

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 18th August, 1938.

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

QUESTION—MCNESS HOUSING TRUST.

Homes on Goldfields.

Mr. STYANTS asked the Premier: Will the goldfields, in common with other parts of the State, participate in the building of homes under the McNess Housing Trust with the money bequeathed for that purpose in the will of the late Sir Charles McNess?

The PREMIER replied: It is not known how much money will be received from this source, and it appears that some time will elapse before it is available. The Trust is in the meantime considering the matter, but it has not yet determined the policy to be adopted.

QUESTION—RAILWAY FARES.

Revenue at Kalgoorlie and Boulder.

Mr. STYANTS asked the Minister for Railways: What was the amount of revenue received as fares at the Kalgoorlie and Boulder railway stations during the 12 months ended the 30th June, 1938, for first and second class passengers respectively?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: Kalgoorlie: first class *£18,143, second class *£49,253; Boulder: first class £448, second class £2,513. *Includes Eastern States fares collected and paid to the respective systems.

QUESTION—NURSES, SCARCITY.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Health: 1, In view of the continued scarcity of nurses, will he inform the House what steps are being taken to ensure an increased number of trainees? 2, Is there any limitation regarding areas from which trainees may come or in which they may be trained?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH replied: 1, Endeavours are being made by the Department and the Nurses' Registration Board to utilise some country hospitals of sufficient size as full or part-time training schools. 2, No; but they can only be trained in hospitals where the patient accommodation and the facilities for teaching are recognised as adequate by the Nurses' Registration Board.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Seventh Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. SHEARN (Maylands) [4.34]: In order to preserve some sense of consistency, I do not propose unduly to detain the House at this stage. I realise, with others, that members will have an opportunity at a later date to discuss matters that affect directly their respective constituencies. It is my desire to depart from that intention only in respect of two particular interests, the importance of which, I consider, is of sufficient immediate urgency to warrant their intruding upon my remarks at this juncture. Before dealing with them, I wish, in common with other members who have already spoken, to take this, my first opportunity, to express my sincere congratulations to you, Sir, upon your appointment as Speaker of this House. Having known you personally for a number of years, and having had an opportunity more recently to be associated to some extent with you in this House, I, like those who have already addressed themselves to this subject, feel confident that you will be able to bring to bear in your high office that absolute impartiality that is so essential in the occupant of the Chair, and that members will in every way have reason to regard your activities in your office with the same degree of satisfaction as marked the regime of your predecessor. Most members who have addressed themselves to the motion so far have referred to what may rightly be regarded as one of the major problems that confront the State. I refer to the parlous condition of our primary industries, particularly that of wheatgrowing. Although I am a representative of a metropolitan constituency, not directly associated with rural pursuits, I feel, as must do all other metropolitan members, that there is an inseparable connection

between the interests of the metropolitan area and the prosperity or otherwise of the primary industries of the State. Our immediate concerns in the metropolitan area are more in relation to the progress of our secondary industries, but it goes without saying that unless a full measure of prosperity prevails in our primary industries, of necessity an adverse effect must follow upon our secondary industries. In consequence, I could not help being struck by what I may be permitted to describe as the very apt references by the member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan) last evening to this particular problem. I feel that he, in a very able manner, dealt with aspects of the question that must be apparent to other members, who may not be able to express their opinions in such clear-cut terms. The member for Nedlands pointed out that not only were the conditions prevailing very serious for the wheat growing industry itself, and for the State generally, but were fraught with grave possibilities regarding the position with which the industry was likely to be faced. Without going into details on many points, respecting which I would not presume to pose as an authority, from my own point of view—I feel confident I can speak for those I have the privilege of representing for the time being—I can say that the position in which the primary producers find themselves to-day is viewed with great seriousness. As the member for Nedlands pointed out, we are just as keen as they are to see that their position, as far as it is possible for us to do so within the State political arena, is made as satisfactory as possible, believing that it is only by that means that the people in the metropolitan area can ever hope to maintain a reasonable state of prosperity. Before leaving this point, however, I do not want to be misunderstood in these references. In view of persistent rumours, I feel I should at least state my position, and I hope that will be the attitude taken up by all representatives of metropolitan constituencies. There appears to be a feeling that because those of us who represent metropolitan constituencies are responsible for a large section, if not for the whole of the industrial activities of the State, our interest begins and ends there, and that we have no realisation of our responsibilities towards the primary producers of the State, and no regard for

their welfare. For my own part, I can give that charge an emphatic denial. To those members that are inclined to criticise us on that score, I would say that though many of the primary producers of the State are in a parlous condition, the position of some people in the metropolitan area is very little better. I could submit to the House details of conditions that obtain in the homes of industrial workers of the State that would provide a complete comparison with those confronting the residents of country districts to whom hon. members representing those constituencies have referred. That brings me to a point upon which some stress was laid last night by the member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan), namely that, if we are going to reach any satisfactory solution of this or any other problem, we must allow our individual ideas to be subservient at all times to the general conditions prevailing throughout the State. Since I have been in this House, I have attempted, whenever I have felt that my contributions might be of assistance, to forget who occupied the Government benches for the time being. I was pleased, therefore, to hear the member for Nedlands say last night that we had to take a national outlook with regard to all our difficulties.

Mr. Raphael: That is all right if you are a member of the Opposition.

Mr. SHEARN: I do not think it would make much difference where the hon. member was.

Mr. Raphael interjected.

Mr. SHEARN: Notwithstanding the interruptions of the member for Victoria Park (Mr. Raphael), which have not been a bit helpful, and generally are not helpful, I should like to say, if the hon. member will give me an opportunity, that I have endeavoured dispassionately to review the problems of the State as, I think, have most hon. members, and, like them, to do what I have been sent here to do, irrespective of party alignments, and that is to legislate for the benefit of the State as a whole. I submit, with all respect to those associated with me on this side of the House, that that is their desire also: to do all they can for the State in their own particular way at all times. Especially is that outlook necessary at this important stage in the history of the State. Before leaving this matter, I must add that, after

having listened attentively to what the member for Nedlands had to say, I heartily endorse all his remarks. I conclude my remarks on the subject by saying I feel equally confident that, when the Premier attends the conference he last night indicated was to be held, we can look to him to present to that gathering a faithful picture of the conditions obtaining in this State, and we can be quite certain that he will not be lacking in his efforts to conserve our interests.

Reference is made in the Speech to the fact that there has been progressive improvement with regard to the position of the unemployed. Such improvement has taken place, but I believe that even the member for Victoria Park will agree with me when I say that the conditions in my electorate, and I should imagine in his electorate, judging from what I have heard, and also in many other metropolitan constituencies, do not reflect quite such a marked improvement as is indicated in the Speech. My own observations are borne out by the activities of the Free Milk Council and many other bodies concerned with the alleviation of distress in our State. Those activities provide definite proof that conditions have not improved to such an extent as is conveyed by the Speech. With others I hope that it will be possible in the near future for the Government to make some greater effort to provide work for those that are still obtaining insufficient to provide them even with the mere necessities of life. I understand that the Government is about to tackle seriously the problem of meeting the needs of single unemployed men and youths. If this matter is not properly handled, serious repercussions are likely to be experienced in the not distant future. I could give and I have no doubt that other hon. members could also give scores of instances of hardship in the various metropolitan constituencies to demonstrate that we are faced with a serious social problem. Were one to take the trouble to examine statistics, one would probably discover that this situation is largely responsible for many of the criminal and other offences that are dealt with by the courts.

The problem of juvenile delinquency needs to be carefully investigated before it will be possible to determine the best course to adopt to meet the position with which we

are faced. Members will recall that a certain amount of criticism was expressed over the appointment of Mr. Schroeder as a magistrate of the Children's Court. In view of that criticism, I took the trouble one day, without Mr. Schroeder's knowledge—though I do not think it would have made any difference had he been aware of my intention—to see for myself what was being done in the court. I say without hesitation—and I feel my contention would be supported by any others who may have taken the trouble to investigate the matter for themselves—that Mr. Schroeder is bringing to bear in that court all the experience of humanity he has gained elsewhere and that he is earnestly endeavouring to direct back into the path that leads to decent citizenship those that appear before him. I found, too, that he was being ably assisted by the officers assigned to that particular work by the Child Welfare Department and that a great deal of excellent service was being rendered by the responsible officers attached to the various industrial institutions of the State. Be that as it may it appears that the time has arrived when there is a proved necessity for some deeper and better balanced system for the solution of this important problem. I am looking forward with the greatest anticipation to the Government's doing something appropriate to grapple with it. The other evening I heard some adverse criticism from one member concerning the introduction of the five-day week in the Public Service and the railways. I find myself in disagreement with him. Surely what we in Australia and elsewhere in the British Empire rightly pride ourselves upon is our constant endeavour to improve the conditions of our workers.

Mr. Raphael: Come over to this side.

Mr. SHEARN: I spoke of workers. I cannot understand any member speaking in the House with the idea of conveying that there is anything wrong with any step that is taken to improve the conditions of the workers. That has been the established practice for many years past in States that are more conservative than is Western Australia. Very little practical work can be done on a Saturday morning. I am only surprised and puzzled to know why this practice was not introduced by the present Government, a Labour Government which claims to

exercise such vigilance in the interests of the workers, of its own volition before this stage. We have the five-day week now, and I believe, notwithstanding what has been said to the contrary, it will work out satisfactorily, and that neither the metropolitan area nor the country will be any the poorer for it.

Mr. Raphael: You must have a lot of civil servants in Maylands.

Mr. SHEARN: I hope they have more intelligence than those who live in Victoria Park.

Mr. Raphael: They cannot have it or they would not have returned you to Parliament at the last election.

Mr. SHEARN: When the Royal Commissioner allows me, and if I am not intruding upon his speech, I will proceed. Another point was raised by the member for Perth (Mr. Needham), namely, that of superannuation. Prior to my coming into this Chamber I advocated that principle, and I referred to it during last year's debate on the Address-in-reply. I am happy to know from the Speech that the Government now proposes to introduce some scheme. Whether that will be satisfactory we shall know in good time. I find myself in agreement with the member for Perth when he referred to what are known as the 1871 men who are alleged to be affected by the operations of the 1904 Act. I hope some means will be evolved whereby a measure of recognition and justice may be brought to bear upon their particular problem. No reference to hospital matters would be complete without a reverential allusion to the late Hon. S. W. Munsie. He was one of those who sat on the Government bench during the two sessions that I was here. His sincerity of purpose was ever apparent. I believe this House and the State generally, irrespective of whether we agreed with his politics or not, will sadly miss him as the days go by. We have a measure of consolation coming to us through our knowledge that the mantle of office, left vacant by the death of Mr. Munsie, has fallen upon the capable shoulders of the Hon. A. H. Panton. Those of us who have taken the merest interest in hospital questions and similar matters will know that there is no person on the Ministerial side of the House, with all due respect to them, who could more properly fill the role, and who would be more ably equipped to discharge the duties of his Ministerial office.

I wish him every success. We are very anxious to know definitely what is going to be done with respect to the Perth Hospital. Whether the scheme that has been promulgated in the Press will prove practicable or not, we shall probably know from the Minister at a later stage. As I said last session, the time has long passed when consideration ought to be given to the conditions obtaining in that institution. I am delighted to know that at least a start is to be made to provide reasonable accommodation for those who may require it at the hospital. Reference is made in the Speech to advertising the State, both locally and in other parts of Australia, with the object of developing the tourist traffic. This recalls to my mind how much we are behind in the matter of tourist trade. Members will have noticed the great commendation which visitors returning from Sydney gave to this State's display at the Royal Show in that city. A personal friend of mine, with some little knowledge of the matter, told me he considered that the layout and presentation generally, as well as the courtesy and attention extended to visitors and inquirers by the officers associated with the display, reflected the greatest possible credit upon them. As our display there was such an outstanding success, it is surely some indication of the necessity for this State considering in the near future the establishment of at any rate one office, in Melbourne or Sydney, so that we may obtain a greater measure of the potential tourist trade from the largest cities of Australia. This in effect is what my friend said to me. The statement is perfectly logical since Queensland has recently thought fit to establish a bureau here, where we have a comparatively small population upon which to draw for potential tourist traffic. Surely, in our case, when we have the huge populations of the Eastern States to draw upon, we should be justified in making the experiment in at least one of the big cities. I hope the Government will set about trying out the scheme as soon as possible. I feel sure the result will be satisfactory and prove to be merited.

In view of the great attraction and utility of the riverside improvements, I should like to see a continuation of the work along the river to the Maylands airport. I have already taken the matter up with the Minister and believe he is favourably disposed towards it. I realise that will perhaps mean

securing some financial assistance from the Federal Government, but it is a work that, if done, will add considerably to that which we have already started and will be of great practical value to the community generally. Under the heading of sewerage undertakings, it is pleasing to note from the Speech and from my own knowledge that this work, which includes Maylands, will shortly be completed. Apart from its beneficial influence on the health of the community, the work has been the means of providing a good deal of useful employment for those who look to the Government for it. Therefore I hope that the Government will be able to continue the policy of general extensions. While I acknowledge at this stage the courtesy of both the Minister and the Under Secretary of the department in the matter of deferred household connections, I should like to remind the Minister that there are still many in my district who have not yet been able to get connected up with the scheme, but have to face the local sanitary charges and the departmental rate. There is a small parochial matter to which I wish to draw attention. I brought it under the notice of the department some time ago. I was told then and have since been informed that the question would receive consideration and review at an early date. I refer to the provision of a full-size main in lieu of a three-quarter inch main in a very short street. In the street I have in mind there are very few vacant blocks of land and quite a number of fine homes, but the position is that at 5 o'clock in the evening it is impossible to get a cup of water under a quarter of an hour. That statement can be borne out by another member of this Chamber. I trust the Minister will be able to inform me that in the very near future the matter will be definitely attended to. The expenditure involved would not be considerable. If it were a matter of involving major expenditure, I could understand the excuse for delay. Another matter is the suggested legislation to provide homes for those on the lower income scale. With the vacant land we have in the metropolitan area, and the available timbers of our own, I am delighted to learn that at last the Government intends to make a move in this direction. I for one will be interested to see at a later stage how the Premier intends to deal with this matter and what the scheme is likely to involve. I

am hoping it will be able to cater for those who at the present time are not being catered for by private enterprise. To get back to another matter of local interest, it is four or five years since the residents of those parts of North Perth and Mt. Lawley that are in my electorate first asked for appropriate transport facilities. Notwithstanding the rapid growth that those areas have made in recent years, and the fact that there has been transport provided in other parts of the metropolitan area, where transport was already in existence, we have not been able to get any consideration at all. In fairness to the Transport Board, I might say that I brought the request before that board, and the members gave it every consideration. I feel confident that from my experience of the gentlemen composing the board that we have their sympathy because they have carried out an investigation and they are convinced that what is sought is thoroughly justified. We should be granted the facilities we seek when their urgency and practicability is definitely demonstrated. Either that, or the Government should allow private enterprise to come to our assistance. The people concerned are indirectly paying for services that they seek, and yet are denied those services.

A much discussed matter is that associated with the regulations framed by the Department of Native Affairs. The question is surrounded by so many different aspects and interests, that I do not propose to dwell on it at any length, except merely to say that it is obvious to anyone, however little he may know of the subject, that the regulations that were recently gazetted are not in the best interests of the community or of the department that has charge of these problems. Therefore, I trust that when the regulations, as I assume they will, come before the House the Minister responsible will withdraw them with the object of substituting others of a much more practicable nature and that greater consideration will be given to the various interests associated with the work of the department.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I understand that the regulations have been withdrawn.

Mr. SHEARN: I am very happy to hear that. With reference to the Education Department, I believe I express the view of every member when I say that the appointment of Mr. Hadley as director of Education was well merited and a wise Govern-

ment decision. As a layman, I feel it should be the aim of any Government to endeavour to select, when requiring a director for this particular department, a member of its existing staff, if that be possible. It will be obvious that action of that kind not only creates incentive amongst senior officers, but their peculiar knowledge of local conditions must be of immense value in their subsequent activities. So I feel that the Government is to be commended for having chosen one of its senior officers to fill the post of director. When the Estimates of the Education Department are reached, I hope to have the opportunity to say something in relation to the absence of appropriate infant school facilities in my electorate. I hope to be able to deal with the deplorable state of the playing grounds and shelter sheds at the Inglewood School. There have been two casualties at that playground in recent months, due entirely to its unsatisfactory state.

Mr. Warner: You are lucky to have a playground at all.

Mr. SHEARN: I have been approached during recent weeks by a number of dairymen in my district who have explained to me their view of the apparently unfair position in which they find themselves. Apart from the merits or demerits of their protest against the recently proclaimed increase in the price of milk, I feel that there is a measure of justice in their claim. They contribute something like two-thirds of the revenue towards the administration of the board, so they tell me, and that has created a fund of some thousands of pounds; yet they have neither representation on the board nor have they any actual voice in its activities. When this question was before the House on a previous occasion, I listened to what the Minister had to say, but I was not convinced that it was logical that a section of the public who always have been and still are vitally concerned in an industry should be called upon to make a major contribution towards the administration costs of the governing body, and yet have no voice in that administration. That does not appear to me to be right. I should like to see that aspect investigated. I trust that as a result of the representations that have been made, the Government will seriously consider the practicability of being able in some way to alter the situation so that the people to whom I have referred may have some representation on the board,

and a say in what the board should do. If such a proposal were agreed to, it would tend towards a greater measure of harmony and a much more equitable state of affairs than exists to-day. My next reference will perhaps be received with hostility by certain members.

Mr. Fox: Do not anticipate!

Mr. SHEARN: It has become almost a custom, not only in this Parliament but in other Parliaments as well, to have at least one all-night sitting per session. Some effort should be made to overcome that position. I submit respectfully and sincerely to the House that, except for one thing which I shall mention presently, there does not appear to be any logical reason for such a condition of affairs. Irrespective of which Government may be in power, opportunity is sometimes taken in the closing stages of a session to introduce some controversial legislation which, if I may be pardoned for saying so, it is desired to push through. I believe I echo the sentiments of the majority of members, if not of all, when I express the hope that the Government will give the House early and full opportunity for thorough investigation of every legislative proposal, so that if it has any merit, even an allegedly hostile Opposition will assist the Government to place the measure on the statute-book. Therefore I see no good reason for all-night sittings, which are hardly fair to members and certainly are grossly unfair to the staff of the House. Ample evidence could be adduced to show that already there has been experience of Bills passed in the atmosphere of all-night sittings reflecting no credit on the Chamber and proving unfair to the people whom we represent and on whose behalf we legislate. I hope that some member with perhaps more influence than I possess will follow up the matter, and that in the near future some good in that direction will result. In conclusion I express the sincere hope that the final session of this Parliament may be characterised by a spirit of ready co-operation on the part of the Government and of the Opposition, and that debate may be free from all bitterness. Let us endeavour to deal fairly and equitably with any and all legislative proposals that come before the House having for their objective the advancement of the whole State of Western Australia.

MR. STYANTS (Kalgoorlie) [5.18]: With others members, I desire to congratulate you, Sir, on your elevation to the Speakership of this Chamber. I feel certain that you will maintain the high standard of efficiency and impartiality which has always characterised the occupants of that distinguished position. I wish also to congratulate the ex-Speaker (Hon. A. H. Panton) on having been raised to Ministerial rank. If experience will make a success in any position, the new Minister should prove entirely successful in the two portfolios he holds. The hon. gentleman is a practical miner; and as regards the Health portfolio it is sufficient to say that he has an intimate knowledge of health matters, gained during the great number of years he has served in an honorary capacity on the board of management of the Perth Hospital. I wish also to congratulate Mr. Leahy, one of my colleagues, on having won the Hannans seat. I have known the hon. member for something like 20 years, and I confidently declare that if he applies to the position of member for Hannans the same ability and integrity which characterised him as a workmen's inspector of mines, he will hold the Hannans seat for many years. Further, I desire to congratulate the new member for Sussex (Mr. Willmott) on having won that seat. Although in his case, as in that of Mr. Leahy, we deeply regret the circumstances rendering it necessary that he should be elected, I have no doubt whatever that if Mr. Willmott attends to his duties—I feel almost certain he will—in the same way as the late Mr. Brockman did, he also will retain his seat for many years.

Before dealing with the subjects mentioned in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech I wish to refer to a statement made by the Leader of the Opposition while the member for Perth (Mr. Needham) was speaking in regard to criticisms levelled at the Government concerning the appointment of Mr. Wolff to the Supreme Court bench. I distinctly understood the Leader of the Opposition to say that there was no congestion in the industrial courts and that therefore the elevation of Mr. Wolff to the judiciary was unnecessary. However, the Leader of the Opposition has steadily denied having made that statement. I took a note of what the hon. gentleman actually did say. I am not particularly concerned about his cri-

ticisms of the Government. In all Parliaments it is more or less the task of the Opposition Leader, whoever he may be and to whatever party he may belong, to criticise the actions of the Premier and his Ministers. What I am concerned about is that I am certain the Leader of the Opposition did say that there was no congestion in the industrial courts and that the appointment of an additional member of the judiciary was not warranted. I made a note of his words, and this is what I took down—

I do not pose as an authority, but I watch the work of the Arbitration Court closely, and I have not heard of any congestion.

Later the Leader of the Opposition said—

I have not seen a reference to any of the cases having been carried over which should have been dealt with.

Hon. C. G. Latham: If you took that from "Hansard," as I suppose you did, you are wrong. I referred to the Supreme Court. You cannot say that I was unfair to the Government.

MR. STYANTS: What I took down is in accord with what appears in "Hansard."

Hon. C. G. Latham: I know that. "Hansard" can make a mistake, the same as anyone else. I was referring to the Supreme Court.

MR. STYANTS: In regard to this particular matter of the appointment of another member of the judiciary, I may point out, as illustrating the congestion in the Arbitration Court, that unions which had cited claims as far back as 18 months had not, owing to the stress of work, had their cases dealt with by the court, and even then the court could not indicate when those cases would be heard. Apart from that aspect, there was the anomaly in Western Australia that a litigant desiring to appeal from the decision of a judge to the Full Court found himself appealing from Caesar to Caesar, in that the judge from whose decision he was appealing had to sit as one of three judges to constitute the appeal court. That is a highly unsatisfactory state of affairs. Now that Western Australia has four judges, the system of appealing from Caesar to Caesar should be unnecessary.

I have listened carefully to the lengthy discussion of the action of the Minister for Labour in connection with the threatened dispute at Collie. From the unanimous criti-

ism voiced on the other side of the Chamber it would appear as though this matter is to become an election battle-cry, at any rate in the country districts. I have a very high opinion of the President of the Arbitration Court. As a rule his decisions are consistent and logical, but there have been instances when it was hard to understand the inconsistencies which he incorporated in awards and findings. I wish to refer particularly to the penalty clause introduced not only in the case of the Collie miners but also in the case of miners on the Eastern Goldfields and elsewhere in the State. The President of the Arbitration Court, in my opinion, definitely went outside the arbitration law and usurped the functions of the Legislature by declaring a penalty additional to that provided in the Industrial Arbitration Act. Section 129 of that Act provides certain penalties which are applicable to either an employer or an industrial union participating in anything in the nature of a strike, and also to individual members of a union participating in the strike.

For what I complain of I hold the President of the Arbitration Court chiefly responsible. After all, we expect the employers' representative to support the employers' case, and the workers' representative to uphold the union's case; and thus the real decision lies with the President of the Arbitration Court. On the occasion I refer to, the President introduced a penalty clause which automatically operates against the worker in the event of a strike taking place. It is the greatest farce in the world that the employer immediately benefits by the application of this automatic penalty clause. I thoroughly believe that the President of the Arbitration Court introduced the clause as an experiment for the purpose of maintaining industrial peace, but there is not the slightest doubt that the experiment has resulted in total failure. It not only causes stoppages, but prolongs stoppages, and will prove destructive to the spirit of industrial arbitration. This penalty clause gives the employer unfair power over the worker, and destroys that sense of equality which the arbitration law presupposes to exist between the parties. The employer can decide upon a stoppage, can declare a lockout, and then, if he is to be made subject to the penalties of the industrial arbitration law, it must be proved that he has committed a breach of the In-

dustrial Arbitration Act. However, there is no penalty attaching to the employer outside that contained in the Industrial Arbitration Act. On the other hand, immediately an unauthorised stoppage takes place, there is an automatic penalty imposed upon the worker.

The most unfair and most unjust part of it is that the fine inflicted on the workers goes into the pocket of the employer, and this without a trial in any shape or form. It is quite possible, and there is more than a suspicion, that provocative methods have been used by employers for the purpose of bringing about strikes, the employers knowing that as the result of a strike they would benefit to the extent that the workers were compelled to forfeit annual leave. There is no provision in the court decision for the imposition of a penalty upon an employer if he declares a lockout. In the event of his doing so, he is not compelled to pay double the equivalent of the annual leave due to the workers. Therefore, I consider the clause most unfair and unjust: it should not find a place in an industrial award or agreement. My opinion is that the Arbitration Court has exceeded its jurisdiction in making provision for a penalty that shall apply to the worker only, or indeed for any penalty additional to that already prescribed by the Industrial Arbitration Act. An employer can order a stoppage of work and it will not be questioned; but if the employees have a vexatious problem to solve and decide to hold a stop-work meeting to discuss it, they are automatically fined by this penalty clause. For every day of the stoppage they lose one day of the annual leave that has accrued to them, notwithstanding that they have worked for and earned it. Even if employees cease work to attend the funeral of a mate who has been killed in their shaft, they are liable, without reference to any legal tribunal at all, to lose a day of their annual leave, if they absent themselves without the employer's permission. It is unfair and unjust that an employer should be benefited by a fine which is inflicted upon the men if they indulge in something in the nature of a strike. That kind of thing will not bring about industrial peace. Irrespective of what penalties may be provided, if the men consider they are being unjustly treated, or if they think that something to

which they are entitled is being unfairly withheld from them, they will go on strike.

No such provision as that to which I have directed attention, or any section of the Industrial Arbitration Act, would prevent the men from striking. They would prefer to take direct action and put up with the consequences. This is one of the most glaring instances of inconsistency and unfair treatment of the worker by the Arbitration Court that I know of. We have heard considerable criticism by Opposition members of the action taken by a Minister in a recent industrial dispute. By a considerable stretch of imagination, they contended that the Minister's action was not strictly fair and not in accordance with arbitration law. They complained bitterly, but we did not hear any complaints from them when the Arbitration Court introduced this unfair penalty clause into an award which, peculiarly enough, applies to the members of the union to whom the Opposition alleges preferential treatment was given by the Minister for Employment. If there were legal means by which that penalty clause could be struck out of the two agreements—

Mr. Hughes: There is nothing to stop you from introducing a private Bill for that purpose.

Mr. STYANTS: I am not so skilled in the law as is the hon. member, although his motions before the House are generally ruled out of order. I would be prepared to give my support to any means that could be devised for excising the penalty clause from the agreements, because I believe the President of the Arbitration Court, who is the deciding factor, has exceeded his jurisdiction and done a complete injustice to the workers in the particular industry concerned.

Another matter I wish to deal with is not mentioned in the list of proposed legislation contained in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech. I would like to see legislation introduced to make third-party insurance compulsory. I would regard such a measure as one of the most important on the statute-book. I realise there are some objections to it, but I believe they could be overcome without inflicting injustice upon anyone. The difficulty is that in this State we have more than one licensing authority. A man of straw, with no assets at all, can at the present time buy a motor car, pay a small deposit on it, use it on the road, and by reckless driving do

grievous injury to a third party. As the motor car does not belong to him, and he has no assets that can be seized, the unfortunate person who is injured has no redress. He has to go into hospital, and if he is without funds the State—that is, the taxpayer—has to bear the cost of his medical and hospital treatment. He may be incapacitated for perhaps six or nine months, and may never regain 100 per cent. efficiency. Yet the person responsible for the accident is not called on to foot the bill to the extent of even one shilling. Third party insurance is in operation in most of the States.

Mr. Patrick: You would have to safeguard the motorist regarding the amount of premium to be charged.

Mr. STYANTS: I agree with the member for Greenough that we should not pass a measure compelling motorists to effect third-party insurance without some safeguard as to the premium to be charged, because, if we did, we would place the motorists of the State at the mercy of the insurance companies, which could charge as much as £10 for a cover. I have been looking up the licensing figures for last year and find that in the metropolitan area 17,640 cars were licensed, and in the country areas, 16,540, or a total of 34,180. In addition, 5,022 goods vehicles were licensed in the metropolitan area, and 14,578 in the country districts, or a total of 19,600. In the metropolitan area 218 motor buses were licensed, and in the country districts 101, a total of 319. In addition, 6,977 motor cycles were licensed.

The Minister for Employment: That is 6,976 too many.

Mr. STYANTS: Yes. In my opinion motor cycles are the greatest potential danger we have on the road. The number of persons who would have to take out third-party insurance would therefore be 61,076. In New Zealand, from what I have read and gleaned from other sources, third-party risk insurance is compulsory. The premium is about £1 for each cover. The scheme there, however, is losing a tremendous amount of money and it is only a matter of time when the premium rate will be revised. I would not like a scheme to be introduced in this State that would not prove to be solvent, that would run for a certain time and then become bankrupt. In South Australia this insurance is also compulsory and I understand that the compensation pro-

vided is much more liberal than it is in New Zealand. The premium rate in South Australia is about £2 10s. In order to find out the opinion of the insurance companies here on this matter and what they would charge by way of premium, I got into touch with one of the principal companies in the city and asked for a quotation. The company quoted £3 5s. which, of course, is a prohibitive amount. I believe that if the State Insurance Office were legalised, it could undertake this insurance business provided means could be found to arrive at a fair charge. I believe also the State Insurance Office could cater for the whole of this business in the State. Another objection to the introduction of third-party risk insurance in Western Australia is that we have 140 licensing authorities, whereas in the other States there is one licensing authority only. In the metropolitan area, the licensing authority is the Police Department, which I am sure would be 100 per cent. efficient in compelling the taking out of third-party risk insurance. Local governing bodies, however—I do not say this in any derogatory sense—would not be so prompt in compelling a motor car owner to take out third-party risk insurance. As a matter of fact, some local governing bodies allow a period of three months beyond the date when the license fee becomes due for payment of the fee.

Mr. Warner: That difficulty could be overcome by making it compulsory for the motor car owner to produce his insurance policy before his license was issued.

Mr. STYANTS: That is so, but then it would be three months late. Local governing bodies are in the habit of allowing farmers three months' grace within which to pay license fees for their motor vehicles. This gives the farmer an opportunity to get his crop off or to receive payment for a crop already sold. It is probably inevitable that any accident would occur during those three months if he had one at all.

Mr. Watts: The law does not provide for that period of grace.

Mr. STYANTS: But still it is the custom.

Mr. Patriek: The difficulty could be overcome.

Mr. STYANTS: Yes. I would strongly support any measure brought down by the Government for the purpose of inaugurating this much-needed reform.

One matter with which I have dealt each session affecting the eastern goldfields is the building of workers' homes. For quite a number of years goldfields residents were not eligible to have homes under the general scheme of the Workers' Homes Act. About 3½ years ago the Government decided to build a batch of 40 workers' homes on the goldfields, and for them 73 or 75 applications were received. The 40 homes have been built and have proved successful from the point of view of the tenant and the department. The prospective owners are maintaining their payments. Last December the Premier announced that he was prepared to authorise the building of additional workers' homes on the goldfields in order to meet the house shortage.

Mr. Nulsen: At Kalgoorlie and Boulder only.

Mr. STYANTS: I believe that is so. I do not know whether the scheme was to be extended to other goldfields, but those two districts were mentioned, and the Premier undertook to authorise the construction of 16 homes per annum. Applications were again invited, and to date these number 118. I understand that in the metropolitan area the board is 18 months behind its schedule of building homes applied for. If we get the promised number of 16 homes per annum we are already seven years behind the schedule, which is an indication of the house shortage prevailing. The postmaster at Kalgoorlie informed me some time ago that in the Kalgoorlie letter-carriers' district—that does not include Boulder—there were over 240 houses in which more than one family was living. Those who know the class of home in Kalgoorlie will appreciate that there are very few large enough to accommodate more than one family. Unfortunately, overcrowding is occurring, due to the acute shortage of houses. While I was in a measure pleased that the Premier had agreed to extend the building operations of the board on the goldfields, what I complain of is that, though something like eight or nine months have elapsed since the promise was given, when I was in Kalgoorlie ten days ago, the stumps had just been put in for the first two of the 16 houses. Therefore it does not appear likely that the programme promised will be maintained.

One of the most pressing problems arising from the deplorable amount of over-crowding is that of rack renting. This applies

particularly to the eastern goldfields. If the Government, to ensure decent homes for parents and children, undertook a bigger programme, there would not be any loss of the money expended by the Government. Goldfields residents do not expect to receive the terms of repayment that operate in the metropolitan area, where a worker may get a brick home on payments spread over 30 or 35 years. On the goldfields a special agreement is made between the board and the prospective owner, in which he undertakes to repay the whole of the capital outlay, plus interest and rates, in a period of ten years. Those people who are in a position to express an opinion state that the life of the eastern goldfields is assured for a period of at least double ten years, so there is no reason why the Government should not launch out on a bigger programme and endeavour, not only to provide an adequate number of homes for the people, but also, by so doing, to bring about a reduction of the exorbitant rents now being charged.

Another suggestion I wish to make is that of providing a free pass once a year for each of the men who have been prohibited from further working in the mines on account of having contracted occupational diseases. Ninety-eight per cent. of those men are drawing less under the compensation payments than is provided by the basic wage for the district. Whereas the basic wage for the district is a little over £4 15s., a man with a wife and two children would receive by way of compensation £3 5s. or £3 7s. 6d. a week. Many of the men concerned had worked in the industry for years, but had to leave it because they had contracted the dreaded miners' complaint. On the amount of compensation they are receiving, they find it very difficult to afford a holiday trip to the coast once a year. Men who work in the mines have told me that if they go to one of the seaside resorts each year for three weeks or a month, the cleansing effect of the sea air on the lungs is remarkable, and they return to the industry rejuvenated in health. I do not wish to infer that the men who have contracted miners' phthisis or tuberculosis would be rejuvenated by a holiday at the coast. I was speaking of the men who are still working in the mines and have not contracted the disease. After spending three weeks or a month at the coast, they experience wonderful relief in the respiratory system.

To grant this concession would not cost the Railway Department anything in actual cash. Rarely, except at holiday time, does a train leave Kalgoorlie with a full complement of passengers. The number of men to whom the concession would be granted is limited; I do not suppose there are many hundreds in all. If they were allowed to travel, one or two each day, the cost to the Railway Department in material and man power would be nil, because such men would occupy accommodation that otherwise would be vacant. The Minister should give the matter consideration with a view to granting the concession to these men, many of whom have pioneered the industry or have worked in it for many years, and have contracted miners' diseases in the course of their occupation. Whether free passes were granted to Esperance, Fremantle or other seaside resorts would be immaterial; it is at the coast that such men derive benefit.

Mr. Warner: Would you grant the same concession to farmers on sustenance, who, after working a whole year, might want to recuperate in order to be fit to put in another crop?

Mr. STYANTS: The hon. member belongs to the Country Party, and if he submits that proposition, I shall demonstrate by my vote whether I support it or otherwise.

Mr. Warner: That is the trouble.

Member: The conditions are not comparable.

Mr. STYANTS: Let me now speak of the lack of accommodation provided at Parliament House for members interviewing their constituents on business.

Mr. Warner: Now you are on good ground.

Mr. STYANTS: It is disgraceful that when a constituent calls on a sitting day to see a member, whether a metropolitan, country or goldfields member, there is only one room, the strangers' room, that can be used. The stranger is not permitted to pass the glass doors leading into the corridor, and if anybody happens to be occupying the strangers' room, and the few seats in the lobby are occupied, there is no alternative to the member's taking his constituent out on to the lawn or into the street. This inconvenience should receive the serious consideration of the Government to the end that a greater amount of accommodation should be provided.

The Speech indicates that legislation is to be introduced dealing with navigation. Inquiries have revealed that the measure is designed particularly to control the use of Neon lights on the harbour front and in the harbour background that might be confusing to mariners navigating vessels into the harbour. I do not know a great deal about that aspect of the matter, but I do know that similar legislation is needed to apply to the railway system, particularly in the metropolitan area.

Mr. Cross: On some of the roads, too.

Mr. STYANTS: Under the Government Railways Act the Commissioner of Railways has no statutory authority to compel anybody to refrain from erecting or to dismantle an existing Neon light, although it might be located immediately behind a signal bracket. Unfortunately, the colours chiefly favoured for Neon signs are those used for railway signals, namely, red and green. Recently I attended a meeting of the managing body of the Engine Drivers' Union. If there is anyone who should be in a position to say whether Neon lights are confusing to railway men, it should be a member of that organisation. They are the men who have to drive the locomotives on the metropolitan railways, and they have assured me that such lights are confusing. Railway officers have informed me that on various occasions when people had contemplated erecting Neon lights that would conflict with railway signals, the danger had been pointed out and those people had proved reasonable and had either dismantled the lights or refrained from erecting them. That arrangement is satisfactory as far as it goes, but some day a person not so reasonable will refuse—and legally refuse—to refrain from erecting a Neon sign and possibly a serious accident will occur. I know from experience of Neon lights in the metropolitan area six or seven years ago, when they were not nearly so numerous as they are now, that at certain points along the line, I had to bear in mind that one of the lights visible was not the red or the green light signal of the railways. If it is possible to incorporate in the legislation to be provided for safeguarding navigation, similar protection for the railways, the Government would be well advised to include it, and thus give the Commissioner of Railways statutory power to ensure that Neon lights shall not be erected in posi-

tions likely to conflict with or be confused with railway signals.

In common with the member for Maylands and the member for Perth, I am pleased to note that the Government has at last decided to introduce legislation to provide a superannuation scheme for Government employees. There is no doubt that the State has been very lax in neglecting to deal with this problem. Eight or nine years ago when I attended an interstate conference of engine-men, which was held in Queensland, I regretted to learn that Western Australia was the only State in the Commonwealth that had not made some such provision. In Tasmania there is a scheme for paying gratuities on retirement, but the other States have superannuation schemes. Now that it has been decided to deal with the matter, I hope the scheme to be introduced will not be on a niggardly scale. Looking through the vital statistics, I find that more than 50 per cent. of the men in Australia die before reaching 65 years of age. Under most superannuation schemes the compulsory retiring age is regarded as 65 years, with 60 years as the optional age for retirement. Throughout Australia during the period from 1931 to 1935, 167,168 males died, and of that number 91,929 died before they reached 65 years of age. It must also be borne in mind that, with the inauguration of a State superannuation scheme, the Government will not be called upon to contribute for each employee under the retiring-age provisions of the Federal National Insurance Scheme. I hope the superannuation provisions to be introduced will be on a fairly liberal scale. I understand from the Premier that they will be modelled principally on the Public Service superannuation scheme. If that is so, I will regard it as a very fair scheme, one that will be appreciated by Government employees.

Dealing briefly with the effect of the basic wage upon industries, I noticed that the Leader of the Opposition, when discussing the problem, said that industry could not stand the strain of constant increases in the basic wage. I have a list showing the profits made by certain companies in 1933 and 1936 respectively. I will give members some details regarding those profits, and that information will indicate to the House that in some instances the profits derived from concerns in 1936 repre-

sented an excess of 400 per cent. over those earned in 1933. Here are some of the companies and the profits they made—

Company.	1933.	1936.
	£	£
Amalgamated Wireless ..	82,172	109,701
Adelaide Steamship Company	126,243	149,312
Australian Glass Manufacturers	122,439	205,493
Broken Hill Proprietary ..	313,617	850,361

The Broken Hill company is an employer of labour on a big scale and those returns do not make it appear that an increase in the basic wage would have any effect on its profits.

Mr. Hegney: Did you notice the profit made by the "West Australian"?

Mr. STYANTS: Here are some more—

Company.	1933.	1936.
	£	£
Broken Hill South	276,199	519,903
Dunlop Perdriau	241,919	307,183
Goldsborough Mort	139,538	237,467
General Motors-Holden ..	134,161	673,057

Those details will open the eyes of most members of this Chamber. General Motors-Holden is another concern that employs a great number of workers, and profits do not seem to have been affected in that instance. Although I have a list of 40 companies, I will not delay the House by quoting all of them. I can assure members that there are just as many glaring instances of increased profits that I have not revealed as those that I have read. Taking the 40 companies as a whole, in 1933 they showed an aggregate profit of £2,723,903 whereas in 1936 their profits amounted to £5,579,128. In view of those profits, I cannot readily see how the small increases in the basic wage could possibly have any serious effect on those concerns. I believe that the system operating with regard to the basic wage is such that the workers do not derive much benefit from any increases granted to them. As soon as they receive an increase of a few shillings a week in the basic wage, there is at once a larger increase in the cost of living. To me it has the appearance of a vicious circle. The industries mostly affected—the primary producing industries including the goldmining industry—cannot pass on the increased burden, as is possible with other business concerns.

For that reason I was glad to note from the Speech that the Government intend

to introduce legislation for the prevention of profiteering. If this "dog-chasing-its-own-tail" system with regard to the basic wage and the cost of living is to continue, it will be very difficult for the farming and goldmining industries to keep going. If the worker derived any benefit from the system, I might be prepared to admit that it was justified, but I cannot see that any such benefit is derived, for the reason that I have already stated. I was particularly struck with the case made out by the member for Avon (Mr. Boyle) on behalf of the farmers. If there is one section of the community with which I have sincere sympathy, it is the section endeavouring to carve out homes from the virgin bush and to make a living from the production of wheat. I was reared on a farm until I was 17 years of age. I understand the poor housing, the drudgery and privations, the lack of educational facilities and of the ordinary amenities of life that civilisation provides, all of which the farmers either experience or are denied. I was so disgusted with life on the land that I left it when I was 17 years old and went sleeper-cutting. I have not regretted my decision to leave the land. The women work like slaves. I have often told city women that they, as compared with the women in the country, do not know what work is. I have seen women carrying, with the aid of a yoke, two kerosene tins full of water over distances of 100 yards or more to their homes and to their stock. The children in the outer districts have a very precarious existence. I would be prepared to support any proposal that is reasonable and just to provide the farming community with a satisfactory standard of living. I worked out what it would mean if the producer were to get a reasonable price for his commodity compared with what the consumer has to pay for the article manufactured from it. I had in mind particularly the wheat farmer.

Assuming the average flour, bran and pollard content to be 70 per cent., 20 per cent., and 10 per cent. respectively, it would take 48 bushels of wheat to produce a ton of flour. I have taken the ton as containing 2,000 lbs. At 2s. 6d. a bushel, that would return the producer £6. To the merchant and miller it would return £10 for the ton of flour and about £2 5s. for the bran and pollard offal, making a total of £12 5s. for every 48 bushels of wheat used for gristing

purposes. I suggest to those who represent the wheatgrowers that they do not concentrate on such an obviously unfair method as the proposed flour tax by which to provide a decent standard of living for their people. It must be quite apparent to them that under that scheme, a basic wage worker with five or six children would have to pay at least four times the amount that would be paid by a man in receipt of £10 a week and without children to provide for. If the country representatives can evolve any decent system to attain the end they have in view, and provide their people with a decent standard of living, they will have my support, because, as I say, I know the drudgery, privations and difficulties confronting the men and women on the land. At the present time they are experiencing a particularly difficult period. I agree with country representatives that those people are just as much entitled to a standard of living at least equivalent to that made possible by the payment of the basic wage as are workers in other industries. That is all I propose to say. I shall have an opportunity later on to discuss other matters to which I wished to draw attention. I desired particularly to refer to the Westland express and other relative matters, but I can deal with them on the Railway Estimates.

On motion by Mr. Wilson, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.13 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 23rd August, 1938.

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

QUESTION—EDUCATION, PHYSICAL.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER asked the Chief Secretary: Will the Minister lay on the table of the House reports, now in the hands of the Education Department, by Miss K. Gordon, dated September, 1937, and by Mr. R. E. Halliday, dated August, 1938, on the physical education of girls and boys?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: Physical training is at present the subject of investigation by the Director of Education. The reports mentioned have been submitted to the Director and represent but one phase of the inquiries that are being made. It is therefore considered inadvisable to publish reports of subordinate officers which form part of the Director's investigations.

QUESTION—HOSPITALS, GOVERNMENT.

Patients' Places of Residence

Hon. A. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary: (a) What was the total number of patients treated at the Perth Hospital during the year ended the 30th June, 1938? (b) How many of these patients were admitted from outside the metropolitan area? 2, (a) What were the total numbers of patients treated at the Government Hospitals at Busselton, Albany, Katanning and Merredin? (b) How many of such patients were admitted from outside the respective districts?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, (a) Inpatient admissions, 5,810. (b) 815, but possibly some country patients may have given metropolitan addresses. 2, (a) Busselton, 507; Albany, 670; Katanning, 723; Merredin, 711. (b) Busselton, 114; Albany, 255; Katanning, 282; Merredin, 209.