, I cannot think of one item. But, I cannot recall one instance where the price has not risen proportionately since that time; more particularly if the goods had been imported from what are known as the hard currency countries.

Hon. H. C. Strickland: How about beer?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: It is not for the want of trying that the price of beer has not been increased. I heard the other day that the price of beer is fixed.

Hon. H. Hearn: That comes under the item of food.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I understand that the price is fixed.

Hon. G. Fraser: That is why the price has not risen.

Hon. H. Hearn: The price is fixed.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I read, the other day, that the price had not been increased for some time and the brewers, or the people who produce the beer, are becoming worried about the increased cost of production. All the brewery costs have increased and the brewers feel that they should be permitted to increase the charge for their product because of the services they are rendering. Therefore, I feel sure that if we had a free market, all these things would adjust themselves. It is not very long since the Government said that it would remove from control houses up to 12½ squares. The Government said, "We want you to go ahead and build them." I can take any hon. member from this Chamber for a trip around the city on a weekend and I can show him families building homes. Under the old system people could not do that because they were not granted permits to build. They had to go through the old routine of waiting for either rental homes or else getting contractors to do the work.

Hon. G. Fraser: There were plenty of homes being constructed under the self-help system when permits were in force.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: If that is so, then I do not know where they were being built. A great many more homes are being constructed now than there were before. At Osborne Park I saw a man—he could hardly be called a new Australian because he came from a foreign country about 20 years ago—and his wife building a cement

block house. The woman was handing up the blocks to her husband and when I went out last Sunday I was amazed at the progress. The man was putting up the walls and I said to him, "You are doing a very good job." He said, "Do you think so?" I said, "Yes. Are you going to do the plastering?" He replied, "No, I am not doing that and I may have to wait a long time for a plasterer but I will put the roof on and live in the house so that I do not have to continue living in the shack where I am now." That clearly demonstrates to me, anyhow, that people will help themselves. I do not think that restrictions help anybody. Thank the Lord, I was not restricted when I was young, and I do not want to pass those conditions on to our young people of today.

Hon. G. Fraser: People were able to get materials when it was necessary to obtain permits.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I know all about the hon. member and his union. It is not possible to join the union because the union will not permit it. I know of a case where a qualified plumber came from the Old Country the other day. That man was told that he had to pass an examination before he could obtain a job as a plumber.

Hon. G. Fraser: When restrictions were in force, people were able to finish their homes. Now that restrictions have been eased, they cannot do so.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: That is a question of the amount of material available. But, there has been an increase in the availability of material, and I will guarantee that from now on more houses will be built than were erected during the period when permits were in force. When the hon. member comes back from his trip to New Zealand, I will show him just how we have built more homes since permits have been lifted.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: A number of half-built homes.

Hon. E. H. Gray: If that man, of whom you were speaking, is a qualified plumber he will have no trouble in passing an examination.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I now want to have something to say about the appointment of Royal Commissions and boards. A little while ago I read a pamphlet, written by a distinguished Englishman, which stated that Royal Commissions and boards were appointed—and I hope it does not apply to this Government—to find an excuse for a Government that could not make up its own mind. I think that fits the situation fairly well.

Hon. G. Bennetts: The present Government has had a lot of Royal Commissions.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: In this State we have ten very good Ministers, eight of whom are fully paid and two are not. These Ministers do a lot of work and, to my mind, they are doing far too

much of the detailed work in their departments and not enough of the big work. It is not the job of a Minister to do the administrative work of a department. I know I will not be very popular when I air my views on this subject, but I trust that my remarks do not apply to the two Ministers in this House.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: We do not mind advice.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The Honorary Minister for Agriculture has the most important job in Western Australia.

Hon. H. Tuckey: Hear, hear!

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I say that advisedly because he has wonderful opportunities. Whether he is hamstrung or not, I do not know. I do know, however, that he has good officers, but they are leaving his department and obtaining employment elsewhere. That is a great pity because his department cannot continue to do the job set out for it unless the Minister has a staff available. We have had a number of Royal Commissions and inquiries but in most cases their findings have not been accepted by the Government. We had an inquiry—a costly one, too—into s.p. betting. I am not actually interested in betting because I myself do not bet, though I do not object to the other fellow throwing his money away if he so desires. We have not yet heard whether the Government intends to do anything about the question of s.p. betting.

We also had an inquiry into the Claremont Mental Hospital. This came about because of publicity in one of our weekly newspapers. I am satisfied that there was no need to bring a man over here for the purpose of conducting that inquiry. We have people who are well qualified to advise the Government on matters such as this. What has been the result of the findings of that Royal Commission? All the inquiry has done has been to upset the minds of the parents and relatives of the inmates of the home. Therefore I hope we will not continue to appoint these boards and inquiries because I believe there is some truth in that statement about Royal Commissions and boards being appointed because Governments cannot make up their own minds. I agree with what Mr. Craig said the other evening: We want people who can make their own decisions after giving careful consideration to the problems confronting them. Therefore I hope that the Government will adopt that attitude in the future. If the Government adheres to that procedure, it will show the people that it is quite capable of governing.

All we need to do is to compare ourselves with South Australia. The population in that State is roughly 200,000 or 300,000 more than in this State. Yet, there are only six Ministers in South Australia. I do not want to pat that Government on the back but I believe South Australia is

the best governed State in Australia. The people there seem to be satisfied with their Government and I want the people of this State to be satisfied with our Government.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: They are, are they not?

Hon. G. Fraser: Satisfied with a Labour Government.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: No, with the present Government. I am out to help the Government and I think everybody in this House will agree that that is the right course. I consider that the Government should pass over some of the lesser jobs to local governing authorities. Most Ministers, at some time or other, have had dealings, either official or otherwise, with local governing bodies. Those organisations do a lot of useful work and all in an honorary capacity. In the Old Country local authorities control hospitals, education, police and health matters, and they carry out this work most effectively.

Hon. H. Hearn: Hear, hear!

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I realise that we need some co-ordination, but that could be brought about by some means or other. We should shed some of our minor responsibilities on to local authorities, and I feel sure they would do a good job.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: Would you have uniformity between districts?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: It is necessary to have uniformity.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: But would you have it if your scheme were put into operation?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: It could be arranged.

Hon. H. Hearn: It works successfully in England.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: In the Old Country local authorities control police, education, health, hospitals and such industrial matters as the inspections of industrial concerns and so forth. Those authorities make a good job of it. We could co-ordinate them under statute and we could have a Minister representing them in the Cabinet. Generally, throughout Australia—although not so much in South Australia—there is too much interference in private business by the Government. By that I mean too much socialisation, if I may be permitted to use the term. I was pleased to hear the Minister give notice today of legislation which will enable the Government to get rid of the Boya quarries. When I was in the Government—if I am in order in talking about when I was in the Government—we tried to get rid of these Government-controlled enterprises. The only things we could have sold were the State Hotels and the State Sawmills. Nobody wanted the Wyndham Meat Works, the brick works, or the quarries.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: That was during the depression.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Yes, but I think we nearly sold the quarries. The person who desired to buy them wanted the Government to give an undertaking that all its requirements would be taken from this one quarry. Of course that could not be agreed to, so it fell through. When we have private individuals competing with Government institutions, we will always find that the former are able to deliver the goods much quicker and more cheaply than is the Government.

Hon. G. Fraser: Do you believe in the Government not running things profitably?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: If they were profitable when they first started, they would soon become unprofitable. The only profitable State-owned concerns I know of are the hotels. If we put them in the right place and give them the monetary aid that the State hotels have, they will run themselves.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Two of the State hotels have kept the others for years.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The Bruce Rock, Dwellingup, Gwalia and Wongan Hills hotels have all been profitable, but the profits have been very small compared with those made by other privately-owned premises.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Others have made fortunes.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I do not know where the money goes, but the profits are very small when compared with hotels run by private enterprise.

Hon. E. H. Gray: The Government hotels give better service.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I should say they give good service—not better. I would be very proud to take Mr. Gray to some of the hotels in the country districts run by private individuals, and to show him the accommodation and service provided there. The State hotels are quite well run but I think something more could be done in that direction. Apparently in other directions the Government is shedding its responsibilities. I see that the works at Chandler have been closed. I should like to know what they cost the State.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: You would not blame us for that.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: These works have been costly. They may have served their purpose in providing potash during the war period, but when they are up against competition we find that there is not enough money in the Treasury to keep them going. I hope that Wundowie is in a better position than I think it is at the moment. I know it is a very desirable undertaking but is it running at anything like a profit? What is the total capital we are committed to there? What is the

possibility of making ends meet there even in 10 years' time? We know that Broken Hill Pty. Ltd., which started in a small way, is a very big show today. I think members will agree with me that it would be very nice to have a few of the shares originally floated in this company. I would not like to take a share in Wundowie.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: You have a share as a taxpayer.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I know I have, but I have got to pay out. That is the difference between Wundowie and Broken Hill Pty. Ltd. I think the Government ought to leave trading alone. The proper function of a Government is to govern, not to trade. It is not qualified to do so. When our civil servants are put into State departments as young people they do a very good job, but when they are taken out and put in charge of concerns of which they know nothing, they get out of their depth. To obtain any knowledge or standing, one has to stick to one's trade or calling. For instance, fancy asking me to do anything in the way of banking or something else for which I had not the qualifications.

Hon. G. Fraser: You did a good job as Director of Loans.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I did, because I was able to call upon the people I wanted to assist, but could not do that in the Public Service. They would have been horrified if I had asked civil servants to stand on a platform and help me collect funds; I am not sure whether the Treasurer would have been pleased about it, either. Another point I should like to make is that some of our civil servants are overloaded with work. Recently I was looking through a list of the tasks some of these people are asked to do. Take, for instance, the Under Treasurer. The Lord only knows how many concerns he is running! Formerly he could not have had enough to do, or he must be now overloaded with work or, alternatively, he is shedding some of his responsibilities on to others. We should not overload our civil servants, as they cannot possibly devote their time to all that they are asked to undertake.

I was very pleased to listen to the discussions that have taken place on what is happening in the North, and we are fortunate in that the representatives of the North Province have told us a great deal about what is going on there. I think the advent of Air Beef Pty. Ltd. has been a wonderful step for Western Australia. It leads me to recall that the carrying of airmail and passengers was first introduced in Western Australia by Major Norman Brearley, and since then it has, of course, proved a great success. I remember that we thought it a wonderful thing when the first plane flew across here from the Eastern States—now we have them going back and forth. Though this

airlift has been of great benefit to Western Australia, I am looking forward to the time when it will also prove beneficial to the Northern Territory, where there are also problems of travelling stock over long distances to treatment works.

The airlift would enable pastoralists to turn their cattle over much quicker, to increase their stocks and, in consequence, get quicker returns from their pastoral holdings. It would also ensure the supply of better meat. At present there is a wastage of stock that cannot be marketed because of regulations. This will all be obviated if we have small treatment works and have beef transported by plane. The innovation is a splendid one and will prove of great benefit. As members know, we are expected to do something to improve the position regarding short supplies of meat overseas. I would like to say a few words about natives.

Hon. G. Fraser: Especially with regard to Mt. Lawley!

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I think the Commonwealth Government made a great mistake in giving money to the natives themselves. It is desirable that the Federal Government should find money to help us with our native problem. I do not remember what was paid last year, but under the Constitution—it was framed in 1889, I think—we were bound to find £11,000 a year. At that date there were but few natives domesticated to any extent compared with what so many of them are today. Since then, we have bred a large number of half-castes, and they are becoming more or less a problem because we have allowed them to drift into native conditions rather than educating them to white conditions.

I believe that instead of the money being given to the natives, it should have been handed over in trust to missionaries who are providing for children and adults alike. I do not believe we can do very much for the older natives. Like most old people, they have set ways which it would be difficult to alter, but a great deal could be done for the young people. I believe there have been some changes recently. Not long ago I attended a few schools and found quite a number of half-caste children associating with white children there and receiving the same education. There was a time, of course, when people were horrified at the thought of native children attending the same school as white children. The natives had to be segregated and special schools established for them.

If anything is to be done for our native children we must lift them from their cradles, in spite of what people might say about tearing them away from their mothers. I think that is the only way it can be done, and I think the Government is doing a good job in this regard. I certainly would not object to native old age pensioners getting something if the money

were handed over to those who are caring for them. I know that in York, Beverley and Quairading the money is not being spent in the direction intended. I do not think our own white people use the money they receive in child endowment for the purpose for which it is meant.

Hon. E. H. Gray: A good many of them do.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Does the hon. member think so? We have a large half-caste population in Western Australia, but we have a larger population of full-blooded natives. Insofar as the half-caste population is concerned, Queensland and New South Wales are, of course, ahead of us. The only way to deal with the native problem is to get young people and educate them into the Australian way of life; get them to live in homes, instead of the tin shanties in which they live, surrounded by their half-starved, mongrel dogs and horses. I have seen the conditions during the last 40 years and there was no improvement whatever until very recently, when they have been forced by the police to clean themselves up when they go to the York show, etc. They have certainly looked a bit cleaner than they did in the past.

I asked a question as to when the Causeway was likely to be finished. I hope the Government never starts another job like that under similar conditions. I believe such big works would be done far quicker and more profitably if tenders were called, and jobs given out under contract. I cannot picture the Sydney harbour bridge being built under conditions which obtain on the Causeway. It will be six or seven years from the time the new Causeway was started before it is completed. I admit that the war was in progress when the work was put in hand, but it could have been expedited. When the Causeway is finished, we are still going to be faced with the difficulty of getting people across the river.

Hon. H. Hearn: They ought to start another one.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The sensible thing would be to start one from the foot of Barrack-street. The Government should do what was suggested by a gentleman some years ago and put an island in the centre of the river. He would have done the work if the land that he was reclaiming had been given to him. It would have been a profitable venture from the State's point of view. A big bridge would not have been required at this end. With a big piece of land in the centre, the setting would be ideal, curves would be eliminated, and all the difficulties associated with the use of the Narrows would be obviated. There would be no need for a ferry if a road were made. I think it was Mr. Vincent who submitted the proposal and prepared a plan showing how it could be done, and the Government would be well advised to give consideration to the suggestion.



Every session there is a favourite topic introduced by Mr. Gray, namely, that of the quality of bread. Just recently I had presented to me a copy of a Bill on this subject introduced by the New South Wales Government—a good Labour Government, too, Mr. President, in case you do not happen to know. That Government has decided to deal with the bread question the same as we ought to deal with it here. I object to being told by the Government, or by anyone else, whom I should trade with. Under our system, everybody in my street is compelled to deal with one baker. That means that the baker can simply sell any kind of bread he likes, because we are forced to purchase what he offers, or go outside the district for our requirements. We also have to submit to the carter's delivering to any part of the premises he likes. Sometimes it is the front fence, sometimes the kitchen door, and sometimes the gas-box belonging to the man next door!

Hon. E. H. Gray: That is the only place in Perth where it is done.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Then we must be unfortunate. New South Wales has not been as stupid as Western Australia, which agreed to legislation some years ago under which it is not possible to buy a 2lb. loaf. One has to take the bread which is delivered because the only way one could be sure of receiving a standard weight loaf would be by having an inspector go to the bakehouse when the bread has been moulded and is in the tins, tip it out and weigh it.

Hon. E. H. Gray: It has been very successful.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: It is, from the baker's point of view but not from that of the public. The bakers, to hide their inefficiency, are blaming the farmers for growing poor wheat. Year after year, however, we have improved the wheat grown in Western Australia, and in Australia generally. I will admit that there are some wheats that are not as strong as others. I happen to have had a little experience of bread-baking—though not as much as Mr. Gray—and I know very well that the baker wants to buy that flour which will absorb the most moisture so that he can make the greatest profit possible out of a bag.

If I am wrong, Mr. Gray can correct me, but I believe that the big bags of flour used to make 130 2 lb. loaves of bread. I think that was the number when I was a young fellow, serving as an apprentice in a bakehouse. We used to get two kinds of flour—that made from new wheat and that made from old. The dough made from the new wheat was always very sticky and would not absorb anywhere near the quantity of moisture that the flour made from old wheat would. So bakers want to obtain very dry flour so as to make more profit, the profit coming from the water and salt added to the product.

Hon. E. H. Gray: There is nothing in that.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Our water is pretty cheap—is. a thousand gallons—so I think they make a lot of profit.

Hon. G. Bennetts: We are paying 7s. 6d. a thousand in Kalgoorlie.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I daresay the people on the Goldfields pay more for their bread, too. I think that since machinery has been used to mix dough, we are not getting the same class of bread as when the dough was mixed by hand. Either that is responsible or the type of yeast—and it is artificial yeast today—is not making the same quality bread as the old yeast did. In former days it was extraordinary not to get a good loaf. Now it is extraordinary to get a good one. It is no use the millers blaming the wheatgrowers. They should turn their attention to their own industry and see how they can improve it.

Hon. E. H. Gray: You cannot blame the millers.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: We have a baker who was able to secure second prize at the Show for the bread he baked. But, my Lord, if I had exhibited the loaf that he left at our house on the same day, he would have been boycotted! To prove what excellent bread can be produced from the flour obtainable today, I have brought along a small loaf, which I would like members to inspect. It is darker than it might be, but it is a good loaf.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: Where did you get it?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I am not advertising any baker.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Will you cut a small piece for us to test?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The hon. member can have a slice, if he wishes. It has not been handled, except that I cut a slice for testing.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: You did not make it yourself, I suppose, from your experience as an apprentice?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: No, but there are plenty of women who can make far better bread with the same flour that the bakers say is bad.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Did you get it from your baker?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: No; I got it from somewhere else. But I believe my baker can make good bread, because he obtained second prize at the Show. I am impressed by the penalties provided in the New South Wales legislation for bakers who do not deliver the goods. In that portion of the New South Wales legislation relating to the furnishing of necessary trade supplies to bread manufacturers by trade suppliers, there is a penalty not exceeding £1,000 for any person

contravening or failing to observe the provisions of that section. In connection with the specified standard loaf, a person who bakes for sale bread which, on being weighed by an inspector, is found to be deficient in weight, is liable to a fine of £100 for a first offence, £200 for a second offence, and £500 for a third or subsequent offence.

So even in New South Wales it is found that the bakers are occasionally defrauding the people, and efforts are being made to prevent their doing so. I know Mr. Gray will say that the bread leaves the bakehouse in the morning with its correct weight but that, by the time it has been carted through the streets, it becomes dry and thus loses a certain amount of weight. But if the right weight of dough were used people would receive the full 1 lb., 2 lb. or 4 lb. loaf which they ordered. I am not going to let the bakers get away with the idea that they are martyrs. They are not; and they cannot blame the farmers, who produce good wheat.

Hon. E. H. Gray: How do you answer the opinions of the experts?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Experts never helped me very much. I went to Dover once and saw Dr. Kent-Jones, who came out here. He did not condemn in a wholesale way the wheat grown in Australia. He has a laboratory at Dover on the south coast of England and he was engaged by the biscuit manufacturers as their scientific authority. He took me to his laboratory at a time when he was interested in producing a loaf containing the necessary vitamins and at the same time attractive enough to appeal to the purchasers. Bread made under his direction was tested on rats with a view to ascertaining how long they would be able to survive on a diet of bread alone. I did not go through the whole rigmarole with him, but he showed me rats fed under certain conditions on bread made from white flour. He had a woman assistant looking after that part of the work.

He made some dough out of flour produced from Australian white wheat and Canadian red wheat. He showed me two kinds. One dough he had made he pumped up until it stretched like a balloon. That was how he tested the strength of the dough. He assured me that the Australian wheat was quite good except for one Victorian variety called Gallipoli, which had a low gluten content. As far as Western Australian wheat was concerned, he said that in some years it was better than in others. The explanation is simple. In a dry season the heaviest yield comes from the western end of the wheatbelt and in a wet season from the eastern end. There is a great deal more moisture in the wheat harvested from the Great Southern. Dr. Kent-Jones told me our wheat was very good because of the low moisture content. Canadian wheats, he

said, contain up to 40 per cent. moisture and ours up to 7 per cent. He explained how the wheat had to be processed in England, where it had to be steamed and dried artificially before being gristed.

Hon. E. H. Gray: He said the farmers were losing money by not grading wheat.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I dare say his knowledge of that matter is different from that of the farmers. In one year we grew a large quantity of Comeback wheat. We received 1s. a bushel bonus on that, but it did not pay us to grow that variety because we could obtain considerably more bushels per acre from other varieties. That is the reason why wheats of high milling value are not grown so extensively by farmers. Even if they were, it is doubtful whether they would not be mixed by the millers with the more common varieties.

Hon. E. H. Gray: There are many good wheats if the farmers would only use them!

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: It is easy to theorise in this House. Almost every year there are new varieties of wheat produced, and I think there is no farmer who is not prepared to test them out. It is not a question of growing wheat just for flour. It is necessary to produce wheat that is rust-resistant. We must have a smut-resistant wheat and one which will stand up to wind and storm. A good milling wheat may have a weak straw that makes it difficult to harvest, and it is necessary to grow a wheat that can be harvested at a reasonable time; one that is free from disease and that will give a good return in a short season. It is all right for the baker to say that the farmer should do this or that, but Comeback and Bobs, two very hard varieties, take a lot longer to grow than do other strains such as Bencubbin. On the question of rainfall alone, it is impossible in some districts to grow certain wheats. I am grateful for this New South Wales legislation, because at a later stage I propose to introduce a Bill containing some of its provisions.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: You are more concerned with zoning, are you not?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I thought that while the bakers were over here, I could inquire from them.

Hon. H. Hearn: They told me it was a failure.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: It would be, from their point of view.

Hon. H. Hearn: No, they said all they had to do was to throw bread at one as they went past.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: They are doing that here now. It is one of the old customs of this House that members can say anything they like, within reason, during the debate on the Address-in-reply.

We have very few other opportunities of doing that as we do not have the Estimates before us at a later stage of the session, as members have in another place, although we do, of course, have an opportunity to speak on the Appropriation Bill. I think members are well advised to express their opinions during the debate on the Address-in-reply. I thank members for having given me such a patient hearing and for having made so few interjections.

**THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE** (Hon. G. B. Wood—Central) [5.47]: Like other members who have already spoken, I desire to express my regret at the passing of the late Mr. C. F. Baxter, who was my colleague for many years, and also at the retirement of Mr. Thomson. I wish also to congratulate the new members who have come among us and to voice my regret that, in the hurly-burly of party politics, Mr. Daffen was defeated. Much as I welcome the man who succeeded him, I feel it is a great pity that one such as Mr. Daffen, who was always a friend of the farming community, had to be defeated in the process.

In the course of my speech I will have to answer a lot of queries and criticism on the part of members with reference to the Department of Agriculture. Before coming to that, I would point out that, with an increase of 250,000 or more per year in the population of Australia and a proportionate increase in Western Australia, the Government is greatly concerned with the question of feeding our own people—in the case of some commodities—quite apart from what we wish to send overseas. I refer particularly to potatoes, milk and meat, and feel that as long as we have high prices for wool, for instance, the problem of providing sufficient meat will be accentuated to a degree. People will not bother to produce meat if they are receiving a return of up to £200 per bale for wool.

It is only human nature to produce that which affords the greatest return. People will not breed fat lambs and increase their flocks in the circumstances, though, of course, in due time there will not be sufficient stock to produce the wool required and something will then have to be done about it. In the meantime I am afraid we will have a period of shortage of meat supplies. The Government will take all possible steps to secure adequate supplies of meat from the Kimberleys. Members know that the Government has already purchased one vessel and hopes soon to secure another for this purpose. Measures will be taken to speed up shipping to and from the North-West and the loading of both dead and live cattle on those vessels for shipment to the metropolitan area.

There is also a proposal to move the meatworks from Broome to Derby, thus avoiding the anomaly of a ship loading live cattle at Derby and not having enough time at Broome to load with frozen meat.

The reason for that is—as I have seen for myself—that when a ship comes in there may be perhaps only 12 hours in which to load the frozen meat on account of the master of ship being in a hurry to complete the trip with the live cattle, and the lumpers sometimes refuse to work the full time that the ship is in port. Only recently I waited up till midnight to watch the loading of frozen meat. I knew the captain was anxious to get away with the tide and I was disgusted to see that the lumpers would not start work for an hour or more. That is the answer to the criticism about ships coming down partly loaded. If the meatworks are moved to Derby—as I hope it will be soon—the loading of both frozen meat and live cattle can go on simultaneously, allowing the vessel to make a speedy trip to Fremantle without calling at Broome. Other measures, which I am not at the moment prepared to disclose, will be taken by the Government to overcome the shortage of meat supplies. I feel confident that the anticipated shortage will be made up, in some measure, next year and the Government will do everything possible to that end.

I was disgusted to read in "The West Australian" the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition, in which he blamed marketing boards for some of our shortages. Quite a number of references have been made recently to the various marketing boards, which have been blamed for shortages of potatoes, apples, pears, onions and milk. It was implied that these boards are controlled by the producers, who deliberately restrict production in order to force prices up.

There is not a single board in Western Australia controlled by producers and, moreover, every board in Western Australia—with the exception of the Dried Fruits Board, which does not concern us here—was created by a Labour Government. Yet we have the Leader of the Opposition suggesting to the Premier that these boards should be abolished. I say—and I hope Dr. Hislop is listening—that these boards are not restricting production. The Milk Board is not restricting the production of milk. While it is true that the Milk Board did at one time, on account of the surplus, advocate restriction of production of wholemilk, in the last few years it has used every endeavour—I have been associated with the chairman of that board in going to the milk producers and endeavouring to get them to produce more milk—

Hon. G. Fraser: Are you correct in saying that the Milk Board was created by a Labour Government?

**THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** Yes, the present Milk Act was passed by a Labour Government in 1946—

Hon. G. Fraser: You said all the boards in this State were established by Labour.

**The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** I am talking about the present Act. The first Milk Act was passed in 1933 by the Mitchell-Latham Government. Do not try to get away from the responsibilities of the Labour Party.

**Hon. G. Fraser:** Why don't you stand up to the truth?

**The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** The Acts at present on the statute book, creating boards, were introduced by Labour.

**Hon. G. Fraser:** How can you say that?

**The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** The hon. member knows perfectly well that the Metropolitan Milk Act was repealed when the Milk Act came into being in 1946.

**Hon. G. Fraser:** That is not—

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! The hon. member will have opportunity of speaking later on.

**The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** I am speaking of the present statute. The milk board legislation of 1932 or 1933 was repealed.

**Hon. G. Fraser:** What about the present constitution of the board?

**The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** As the hon. member will not understand what I say, I will not listen to his interjections, but I say to the House, and to the public, that the boards in existence today are doing everything possible to increase production. There has been a lot in the Press lately—especially from a gentleman named Crooks—about people leaving the milk industry and going into other avenues of employment. That can be said of most industries today, but I would point out that in the last two months new producers have come into the field and there are now 13 more producers of milk under the Milk Act than there were two months ago. Mr. Stannard has been around among the milk producers urging them to increase their production by from five to 10 gallons per day. I have here his remarks to a big meeting—

**Hon. G. Bennetts:** A lot of the milk producers are not satisfied with the Milk Board.

**The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** There are always some people who are not satisfied with anything. Mr. Stannard asked the producers whether they would like the board to be scrapped. They do not want to go back to the chaotic conditions of 1932, when Rafferty rules prevailed. Today there is some semblance of order in the industry and I repeat that the Milk Board is out to increase production as much as it possibly can. I do not favour Dr. Hislop's suggestion that the Milk Board should be amalgamated with a dairy industries board. I believe that wholemilk production is a separate phase of the dairying

industry. The Potato Board, also, has been accused of restricting production, yet it almost went down on its hands and knees in an endeavour to get people to produce more potatoes. It was successful in having 800 acres more under potatoes in the last planting than hitherto.

The shortage of potatoes in this State was entirely due to the bad season, and that experience was not confined to Western Australia. When I was in Sydney recently there was a big argument on as to whether New South Wales should be allowed to import potatoes from New Zealand. Western Australia had to import potatoes from Tasmania, as Victoria could not supply our needs, and New South Wales, as I have said, had to get potatoes from New Zealand. I mention that to demonstrate to the House and to the people that Western Australia was not the only part of the Commonwealth that suffered from a shortage of potatoes. I have recently been told that many potato growers are going in for the production of tobacco, because returns from potatoes are not as great as from tobacco. They consider the price of potatoes is not high enough. As for any other shortage, there is no restriction, of course, on the production of eggs or onions. There may have been one or two mistakes made in the production of onions, but they cannot be laid at the door of the producers.

I now desire to answer some of the queries which were put to me during this Address-in-reply debate. Mr. Jones suggested that the Department of Agriculture should be the sole responsibility of the Minister in charge. Of course, it is almost my sole responsibility and has been for three years, but now I am the Honorary Minister for the North-West. That portfolio does not take up a great deal of my time and certainly does not interfere with my responsibilities in the Department of Agriculture. It has also been said that the Department of Agriculture has deteriorated. Mr. Jones spoke about increasing the remuneration of the staff. I would point out that no Minister of any department has any say as to the fixing of the salaries of his staff. That comes under the jurisdiction of the Public Service Commissioner.

No matter how I strive and talk to get my remarks published, it does not seem to make much difference to the Public Service Commissioner. He has his routine and formula as to how employees of any department are paid. However, I hope I had something to do with improving the salaries of veterinary officers. It is of no use Mr. Logan talking about sending a veterinary officer to Geraldton because we just have not got one. After Mr. Logan had spoken, Mr. Parker pointed out the other day that we have done everything possible to alleviate this shortage of veterinary officers.

In the year I started as Honorary Minister for Agriculture, I was instrumental in getting the Treasury to agree to the cadet system by which the State Government subsidises veterinary cadets during their attendance at the Sydney University, which is the only training ground available in Australia. It would be an extremely expensive business to set up a Chair of Veterinary Science in our own University. I think Queensland has established such a chair on a minor scale. The only place for training these cadets is the Sydney University and the State Government is providing a subsidy to send two cadets there per year.

I think it was Mr. Logan who said that after the cadets had been sent to Sydney they would complete their training and then remain in New South Wales. In answer to that I would point out that they have to put up a substantial guarantee that they will return to Western Australia after finishing their course. Also, during 1947, salaries of veterinary officers in Western Australia were increased so that they compared favourably, and even more than favourably, with those in every State in Australia, except Queensland. That may be news to some of the critics of the Department of Agriculture. The following figures show the stepping-up of expenditure on the Department of Agriculture from the year 1945-46 until the present year:—

Year.	Expenditure.
1945-46	£230,490
1946-47	£251,726

That was the year in which we assumed office.

1947-48	£288,948
1948-49	£361,084
1949-50	£445,532

Hon. A. L. Loton: How would the increase in the basic wage affect that expenditure?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Quite a lot, but we have to spend money just the same in other directions, so the Government approved of it. Between the years 1945-46 and 1949-50, we have nearly doubled the expenditure of the Department of Agriculture, namely, from £230,490 to £445,532.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: Those figures are only equal to the valuations in finance.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Not altogether. We have raised salaries as much as we can to keep our officers here and also to attract more staff.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Everything which the department buys has increased in price.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The Estimates for the year 1950-51 are, expenditure, £539,698—over half a million—and revenue, £236,765.

Hon. H. Hearn: You are going to show a deficit.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Of course we are, but who will quibble at that? We show a deficit in the Department of Agriculture, but we do not show a deficit in the earnings of the State. We showed a profit on the Salmon Gums State farm last year, but we do not look for it. Mr. Strickland will be interested to know that we showed a loss on the Carnarvon research station last year. We do not look for profit. I have been at great pains to try to arrive at a solution of this baking and wheat problem. In my opinion, Sir Charles Latham advanced an extreme view against the bakers, and I have an idea that Mr. Gray put forward an extreme view on behalf of the bakers.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: He does, too.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I have greatly desired to do something about the question and when Mr. Bond, who is an expert on these matters, made some grave charges against the quality of wheat in Western Australia and I was approached by a deputation asking me what I could do about it, I set up a committee consisting of the Superintendent of Wheat Farming of the Department of Agriculture, as chairman, a representative of the bakers, a representative of the millers—

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: And a representative of the growers.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No, the Department of Agriculture represented them. There was another, the chairman of Co-operative Bulk Handling (W.A.) Ltd.—who plays such a big part in directing and diverting the wheat—and finally, the chairman of the Australian Wheat Board. This committee went into the whole question of abolishing the f.a.q. standard for wheat. Its whole purpose was to pacify the baker or, in other words, to cut the ground from under his feet and allow him no excuse for blaming the quality of the flour. Personally, I do not agree that the quality of our bread is so bad as it is made out to be.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: You have a good baker, I suppose.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I have watched the position closely and I honestly believe that the complaint against our bread is not as serious as people may think. Perhaps I have lived on damper in the bush for so long that I am no longer a good judge of bread. However, the following sets out the findings of this committee:—

(a) That the segregation of the strongest wheats delivered at sidings and the manufacture of such wheats into flour for breadmaking would be of advantage to millers and bakers, but the committee could not suggest any means of bringing this about as they knew of no practical method

whereby the strength of wheat could be determined at individual sidings.

(b) That the development of the practice of quality classification based on sidings and districts for delivery to mills be considered and investigated by those concerned with a view to greater exactitude.

I am of the opinion that a lot of our wheats, not all of them, are not suitable for baking. Mr. Gray will agree with that. I am also of the opinion that we have a great deal of wheat in Western Australia which is highly desirable for the baking of bread and of other lines, too. Mr. Judge, who is an expert, was recently over here advising on the quality of wheat and baking and he referred to Western Australian wheat in most scathing terms, and also, in the same manner, to Victorian wheat.

We have heard about the wonderful wheat in New South Wales, but it is not fair to compare the wheat grown there with that produced in Victoria and Western Australia. A lot of the New South Wales wheat comes from the north-west of that State and from southern Queensland where the climate, which is uniform right through those districts, is the same as that enjoyed at Three Springs, Northampton and other nearby centres. A tremendous body of wheat comes from those districts in New South Wales and, of course, they can say, "Look at our wonderful wheat."

In Victoria and in Western Australia the position is quite different. We have all kinds of climate and different varieties of soils and therefore it is quite unreasonable to say that all our wheat should be good. But who is to say that we should cease producing wheat on that account? I am not going to suggest to farmers in the various districts that they go out of wheat production because their grain is not just what Mr. Gray would like or what the bakers consider is desirable. However, there may be a solution to this problem and I am out to find it if I possibly can. I understand that representatives of the bakers are coming to see me on Thursday to offer one.

I do not believe the answer is in the grading of wheat, because I do not think we can grade wheat under our bulk handling system. As the committee I previously referred to has pointed out, I do not think we can determine the grade of the wheat when it comes in to the different sidings, but I believe we can grade the districts. We may be able to encourage the farmers in the dry centres to grow wheat for milling purposes only; that may be the solution. I want to assist in solving this problem because I dislike hearing Western Australia being criticised—not because I think there is a great amount of justification for the criticism. I do not like to

hear anyone tearing Western Australia to pieces and comparing it with New South Wales.

It is a matter of amazement to me why our bread is supposed to have deteriorated in recent years. About 13 years ago the bakers were told they would be given warrants to take wheat from approved sidings. In 1937, I think, they obtained 15 per cent. of their wheat from Bencubbin and such places, and that percentage has now risen to 59. At those particular sidings there is the best wheat they think is desirable for the milling of flour.

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

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not want to say much more about wheat, but I would like to make one or two observations in reply to Mr. Gray's allegations about the f.a.q. system. He claims that it is inadequate and antiquated, and was established in 1880. The first declaration of an f.a.q. standard for Western Australia took place in 1905. I claim, and people who I believe are competent to advise me say so too, that it is not antiquated, but is the best system for Western Australian conditions. It is effective and economical, and sufficiently elastic to facilitate trade between growers, shippers and buyers. We have a very small local consumption here compared with the quantity exported.

Before discussing any alteration to this marketing system, careful consideration must be given to the needs of buyers overseas, particularly British buyers. Mr. Gray should know that the conditions prevailing at sidings in Western Australia make it very difficult to grade the wheat. He does not actually suggest how it should be done, but I think he must agree that it would be difficult. I make this promise to him, and to other people who are condemning Western Australian wheats, that although I believe we have to accept the different types of wheat in Western Australia because of climatic conditions, varying soils and other reasons, we shall do our best to segregate the good wheat from the rest in the different districts, and see that the millers get it.

I had a talk yesterday with Dr. Sutton, who is a great advocate of scrapping the f.a.q. system, and he said he believed we could do that. I am not going to advocate to the farmers that they should grow wheats that do not yield heavily, as I do not believe that is necessary. Dr. Sutton is an authority on wheat, and whether or not we agree with everything he says, we must recognise him as such, and he claims that there are wheats such as Dowerin, Kondut and Woongundy which would fulfil the requirements of the baking industry and, at the same time, keep up our yield.

Bencubbin, I believe, is one of our best varieties for yielding, but it is not suitable. It may be all right on the heavy ground. Whilst I do not intend to lecture or dictate to the farmers, I intend to ask them, in order to keep up the standard of Western Australian wheats, to endeavour to grow some of these hard wheats. Dr. Sutton—he has not been in the department now for many years—also paid a very high tribute to the Agricultural Department by saying that there was not another department in the world, that he knew of, that was performing such a good work in the breeding and distribution of good seed wheat.

Hon. E. H. Gray: We all admit that.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I am glad to hear that remark. I have watched the handling of seed wheat at the research stations, and it is a difficult and exacting job to keep the wheats separate whilst harvesting and grading them. I was glad to hear from an authority like Dr. Sutton such praise for our department.

Hon. E. H. Gray: All we want is for the farmers to follow the department's advice.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is so. At the moment it would appear that the scrapping of the f.a.q. system is not desirable. However, we have this committee set up, and it will do everything possible to meet the claims and desires of all concerned. I do not want Western Australian wheats to get such a bad name that people overseas will not buy them. The committee will watch the position very closely. A matter which is causing us a lot of concern is the supply of superphosphate. Many people blame the manufacturers for lack of supplies, but there are other factors. I tell our country members that a big reason which will enter into the manufacture of superphosphate is the supply of sulphur. I was informed just recently in Canberra that if we established new superphosphate works at Albany there would be no sulphur available for them unless it was obtained elsewhere in Western Australia.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: Why not use pyrites?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Let me come to that. It is disturbing to learn that, with the great hopes we had for Albany and the increased output there, the works up here must be deprived of sulphur in order to make enough available for down there.

Hon. A. L. Loton: Do all the States have a quota of the sulphur imported?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, I think it is fairly allocated. Mr. Bulcock, Director General of Agriculture, said that the position regarding sulphur from America was very disturbing. He said that America would not give us any more. I believe that more pyrites will have to be used, but that is not the answer. The more pyrites we use

the less our output. Again, the answer to that is that in order to increase the output, burning arrangements must be made adequate for the use of pyrites at our works, which means that, for that purpose, £1,000,000 would have to be spent. This is a big problem, and while I would like to see Western Australia self-supporting with regard to sulphur and pyrites, the answer is not as simple as that.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: The first loss would be the last loss.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is so, but of course £1,000,000 is a lot of money. The expenditure of that sum may be justified, but it might be hard to convince the superphosphate companies of that.

Hon. A. L. Loton: The Government would get the £1,000,000 back from the increased output in the first year in exports.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That may be the solution, but, of course, it cannot be done in a moment. We are faced, for a while, with a lot of worry in connection with superphosphate. Personally, I do not think there will be enough to satisfy everybody. If we find in January, or whenever the allocations are made, that there is not sufficient superphosphate to go around, then I believe some of the big users who get from 100 to 300 tons should be put on a quota for the benefit of the small man.

Hon. G. Fraser: Getting back to controls again.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The Farmers' Union representative—Mr. Noakes—does not agree with that, but I think it is inevitable. I know that many men are not getting sufficient superphosphate today to make an adequate living. The man who is getting from 80 to 300 tons should be able to stand a five or 10 per cent. cut for the benefit of the men who are not getting enough.

Hon. A. R. Jones: It is a retrograde step.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Can the hon. member tell me any other answer? It is not a bit of use saying that the manufacturers will not manufacture, but will take advantage of the prevailing conditions. We have to look at the position as we shall find it in four or five months' time when not everyone will have sufficient superphosphate.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: Prohibit the import of sulphur and the manufacturers will have to use pyrites.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not care what anybody says about me; I maintain that those who will have to be cut down will be the big men for the benefit of the smaller men. They will not be cut by very much.

Hon. A. L. Loton: What do you mean by the smaller men?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I am speaking only in general terms, and am not prepared to formulate any particular policy or specify the tonnages, but I say that the bigger fellows who are piling it on should be cut down for the benefit of the man who gets, perhaps, 10 or 15 tons and is struggling along on that small amount. I know what it is to do without superphosphate. For some reason, my basic year before the war was very low. On a property of about 4,000 acres I got down to nine tons. I had to go cap in hand to the allocation committee to have that increased.

I know people who have been piling on super. for years, and their properties are a picture of clover. Some of them could suffer a small cut. But that would only be necessary in the event of there not being enough to go around. I do not think this will make the slightest difference to the superphosphate companies. I believe they would want to produce all they could. There is no logical reason why they should not. I hold no brief for them; I am not a shareholder in any of them as some farmers are. I do not think they would in any way want to reduce their output.

Hon. H. K. Watson: Is the sulphur shortage caused through physical or currency problems?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I cannot give an answer to that because Mr. Bulcock merely said that he had been told by America that we could not get any more than our present allocation. The cause may be due to currency difficulties.

Hon. G. Bennetts: If another world war broke out we would be in a worse position.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: We would probably have to use pyrites and that, as I said before, would cost £1,000,000. Another matter causing a little concern is the shortage of bags. I do not know whether members know the reason for that shortage, but it appears that the people in Pakistan and India have been squabbling for a number of years in connection with the manufacture of our wheat, superphosphate and potato bags, and the matter has now come to a head. The production of jute is carried out in Pakistan and the manufacture in India.

We are the people who are suffering from their quarrels. Fortunately, I was happy to be able to tell the people at Canberra about our wonderful bulk handling system. It was very nice to tell them that we wanted bags only for superphosphate and potatoes whereas over there they want hundreds of thousands more bags than we do for wheat. It is a problem and I do not know whether it is entirely solved yet but I hope it will be soon.

Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: Have we made any attempts to grow jute ourselves?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, I made inquiries to see if jute could be grown at the Wyndham research station. I have also made inquiries in Queensland and they tell me they can grow jute but there are certain difficulties in retting it. Apparently, in India, they have cheap labour to do this work, but that is the difficulty in this country. They have attempted to grow jute in Queensland and I asked the Queensland Minister for Agriculture only a short time ago about it.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Cannot they ret it with machines in a similar way to flax?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not know. They are endeavouring to do so and it would be a wonderful thing if we could make ourselves independent of India. I always imagined that as India required our wheat there would not be any difficulty, but the position has become so serious that the Commonwealth Government sent someone to India to look into the question to see if the problem could be solved. Bad as the position is in this State, it is ten times worse in the Eastern States. We get our fair share of the bags available.

I know that my farming friends will be pleased with the extension of the wheat stabilisation scheme. The present Government has agreed to it but I suppose it will be necessary to place legislation before Parliament so that stabilisation can be extended for a period of ten years. I think the Commonwealth Government has in mind the extension of a stabilisation plan to cover other primary industries also for a period of ten years.

I always argued with Mr. Pollard that it was foolish to have a five-year plan. I asked him what would the wheatgrower gain? He used to say that wheat would come down to about 3s. 6d., but results show how faulty was his judgment. I told him that it would never happen in five years. Therefore, this extension of the stabilisation scheme is most pleasing to everybody, except Tasmania. That State is not so happy because wheat is not grown there and it would like to obtain supplies at a cheaper rate than is possible under the stabilisation plan. However, all the other States will pass supplementary legislation, as I know we will do, too.

Hon. G. Fraser: The farmers are very lucky they voted for the Federal scheme.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, they are. The majority of the growers voted for it, but one of the reasons against the scheme was that its term was not long enough. I believe that the scheme will be successful under a ten-year plan and it is very satisfactory to know that the wheatgrowers will be catered for, as regards price, for the full ten years. Another pleasing



aspect is the setting up of a primary industries board. This is an independent cost-finding tribunal and farmers generally should be pleased about it.

There will be no political influence on the board and though some primary producers may not be happy about its inauguration, generally speaking it will give satisfaction to all concerned. I know that some smaller producers are allowing their costs of production to get out of hand. They are not doing much about it and to my way of thinking they should do something to try to prevent themselves from getting out of bounds with their costs of production so that they do not have to rely on subsidies and guaranteed prices. Those people have a duty just as the Commonwealth Government has a duty, whatever party is in power.

I now want to make some reference to remarks passed during the Address-in-reply debate. Mr. Loton had something to say about the advisory committee set up to look into rural education. He said that this committee was started with the idea of considering the position regarding Denmark and Narrogin schools. That is not so. I think the original proposal was for that purpose, but a deputation went to Mr. Watts and when the matter was referred to the Agricultural Department, I said, "No. Let us have a committee which will look into the whole question of rural education in Western Australia."

Hon. A. L. Loton: You did not give that reply in answer to my first question 12 months ago.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I thought I implied that. The committee is more or less a private one set up to advise me and the director. I claim that the findings of the committee are confidential but, as I have already told Mr. Loton, if I think fit I will release the report when I receive it. This is a standing committee and not a select committee which takes evidence for a month or so and then puts in a report. There is no particular hurry about the report of this committee but perhaps in due course its findings will be released. However, I claim that I have a perfect right to release it only if I think fit.

This committee represents the Education Department, the Agricultural Department and the farmers. The department controlling the agricultural schools has equal representation with the Department of Agriculture which controls Muresk College. I come now to some remarks made by Mr. Logan. He seemed to take great exception to the fact that members of the Ministry do not take any notice of private members, or at least that is what he implied. He made the statement that members of the Government think they have all the brains. He excluded Mr. Simpson because apparently he has not been there long enough to have fallen from grace.

Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: Is that inevitable?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not know. Apparently, according to Mr. Logan, it is. Perhaps in 12 months' time Mr. Simpson will be in with the rest of us. I do not believe any member of the Cabinet thinks that we have all the brains. Mr. Logan said that he knows of many cases where he was right about something but members of the Cabinet did not take any notice of him. If he had only specified those cases, it would be easy to reply. However, he made a general statement and it is almost impossible to reply to it. I am only too happy to listen to what members have to say.

At present I am investigating something Mr. Logan has put up to me in regard to the establishment of a freezing chamber at Geraldton and I hope that Cabinet will agree to it. Mr. Logan took the Government to task because it brought somebody from the Eastern States to look into the meat position. He claims that 80 members of Parliament could do the job better. What sort of job would 80 members of Parliament do in solving the meat problem? If it were possible to get them together, the result would only be by majority decision, and that majority might be one or even three. The Government in its wisdom decided—I did not do it—to consult Professor Copland in this matter. He nominated Mr. Kelly, who came over here to look into the position.

It was said by Mr. Logan that Mr. Kelly was here for only three days. So he was, but in those three days I do not suppose any man could have interviewed more people. It was all done in my office and although I did not see all that went on, I saw most of it. He interviewed 25 people directly concerned in the meat business—distributors, butchers and producers. I do not suppose anybody could have collated more information in the time than did Mr. Kelly. Personally, I do not agree with all his findings.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: But that does not make him wrong.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No. Other members of the Cabinet have different opinions. I think he got a pretty good line-up of the whole business. Mr. Kelly was brought here in order to give us an independent report on the meat position which, I will admit, is not too healthy. Nobody could say it is the fault of the Government. It is a matter of production, and supplies will be reduced because of the high price of wool. I believe that the position may be worse than it has been over the last few weeks.

Hon. G. Bennetts: It would not want to be any worse than it has been in Kalgoolie over the last few weeks.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No, and if it had not been for me the people of Kalgoorlie would not have had any meat at all over the last few weeks. The Kalgoorlie butchers have nothing to be proud about. They were offered frozen meat which the Government brought over from the Eastern States, and it was only when I went up to Kalgoorlie and threatened to open up a butcher's shop myself—which I intended to do—that they played ball. I did not actually threaten them but they knew what I was there for. While the meeting was in progress I had a scout out looking for premises so that I could open up a shop. I did not want to do it, but something had to be done. I had 3,000 or 4,000 carcasses of meat and I was determined that the Kalgoorlie people should get some of it.

Hon. G. Bennetts: We might have to get you to do it again.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Unfortunately the Government meat has been used and I am a little concerned about the Kalgoorlie people. I made provision for 20 carcasses to be sent there last Monday. Most of the carcasses are beef because it is not possible to get either mutton or lamb. The butchers up there say they cannot buy meat and I have made inquiries in the district and find that there is very little meat available. That is most unfortunate. Somebody made the suggestion here that a refrigerated van should be put in service so that meat could be delivered to Kalgoorlie. That aspect will be dealt with by my colleague.

The Minister for Transport: It started yesterday.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I am glad to hear that. There are up to 1,000 parcels of meat going to Kalgoorlie every week. They are being sent by individual people and not by the Government. Some of the parcels have been badly packed and the labels have disappeared by the time the meat arrived. However, the majority of it arrives in good condition and it helps the people in the district. The suggestion of the refrigerated van is a good one, because although meat sent by private people travels all right in winter time, it is not a desirable practice during summer months.

When Mr. Parker was speaking, Mr. Baxter, by interjection, said that Cabinet is in full agreement with any suggestion I make. I think there are different opinions about Cabinet procedure, and I would inform Mr. Baxter that Cabinet does not always agree with suggestions I put up, any more than I agree with suggestions put up by other Ministers. There are many things I consider desirable, but that does not mean that Cabinet thinks they are always necessary. That is the experience of all Ministers. However, the matter is

not an important one. Mr. Loton referred to the salaries of veterinary officers. I have already dealt with that.

Hon. A. L. Loton: I did not make any reference to veterinary officers.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Then I must have confused the hon. member with somebody else. I think it was Mr. Loton who said that the Denmark Research Station had been set up to combat wasting disease. That is not so; the station was there long before wasting disease appeared. I think he suggested that the station should be absorbed by the School of Agriculture there. I do not consider that at all desirable, and on no account would I agree to it. The present set-up is satisfactory. The research station should be carried on, and the boys should be allowed to go there. I think the hon. member mentioned the distance that the boys have to go, and added that they had to cross a bridge. It is only 200 yards from where they are located to the farm buildings. Without strong advice from the advisory committee, I would not give up the research station there.

A good job has been done by this station. It has set up a butter factory and is breeding good pigs, which are proving of benefit to the district. There is a fine herd of cattle and experiments in pasture are being made. One member was critical because there were no sheep on the station. The area of pasture is only 125 acres, and on that is carried 80 head of cattle and some pigs. This station is in the 40-inch rainfall area, and there are very few sheep in the district. The country is chiefly used for dairying and pig-raising. Anyhow, I say the station is unsuitable, in its present state, for the running of sheep. The area is insufficient, and the heavy rainfall makes it unsuitable for sheep generally. It is almost a 100 per cent. dairying district.

According to Mr. Cunningham, when there was a cut in the milk supply, the people at Kalgoorlie suffered as compared with people in the metropolitan area. I referred his statement to the Milk Board and have been informed that the people of Kalgoorlie do not suffer any more than do those of the metropolitan area. All are treated on an equal basis. Mention was made of unsuitable cans for conveying milk to Kalgoorlie. There is some truth in that statement. It is due to inability to obtain suitable cans, but that matter is receiving attention. I think the statement was made that the top of a can had come off in transit. That was an isolated case, but it will receive the attention of the board.

Either Mr. Bennetts or Mr. Cunningham spoke of the Kalgoorlie people obtaining supplies of milk from Adelaide. They are quite at liberty to do that if they so desire, as it has nothing to do with either

the Milk Board or the Government. I believe there is plenty of milk in South Australia, but it is not the responsibility of the Government to bring it over. If the dairymen can arrange for the Commonwealth to grant a reduction of rail freight on the milk, that is their business. It would be a good thing for Kalgoorlie, but I doubt whether it could be done economically.

I was asked by Dr. Hislop whether I would comment on the Commonwealth free milk scheme. I am dead against it, because I do not think we are ready for it. We have enough troubles without that. We have to face an increased consumption of 5,000 gallons per day, due to the increase in population, and I do not believe we can adequately handle the scheme. I hope that, in saying this, I am wrong, but I think the introduction of the scheme should be deferred until we can handle it properly, desirable though the scheme may be.

Hon. G. Bennetts: We cannot get powdered milk in Kalgoorlie.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: But it can be obtained from the Eastern States. I do not know who is responsible for the non-supply of powdered milk in Kalgoorlie, but it has nothing to do with the Milk Board or the Government. That is a matter between the people of Kalgoorlie and the store-keepers.

I regret that Mr. Craig took such a pessimistic view of the possibility of producing sufficient milk to meet the requirements of the State. He was of opinion that we could not produce all the milk needed, and that we should seek a substitute food, though he did not suggest what the substitute should be. I was glad to hear the remarks of Mr. Tuckey, who expressed the conviction that all the milk required could be produced in the districts between Perth and Bunbury. I believe that is correct. But to hear a man from the South-West taking such a pessimistic view amazed me. In view of the possibility of developing more land and bringing more of it under irrigation, I think we shall be able to produce sufficient to supply our own needs.

Hon. A. R. Jones: What about the shortage of superphosphate?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not take a pessimistic view of the super. position for all time. I think the present shortage will be overcome, but when I say that, I am speaking only of the coming year. If we are going to increase our production, more super. must be made available. However, this shortage does not apply to Western Australia only; the Eastern States are suffering similarly. The super. shortage, like many of the disabilities I have mentioned, applies equally to the other States.

I have a cutting from a Sydney newspaper stating that six apples cost 3s., so that children have to go without fruit on account of its high price. For lamb chops, 10d. each is being charged. I made it my business to investigate some of the prices. I found that cauliflowers were selling at 6s. each in Sydney, and when I returned my wife bought one for 9d. which, she pointed out, in Sydney would have cost 5s. Beans over there were costing 3s. a lb. and people were going without this vegetable because they could not afford the price. Residents of Western Australia should consider themselves exceedingly fortunate in faring as they are. As compared with people in the other States, we are doing very well indeed. Let me mention some of the meat prices, particulars of which I received today. These are wholesale prices on the hoof and are the comparable quotes for Midland Junction, Western Australia, and Homebush, Sydney, on the same day—last Wednesday—

Mutton—best quality, Midland Junction, W.A., 11d. to 13½d.; Homebush, Sydney, 12½d. to 17½d.

Lamb and suckers, 13½d. to 15½d.; 18d. to 24d.

Beef—good quality light weight, 14½d.; 14d.

Light weight cow, 12d.; 12d.

Medium quality cow, 10½d.; 10½d.

Those figures convey an idea of what people in the Eastern States are putting up with. The suggestion has been made that the Government, or private enterprise, should buy meat in the Eastern States and store it in our freezers. What hope is there, in view of those figures, of buying meat in the Eastern States? An answer to the problem might be to purchase meat on the local market and store it, but this should not necessarily be done by the Government. However, the Government is bringing more meat from the North-West, and other steps will be taken to tide over the lean period.

A suggestion was made by Mr. Bennetts that plant should be installed at Albany to provide for the treatment of pyrites from Norseman. That might be a good idea and might be the solution of the problem. I suggested two years ago that pyrites from Norseman should be obtained through Esperance. I do not know what the opinion of the experts would be, but if sulphur is likely to be in short supply, we might obtain our requirements in this way. It would be a good thing for Esperance if the industry could be established, as suggested.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Six months ago I wrote to the board suggesting that, but I did not receive a reply.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Had the hon. member written to me, he would have received a

reply. Mr. Bennetts also advocated increased action by the Government to develop Esperance. What more could this Government have done than has been done? I am not aware that the previous Administration did much for Esperance. We have established a research station in association with the Salmon Gums farm, and good work has been accomplished there. By dint of scrounging, I obtained fencing material from other research stations, and an area of 300 acres has been cleared, quite a large area ploughed, and many experiments have been made. I hope Mr. Bennetts will take the opportunity to attend the field day there next month.

Hon. G. Bennetts: I know all about that, but I did not comment on it in my speech.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Then apparently there has been some misunderstanding, but the remark was certainly made by somebody, perhaps by a member in another place. The hon. member did refer to the desirability of establishing a vermin board in the Esperance district. There is nothing to prevent the local road board from establishing a vermin board. To do that is not my job. When the hon. member sees the amendments to the Vermin Act to be introduced later in the session, I am sure he will agree that we are trying to accomplish something.

The hon. member said that insufficient interest was being displayed by the Government to ensure that the local demand for various commodities was met before exports were permitted, and he mentioned the dearth of meat in Kalgoorlie. I have already explained the meat position. The matter of the export of commodities is one that is controlled entirely by the Commonwealth and has nothing whatever to do with the State Government. I believe that the Commonwealth is a little concerned about the shortage of supplies to meet local demands, and that action will be taken to ensure that home requirements are met before export overseas is permitted.

The development of 5,000 acres of land in the Wanneroo Road District was suggested by Mr. Baxter. I have no objection to offer to such a proposal, but we have had a rather unhappy experience with land at Wanneroo and also at Osborne Park, as Dr. Hislop knows. I cannot say what is wrong with the Wanneroo land, but there is no doubt that the incidence of T.B. amongst dairy stock there was terrific. On one farm it amounted to 93 per cent. of the herd, but the reason for this high incidence is not known. Dairying has not thrived at Wanneroo. Personally, I have no objection to obtaining supplies of milk from any district, provided the country is suitable for milk production. If some of the Wanneroo land

used by market gardeners could be utilised for dairying, it would be all to the good. I am concerned about the future of the milk supply, and if Mr. Baxter can offer any constructive suggestion to increase production, I shall be glad to hear it, but he cannot expect the Government to set up a farm for the production of milk. Dairying was carried out in the Wanneroo district at one time, but the difficulties proved to be great; otherwise, people would have continued to engage in the industry.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: The trouble was the high incidence of T.B.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is so. With the cows moving about in the sandy soil, it is dirty country for milk production. I spent quite a little time in the district. I went there with Dr. Hislop, and to me it did not appear to be good dairying country, especially when one saw 60 or 70 cows messing about in the sand. No matter what pasture might be laid down, there was still the sand to contend with, and I say it is not in the best interests of milk production to utilise country of that type for dairying.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: Can you clover that land?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, but apparently the clover does not hang. There is no bottom to it and the clover does not seem to consolidate the ground as it does on some of the sandplain where there is a clay subsoil.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Have you tried it out?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Mr. Baxter told me that he had seen wonderful clover grown without super. I have never seen wonderful clover grown anywhere without super., even on good country. I will be happy to go with the hon. gentleman to inspect it. I would explore any country which could be utilised to increase the milk supply of the metropolitan area. But I want to remind him that we have had a very unhappy experience of Osborne Park country, and the object has been to eliminate those dairies because they have not been successful.

I was very pleased to hear the remarks of Mr. Tuckey. He understands the difficulties of the Agricultural Department. He realises that we find it hard to procure officers. What he said was quite true, and it was very nice to hear his remarks. I was particularly interested to listen to what he had to say about the slaughter of heifer calves. This matter has given me and other people a good deal of concern; and if anyone can offer a solution of the problem, I would be very happy to have it. One cannot tell a man that he

must not sell his calf. The animal is his; if it does not pay him to rear it, he is entitled to do what he likes with it. Mr. Manning, a member of another place, told me that he had fed milk to his calf to the value of £18 in six months in order to rear it. Another authority told me that he would sooner spend £30 on another heifer than try to rear a calf.

So members will see the difficulty involved in asking people to bring up their calves. If we passed a law saying that a man must put his heifer calf into a saleyard in three months or six months, the animal would be knocked on the head at birth, and then we would have nothing. It is a very big problem. It does not make sense that these valuable calves should be slaughtered; but what can we do about it? I would be glad to accede to Mr. Logan's wishes, if he could point to a solution of the difficulty. Mr. Tuckey also pointed out the possibilities of the country between Mandurah and Bunbury and I agree entirely with his remarks. I believe that the district has great possibilities, if we could only get a bridge over the river at Mandurah. Mr. Tuckey was rather lukewarm in his request for a bridge at Mandurah. I am sorry he was not more emphatic. It would be necessary to have a bridge there in order to open up the country and provide quick transport of milk thence to Fremantle. I have been over that country and I was able to get through. The road does not need to have much money spent on it, and I believe that quite a lot of milk could be brought from that area without going over the ordinary road near the railway line.

Hon. G. Fraser: Does not a lot of milk come from the Peel Estate to Perth?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Some would come the other way. I think it is taken both ways, according to the need. I suggest that most of Fremantle's requirements could come from there and a lot of mileage would be saved as a result of not going around the way I have mentioned. There is much good country in that district. It is better than the Wanneroo area. The land is harder and more consolidated. There is some swamp land and some fairly good light country where there is not very much heavy clearing to be done.

Then again, Mr. Tuckey also suggested that a survey should be made of the water supplies between Bunbury and Armadale. I entirely agree with that, and have asked for such a survey to be made. I believe there is in that area a considerable quantity of water that could be used. I do not agree with the hon. member that the day will come when Perth will have 20 times as many people as it has now. I hope that will not be so. It would mean that we would have 6,000,000 people in Perth for

whom we would have to make water available. I hope that will never happen. We do not want even 1,000,000 people in Perth. It would be a very bad thing indeed. Probably Mr. Tuckey did not realise what he was saying when he made that comment. However, I agree that there is a lot of water in the region referred to which could be conserved for irrigating land that could be used to augment our milk supply.

Finally, Mr. Tuckey also had a lot to say about noxious weeds, particularly Cape tulip. I also agree with what he said in that regard. I consider that Cape tulip is one of the worst weeds we have in Western Australia. As a matter of fact, it is probably easily the worst because it grows so prolifically both from the bulb and from the seed. I can understand the hon. member's anxiety that it should not spread in his country. I think I have referred to most of the remarks of hon. members. If I have missed anything I hope they will let me know. I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

On motion by Hon. G. Fraser, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 8.22 p.m.*