

ern Australia, or perhaps he did not appreciate the necessity for giving us a fair and a reasonable spin such as the farmers in the Eastern States were getting. That is another instance in which I can agree with one of the members on the opposite side of the Chamber. In this case the Deputy Premier is reported to have remarked that the Western Australian public should be warned of the fact that the Eastern States were only too ready to rob Western Australia. Evidently, that applies to the highest as well as to the lowest. I commend the Minister for drawing our attention to that fact.

I hope some effort will be made early to overcome the difficulties with respect to farming requirements during the coming year. It is regrettable that the present rains are doing a certain amount of damage to crops, in my area at all events. While the damage is not extensive, unless we get some warm weather I am afraid we shall have to suggest to the Government that it take action to change our present meteorologist and secure another who will do better! With respect to the rains and floods, I hope the Minister for Works will put the hard word on the Treasurer—who I hope will not be as parsimonious as his predecessor—for a grant to the local governing authorities to assist them in meeting some of the expense which they will have to incur to repair damage done by floods. In my own district I know of several roads which have been washed away and of bridges that have been destroyed. As these roads are not declared main roads, the local governing authorities will have to do the necessary repairs out of the small finance available to them. It is only reasonable in such cases that the Government should assist in bearing part at least of the cost of putting those roads in reasonable repair.

There is another matter I wish to bring up. I asked the Premier a question tonight as to when the report of the honorary Royal Commission on Vermin will be available. I, with others, am somewhat disappointed that the report, although it has been in the hands of the Government since some time in May, has not been made available to members, or to road boards or to the public. I know that local governing authorities are, as it were, standing by waiting to learn the contents of the report. They

are not aware of its contents; neither am I. From statements made to me by responsible people, I learn that the local governing bodies appear to be convinced, or they have formed the opinion or impression, that the members of the Royal Commission did a very fine job. They base that opinion on the exhaustive investigations which the commission conducted, and consequently they believe it will speak with authority. They are looking forward to receiving the report.

While the previous Minister for Agriculture had several months to consider the report, it would now appear that we shall have to wait several months longer until the new Minister has had time to consider it. I suggest, and I do not consider it unreasonable, that the members of this House might have the opportunity, simultaneously with the Minister, to consider the report. When all is said and done, I doubt that he can do anything in the matter until such time as he is authorised to do so by the House, and it will save time if the report is made available to us and to the local governing authorities, so that the latter may at least get some idea of the recommendations of the Commission and plan accordingly. If this course is not followed, it may be that another 12 months will elapse before we can act upon the recommendations of the Commission.

On motion by Mr. Abbott, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.36 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 23rd August, 1945.

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Address-in-reply, eleventh day

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

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Eleventh Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central) [4.36]: Mr. President, in common with other members, I desire to express my grateful thanks

to all concerned for the very great change which has taken place in the circumstances of our living since we met in this Chamber last year. I also want to associate myself with the expressions of regret that have been voiced at the passing of our late Prime Minister (Mr. Curtin) and of the President of the United States of America (Mr. Roosevelt). We have won the war, but all thinking people must realise to the full that we have a most difficult task ahead of us. We Australian people, without being unduly puffed up, can look with admiration and gratitude at the fine example set us throughout the war by the Mother Country; and I think we will be able to continue to view with admiration the way in which the people of the Mother Country will face the very (troublesome) times that lie immediately ahead of them.

Although it may be regarded as only a small matter—and I am reminded of the old saying that straws show which way the winds blow—I wish to remind members of what I consider was a very fine gesture made by the Mother of Parliaments when it assembled the other day. Speaking as an Australian, I think that we in Australia, in both State and Federal spheres of politics, have much to learn from the way in which proceedings are conducted in the Mother of Parliaments. I have on a previous occasion expressed my regret that the leaders in our Federal sphere did not see their way clear to follow the exceedingly fine example set by the House of Commons, when the members there of all shades of political opinion sank their— I will use the word—petty party differences so as to stand together for the defence of all that they held most dear. Those petty party differences were swept away, and we saw men of three separate political parties working together wholeheartedly with one object in view, namely, to obtain and secure a peace which they thought their people were entitled to.

I think that that had a lot to do with the very fine record of the people of the Mother Country during the terrible years through which they passed. In my opinion, the fact that our political representatives here either could not or would not act similarly—in any case they did not get together like that—retarded their efforts, notwithstanding the very fine record that they achieved during the struggle. A matter to which I wish to refer is that the

House of Commons met a week or so ago and the Labour Party, although in charge of the Treasury bench and returned with such a splendid majority, did not appoint one of its own followers to the Speaker's Chair. No! Colonel Clifton Brown must be a very fine gentleman and must have discharged his duties to the satisfaction of all the members of the Commons because he was again voted into the Speaker's Chair. That is an example that we might very well emulate.

Hon. C. B. Williams: We have done it here for years in regard to the President.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: We could emulate that example in more ways than one. It may be only a small matter, but it was a very fine example for the House of Commons to set other legislatures. Since I have been in Parliament it has been stated, and I think with a good deal of truth, that our Governments have followed a policy that is known as "spoils to the victor." During my tenure there have been only three short years in which a non-Labour Government has occupied the Treasury bench, so that most of the faults in this connection can be truthfully laid at the door of the present Labour Government.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: It has made some good appointments too.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: That may be. The members of most of the boards, for which the present Government is responsible, are of the same political faith as is the Government. One needs only to remember the remarks passed here yesterday about the failure of the Government to re-appoint a member representing the primary producing industries to the Fremantle Harbour Trust. One can recall the constitution of the Licensing Court. If the members of that court are not ex-Trades Hall union secretaries, then my memory is at fault. Two of them are at any rate. One could quote many such instances.

While speaking the other evening, Mr. Bolton mentioned a rumour that is going about to the effect that the Government had appointed a committee to go into the question of taking over the control of all privately-owned bus services in the metropolitan area. He said, "I think we should endeavour to nip this in the bud." I want to ask Mr. Bolton if he has forgotten that the Govern-

ment, by so doing, is simply carrying out its policy, or, to use the ex-Premier's words, "The Government is carrying out the policy laid down at the Triennial Labour Conference." Just what chance, therefore, is there of nipping this move in the bud? I want to bring Mr. Bolton back to actualities. It may be all right to indulge in that kind of fond hope, but we have to face realities. No members of the Government will deny that they are endeavouring loyally to carry out the planks of Labour's platform. That is only what we have a right to expect. So, to talk about nipping in the bud something that is the policy of the present Government seems to me to be utterly futile.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: I said, an extension of the policy.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The hon. member can have it whichever way he likes, but the sooner we face up to this the better. We have seen in the Press a lot of controversy about the suitability, or otherwise, of the Garratt engine. I wonder why the present Administration does not follow the advice given it on many occasions from people who are entitled to do so, and why it does not seek the opinions of the men who drive those engines. Surely their opinions are entitled to some consideration. It seems to me, as a layman, that this State has been put to considerable expense in connection with the Garratt engines and, what is more, we have been told in no uncertain language by the unions concerned that they do not intend to sit down under the disability and that something must be done to improve the position. We have been warned—so why go on until the rupture takes place and the trade of the hinterland is paralysed?

The Government would be well advised to give the men a chance to demonstrate their reasons for their dislike of the Garratt engine before an impartial committee. If their opinions are well-founded, why not face up to the matter? The sooner that is done the better it will be for all concerned. The payment of child endowment to the aborigines is a Commonwealth matter, but I mention it here so that the Government cannot say that it has not been reminded that it should be attended to. In many instances this money, which is paid to the aborigines, is not being used to the best advantage. The cost of native child endowment to the 30th June, 1943, was £37,040. That is a fairly large amount and I think

the State Government should bring under the notice of the Commonwealth Government the fact that the matter should receive some consideration with a view to ensuring that the people concerned get the benefit of the money that is spent.

Members of this Chamber, together with members of another place, have indulged in some caustic criticism of the railways. I think that we should extend to the Railway Department every possible consideration; especially was that so throughout the war years. While considering the matter I have reminded myself of the inquiry by a Royal Commissioner which Mr. Miles initiated in this Chamber some years ago. Nothing much seems to have been done about it. Later it was ascertained, as the result of a very close investigation by the Royal Commissioner, Dr. Herman, that one and a half tons of Collie coal were equal to only one ton of Newcastle coal. According to the estimate arrived at by Dr. Herman the additional cost to the railways due to the use of Collie coal was approximately £52,229. I would not suggest that Collie coal should not be used on the railways. Mr. Thomson has, from time to time, urged that the interest bill should not be a charge against the annual cost of the railways, and I certainly think that if the Commissioner has to use Collie coal and in consequence incur the additional cost I have mentioned, he should be given credit for that fact.

I do not know whether it is news to the House—how it has been possible throughout the years of war I do not know—but the Midland Railway Company has not during that period used Collie coal but Newcastle coal. Thus, in addition to the opinion expressed by Dr. Herman, we have the fact that a private company, which does not feel itself bound to support local industries, has gone to the expense of importing Newcastle coal because it pays to do so. Yesterday we heard in this Chamber a statement by a member who doubtless knew what he was speaking about, to the effect that the housing conditions in the City of Fremantle were deplorable. That hon. member has been connected for many years with the civic life of the port and spoke in the light of his experience. To indicate that Fremantle is not the only place where deplorable housing conditions exist

I would refer the House to the issue of "The West Australian" of the 31st July last in which the Perth City Council's survey of the housing conditions in the metropolis was dealt with. It will be seen that in Perth and Fremantle many houses are without the proper facilities to enable people to live decently and bring up their families in a proper manner. I ask myself this question: Is it only during the last few years that these deplorable—I think the word "disgraceful" is a better term to use—conditions have existed? I do not think so. Why is it that bodies charged with seeing that their regulations are complied with have not attended to the matter? That is a pertinent, and certainly not an impertinent, question. It is, I think, because no-one cares to speak up. Recently a highly placed ecclesiastic in Perth complained that men were "afraid to get up and speak up." To my mind, it is because members of local governing authorities have not been courageous enough over a period of years that the existing disgraceful housing conditions have been allowed to continue.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Certainly a lot of those places should be condemned, but where would you put the people affected?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: That will not wash with me! Mr. Baxter was not the member who made the statement I have referred to, and so far as I am aware he is not connected with any local governing body. I have had eight years' experience in that regard and I know that the housing position was formerly not so acute as it is at present. Nevertheless I claim that had more attention been devoted to the matter at an earlier stage, the position would certainly not be so acute as it is today. We have also heard a lot about the milk supply. Others besides Dr. Hislop have informed us that milk is a food. The way that food is served up to people reflects no credit upon those responsible. Some interesting figures were published in the Press the other day in a communication from a writer who asked whether it was any wonder that the milk supply here was not as well handled as it should be seeing that the return for milk was only 1s. 4d. per gallon as against 4s. for lemonade and 10s. 6d. for beer. If that is the best the Price Fixing Commissioner can do, it is little wonder that the existing conditions obtain.

Some of the hard things that were said about the price fixing authorities the other day were obviously well deserved. At Geraldton we had three dairymen, but one was forced to give up his business because he was losing money owing to the unsatisfactory price he was able to charge. I called upon the Price Fixing Commissioner about the matter and I was informed that an increase had been recommended but the authorities here were awaiting Commonwealth approval from Canberra! Everyone is talking about education these days and at last the Teachers' Union has had something to say about it. I assume that the union was not called upon to do anything about the matter, but nevertheless it issued a very good pamphlet. Those members who have read it must have received a shock and certainly there is only one word that can fittingly describe the conditions obtaining in Western Australia with regard to education, and that word is "disgraceful." The whole position is set out in the pamphlet, which was not issued by some political partisan but by the Teachers' Union. It is not only the teaching in the primary and secondary schools that should receive attention but also that available at the University of Western Australia. That institution came in for some criticism last session and I think there was considerable misapprehension about the position there. I should like to read a short quotation from a report in "The West Australian" of the 25th October, 1944. The extract read—

University Education.
"Reforms Imperative."

Professor Addresses Workers.

Newcastle, Oct. 24.—"Fundamental reforms in university education were imperative if industrialised democracy was to survive the onslaughts of totalitarianism and progress to something finer," said Professor Julius Stone yesterday at the Workers' Educational Association Conference at Newcastle.

The report continued—

"The educational process in a modern democracy," he said, "is in purgatory. Above is the heaven of a past age when world and work were such that every individual could have his own picture of it and a sense of belonging to it. Below is the hell of totalitarian dictatorship in which no-one save the leaders is permitted to seek or attain any view of life as a whole but all are coerced and conditioned into accepting only what is laid down. The granting of universal franchise before education had forced politicians to pay attention to

the irrational impulses of the masses lest they be ousted by men less scrupulous than themselves. This had been a contributory reason for the rise of Nazism and Fascism."

In my opinion some notice should be taken of the considered opinion of Professor Stone. Last session I drew attention to the very regrettable fact that too many of our male teachers had been allowed to enlist in the Armed Forces. I well remember—I had no need to look up the report in "Hansard"—the facetious, not to say sarcastic, reply I received from the Chief Secretary who made out that I inferred that our women teachers were not as efficient as they might be. That reply was very ill-timed and ill-placed.

I had very good reason for asking that question. My daughter was wrestling with the task of teaching 30 to 40 boys, or young men, at the Perth Boys' School. She was subjected to considerable nervous strain and risked a breakdown in health whilst men were strutting about in camps and other places in uniform and their sacred duties were being delegated to those who were in no way able to do the job. Since then other people have taken up the matter. I noticed from a newspaper in February that an agitation had been successful in respect to applications that had been made for the release of some of these teachers. We were told that 549 male teachers had enlisted from the Education Department. In the statement that appeared on the 3rd February of this year it was said that 95 teachers had been recommended for release by the manpower authorities, 31 of these had been released, 29 had been refused and 13 were pending. I wonder why male teachers were not put in the same category as were policemen and railwaymen.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Some were!

Hon. G. W. Miles: And trade union secretaries.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: It may be that some were put in the same category, but too many male teachers were allowed to enlist. It is no use making a fuss about it now. It is difficult to understand that a Government which was faced with the responsibility of educating our young people should have failed to make the necessary representations. It has not carried out its responsibilities over the years to anything like the extent it should have done. On top of that, it has allowed 549 male teachers to

enlist. Had those men gone oversea, the position might not have seemed so bad, although even then I would not have agreed that they should have been allowed to enlist. Policemen have come to me asking if I could obtain permission for them to enlist. One of them that I know resigned from the force so that he might enlist, and he became a military policeman who used to stand outside the A.N.A. House. I venture to suggest that per head of the population of the State we had more enlistments amongst our male teachers than did any other State of the Commonwealth. That does not stand to the credit of those who were responsible. The Director of Education is a personal friend of mine. He was at one time the head teacher at Geraldton, and I have every respect for Mr. Murray Little. When he was at Geraldton he said the responsibility was his. It is not right that that should have been so. It should have been a matter of Government policy, and no director should have had the right to grant permission to such a large number of male teachers to enter the Services, for that act robbed countless numbers of boys and girls of what was their birthright.

We have heard a lot about the fine effort that has been made in Tasmania in connection with education. I was in that State some 20 years ago. At that time it was looked upon as the most backward part of the Commonwealth. Today that little orchard State leads the Commonwealth in education. It is ahead of the most populated States of New South Wales and Victoria, and leads the Commonwealth, not only in respect to educational facilities but in regard to health matters. There is no doubt the late Mr. Ogilvie left behind him a monument and a record that will redound to his credit for many years. He provided free educational and medical facilities for everybody, including maternity allowances for women. That good work has been proceeded with, be it said to the credit of those concerned.

It was stated yesterday that Tasmania did not provide a fair comparison with the other States. I like that! Tasmania is a claimant State, just as we are. It is perfectly fair to use it as a comparison. It is only a small State, but look what it has done! Tasmania has had 15 area schools established and functioning for

some years. It is now going to erect another 15. Some of those extra area schools have already been built, and authority has been given to erect the remainder at a cost of £12,000 each. I have here a broadcast given by one of our own teachers, who was enthusiastic enough to spend his long service leave in Tasmania so that he might return and tell the people of this State what that little island is doing for country children in the way of area schools. The following are some extracts from the broadcast that was written by Professor G. Foxcroft:—

No-one connected with education in Western Australia, or concerned for the creation of a really effective and democratic system of education in our State, but has sighed and longed and hoped for the time when the public would take some active part in the demand for better facilities for education for our children. I found in Tasmania this revolution had been accomplished and the leading publicists were the members of the Government. Seldom did a Minister or a member make a public address that was without a reference to education. It was in the air, it was a topic for conversation wherever one might be, the passing acquaintance, the casual fellow-traveller in tram or train or bus, would assume quite naturally that you would be interested in schools and in education. I wish that time would permit to tell you more of what Tasmania has done, of hospital classes, sight-saving classes, the schools for the blind, the deaf and dumb, the kindergarten college, activities all of them, not of charitable or semi-charitable bodies, but the State Education Department.

Tasmania has in the last few years raised itself from the position of being the most backward State educationally to leading the Commonwealth. Yet in 1941-42, the latest figures available, the cost of education in Tasmania was 35s. 11d. per head. With us it is 38s. 10d.; the all-States' average is 36s. 8d. The Tasmanian Treasurer in presenting these figures, claimed that there were, relative to population, more children in Tasmania than in any other State, and a larger proportion attending high school, and gave the cost per scholar as £12 18s. 10d. The corresponding figures for our State have not yet been published, but would be, I should say, approximately £12 2s. 3d.

It is not a question of big distances; it is a question of whether the Government of Western Australia has tried to do anything along similar lines here. I am not so unreasonable as to suggest that our Government should immediately erect 30 area schools, and thus follow the example of Tasmania, but I would point out that it has done nothing like the work that has

been undertaken in that little island for the country children. The broadcast continues—

And what sort of schools do they get for their money? Well, here is an example! During my stay the Parliamentary Public Works Committee presented a report and recommended the building of an area school at Snug. They had inspected the site, 11 acres, and they had had an opportunity of seeing various area schools and had nothing but admiration for the fine work of the Education Department in that respect, and they had inspected the pious—these provided for a modern brick building with concrete foundations, embracing five class rooms, library, assembly hall, gymnasium, change rooms and showers, stage, teachers' room, head teacher's office, stores, cloak and washrooms, with a maximum of light and ventilation. The estimated cost which was approved was £12,850.

If it is true that conditions of population density, isolation, transport facilities and so on are different in Western Australia, it does not follow that area schools are impossible but only that we need area schools adapted to our conditions.

Members should know, too, that Tasmania has one more high school than we have and also leads in the matter of technical colleges. Of what use is it to say that Tasmania does not provide a fair comparison? The comparison is quite fair. We know now what has been done in one State, and that nothing of the kind has been attempted in another State. In the course of the broadcast from which I have been reading, reference was made to a public works committee. Members will recollect that a public works committee from the South Australian Parliament visited this State a few months ago. How many times have members of this Chamber referred to the necessity for the creation of a similar body in this State? Mr. Thomson has advocated that on many occasions.

The object of appointing a Parliamentary public works committee is to provide means whereby the Government of the day might benefit from the reports and advice tendered by such a body. Nothing of that kind has yet been attempted here. It is time that the representations made by members of this Chamber, year in and year out, received attention. I do not know why, but a couple of weeks ago I had sent to me a copy of "The Worker." As it was in my box, I imagined it was sent to me to read. In it I came across a reference to the fact that the women's auxiliary of the Labour movement had written to the Minister for Health drawing attention to the conditions under

which nurses were working and, in particular, to the need for a superannuation scheme for those women. I will tell members the reply sent by the Minister to those ladies. The paper states—

A letter was received from the Minister for Health in which he wrote—"In Friday's issue of the 'Worker' under the heading of 'The Nurses Need our Help,' the question of assistance to nurses is dealt with, and while I have no desire in any way to discuss the merits of the nurses' claim now before the Arbitration Court, I feel that one item, namely, superannuation, should be cleared up. As you know, the Government introduced such legislation, afterwards amending it to cater for nurses in Government hospitals. It is interesting to note that although the Act was amended in 1939 only 44 nurses have taken advantage of the superannuation."

That is the end of the Minister's letter. The concluding words of the article are, "That news certainly came as a shock to the executive." Only 44 nurses had applied for superannuation! I made a few inquiries and found that the nurses did not embrace this superannuation scheme for a very good reason; but the Minister did not see fit to tell the good women of his movement what that reason was.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Who was the Minister?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The paragraph does not mention his name. I think it was in Mr. Panton's time. The "Worker" was dated the 10th August, 1944. I know that Mr. Panton has been a very good Minister for Health; he is a gentleman I hold in very high esteem. Nevertheless, to leave the matter like that is not fair. If we want—as we do want, and must have—good women to take up this noble profession, we must be prepared to deal with them in an equitable manner and not ask them to contribute to a superannuation scheme that returns them only a few shillings per week more than they would be entitled to from the old age pension without making any contribution at all.

The Honorary Minister: They would be entitled to get superannuation plus the old age pension.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: That is the reply I received from the Nurses' Union. I hope that much greater consideration will be given to the treatment of nurses, not only in Government but also in private hospitals. I was speaking recently to the matron of the Government Hospital in Geraldton and

she spoke in loud praise of the Government. I want to be as fair as I can about this matter. She is a lady who has given the best portion of her life to nursing people in Government hospitals, and she said to me, "I want you to know we are treated very well indeed by the Government." It gives me very great pleasure indeed to pass on that information. I happen to know that in the metropolitan area—not in Government hospitals perhaps, but in other semi-governmental institutions—that is not the case.

There has been a good deal of controversy about the shocking state of the Geraldton Hospital. Some of it is a little exaggerated, I think, though we could do with a new building. But here is something I cannot understand: Many years ago, very close to the hospital there was a residence for the resident medical officer. At that time, we used to have such an officer in charge of the Government hospital. Attached to those quarters were quarters for the District Medical Officer and the gaoler. Some years ago, an arrangement was made between the Railway Department and the Public Health Department for those premises to be taken over as a residence for the Engineer of Ways and Works. A good deal of money was spent on the place, and today the Engineer of Ways and Works is living, and for some time past has been living, in those premises; while the nurses, notwithstanding what the matron told me, are not properly housed—a fact that the department acknowledges. Their sleeping quarters are anything but what they should be. As there were many houses set aside for the occupation of railway officers in Geraldton, I cannot understand why permission was given by the Public Health Department for the surrender of the building to which I have referred for the housing of a railway officer. I have nothing against the gentleman occupying the quarters; he is a very fine man. But I cannot see why the arrangement was entered into, and I think it would not be asking too much to request the Railway Department to put its official into a railway residence and allow the quarters occupied by him to be used for housing the nurses.

I notice that in the report of the Commissioner for Native Affairs for the year ended the 30th June, 1943, it is stated that the school at the Moore River Settlement was closed in the early part of 1943 owing to

a shortage of teachers. I am wondering whether it has been re-opened. In view of the rain that we have been receiving this winter, it seems not to be worthwhile to talk about water conservation; but when one knows the annual cost to the Railway Department and the antiquated method of hauling water which has gone on for so many years, one wonders whether we will ever profit by experience. One wonders whether some method could not be adopted to conserve water that falls so abundantly. A few months ago a largely attended conference of local governing authorities was held at Geraldton, and amongst those present was the general manager of the Midland Railway Company. He made an interesting statement of the methods of his department in conserving water at Walkaway, where there is not a very great annual rainfall. With the expenditure of a few thousand pounds in bituminising the runways, the company was able to provide excellent storage. The figures seem almost too great, but he expressed the opinion that without bituminising the moisture lost amounted to 95 per cent., but that when the work was put in hand, 95 per cent. was conserved. The sooner we undertake similar work on our State railway system, the better it will be. I know that material has been scarce during the war years, but now that the war is over attention should be given to the matter as promptly as possible.

A geological examination of the Eradu and Irwin coal seams was requested, but has not been granted. The Government has spent some money on work at Eradu; that I acknowledge with gratitude. But what is wanted is a proper detailed geological examination so that we will know definitely, from people who can tell us, just what we have in the way of coal at either or both of those places. When we hear of a committee having been appointed to go into the question of the purchase of private buses, it makes us wonder why any State Government that believes in nationalisation should have taken no action, so far as we know, to take over the Midland railway. The Government might say, "We have not the money." But a main line of railway such as the Midland Company owns should be linked up with the State system. We are committed to State-owned railways; and while the facts are as they are, we

should urge the Government to give consideration to the purchase of the Midland line. I have stated the facts before, and they should be stated every session, because in a British community it is unbelievable that such an injustice could be perpetrated year in and year out as has been perpetrated in this State without anything having been done about it. I refer to the fact that the people along the Midland line are charged higher freights and higher passenger rates than are the people who live along, and are served by, Government lines.

Hon. C. B. Williams: That is a decent admission!

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: It is not right that that should be so. To forestall any questions, I would ask whether there is any worthwhile agitation by the people along the line for the Government to buy it, and I will be perfectly frank in replying that I do not think there is. I explain that in this way: The people along that line are well served by the company. It might be said that that admission is strange in view of the fact that I previously said they are overcharged. What I mean to convey is that the officials seem to lay themselves out to study the wishes and meet the convenience of the people; and that goes a long way. However, I maintain that that is not the question. The people along that line are being dealt an injustice because they are charged higher railway freights and higher fares by the Midland Railway Company, which is a private company, than other taxpayers are called upon to pay who are served by Government railway lines. When we hear of such schemes as are afoot for the taking over of railways in the Eastern States and the institution of a standard gauge on which millions of pounds will be spent, we are justified in thinking that the Government would be well advised again to open up negotiations for the purchase of the Midland line.

The Government owns and conducts a number of State hotels. Although there are not any of these hotels in the Central Province, I have heard very good reports of the way they are conducted. In many towns there is only one hotel, and with all due respect to the Licensing Court, I may say that some attention should be paid to the convenience of the travelling public in those hotels, especially in the

way of bathrooms and lavatory accommodation. Some of the hotels are badly in need of up-to-date amenities of that sort. Most of the hotels are owned by companies who are concerned with profit-making. I consider that where there is one hotel in a town, the Government would be justified in giving consideration to its purchase and to running it for the benefit of the people of the district. We have heard a lot about housing, and I am very much afraid that both State and Commonwealth Governments have fallen down on their job in that connection. Only on the 11th of this month did the Minister for Industrial Development acknowledge in the Press that he had appointed an officer to go into the matter of housing. The report of his remarks included the following:—

Although this officer had commenced his new duties only last week it was already evident that by concerted action and co-operation on the part of the various controlling authorities, the production of building material could be quickly increased. This matter has been crying out for attention for months past. For a couple of years everyone could see what was happening, and only last week the Minister appointed a man to investigate the position. The shortage of apprentices has been referred to time and time again, but nothing has been done. During this session Mr. Williams called attention to the selfishness of some of his fellow unionists in this regard. I have here a report showing that the position in New South Wales is just as bad as it is here. In 1938 in the building trade—in carpentry and joinery, bricklaying, plastering, painting and plumbing—there were 1,128 apprentices, and in 1942 there were only 366.

That is a truly alarming state of affairs, which has been going on throughout the Commonwealth, but nothing has been done about it and no steps have been taken to check the selfishness of these people. It is the failure to face up to things that are threatening us, the failure of public men to face up to the position, that is responsible for our finding that we have been too slow and have accomplished too little, too late. I quote the opinions of men who are entitled to be heard. In "The West Australian" of the 11th August last His Honour Judge Kelly, of the Commonwealth Arbitration Court, is reported as having said,

when announcing his policy on "Go Slow," that he was unwilling to adopt the view that it was incumbent on the court to create offences on too many occasions. This article in "The West Australian" continues—

His Honour had before him a reference under Regulation 10 of the National Security (Industrial Peace) Regulations, in a notification by The Master Builders' Association, dated June 27th that subsequent to a stop-work meeting on June 26th a go-slow policy had been instituted in regard to the construction of base ordnance stores at Broadmeadows, and that the matter had been referred to the Conciliation Commissioner (Mr. G. A. Mooney) for report. The substance of the report was that Mr. Mooney had been satisfied that the allegation that a go-slow policy had been operating on that particular job had been substantiated.

That is from the Arbitration Court judge himself. The article ends with what I consider to be a pregnant warning—

His Honour said he was not satisfied that the Federal organisations over whom the Court had control supported the action of their branches in having paid allegiance to any go-slow resolution. At the same time, he was bound to say that unless the Federal organisations exercised disciplinary action, they rendered themselves open to applications eager for their de-registration or for the cancellation of awards which those organisations had over a period of years gained through the Court. They also rendered themselves open to having future claims, so long as the go-slow policy existed and was extended on any considerable scale, either postponed or rejected by the court which must take the attitude that employees could not have both direct action and arbitration. The right to make application for cancellation of awards or de-registration of organisations was known to the persons concerned, and it was for them to consider whether the situation warranted such applications being made. So far as employees were concerned, His Honour considered it his duty to point out that they were jeopardising the position of their fellow organisations.

And so it goes on. There we have a judge of the Commonwealth Arbitration Court reminding the unions that they cannot have it both ways, though they are repeatedly attempting to have it both ways, to the embarrassment of most of their own people. The war, as I have said, cannot be blamed for this. I refer now to a deputation which was introduced on the 21st June, 1937, to the Hon. A. R. G. Hawke when he was in charge of the Child Welfare Department. It was a deputation regarding child delinquency. On that deputation there were Dr. Moss, Dr. Williams, Mrs. Rischbieth, Mrs.

Vallance and the Rev. Dr. McMahon. The reply by the Minister to that deputation was in these words, "We are getting somewhere. We are slowly but surely reaching the stage when definite proposals will be ready for the consideration of Cabinet. I hope this day will not be far distant." Those were the considered words of the Minister to that deputation on the 24th June, 1937, but nothing was done, and in February, 1943, I moved for a Select Committee, owing to the frightful state of affairs existing in connection with youth delinquency and Barton's Mill.

After a great fight, in which my motion was strongly objected to by the Chief Secretary, the House granted that Select Committee, and on the 10th August, 1943, its report was laid on the Table of the House. If I said that nothing had been done and that no notice had been taken of that report I would not be far out. That Select Committee recommended, among other things, that more male probation officers be appointed. The report was laid on the Table on the 10th August, 1943, and on the 23rd August, 1944, I read in "The West Australian" that one additional male probation officer had been appointed. I think that is the sum total of the notice that was taken of that report. The detention quarters at the Roesstreet lock-up, where these boys were kept whilst awaiting trial, and before they were found guilty, shocked every member of the committee. I might add that we had a returned soldier from the last war on that committee—a man who had seen some very rough conditions—and it shocked him. It was unbelievable that in a civilised and Christian country boys of tender years could be shut up, in the heart of the city, in a place such as we saw. I do not think any member at present in the Chamber was on that Select Committee, but that was a shocking place in which to lock boys up. There is now a new place—I have not been to see it—but I read a letter in the Press the other day which said it was not very much better than the old one.

I would like members to put a request to the Chief Secretary that we see that place, in order to form some opinion of what the powers-that-be have now provided, after the attention of the Government had been drawn to the matter by the Select Committee. That would let the House know how necessary it is, if we are going to keep youth delinquency within bounds, to

provide better accommodation there. I do not wish to be charged with making out that it is worse than it is, but it must be dealt with, as the deputation pointed out in 1937, when the Minister said we were getting somewhere. We have got nowhere. Mr. Hawke gave up that department and took over another. There is a very fine Minister in charge of the Child Welfare Department now, but so the matter goes on, and the fact remains that the position has not been faced as it should have been. At the time when that Select Committee investigated the position there were 307 boys on probation, and only one male probation officer, though he is a very fine officer. Now there are two. There were 52 delinquent girls, and three female probation officers. Not only were there about six times as many boys as girls, but there was only one male officer, excluding the later appointment to which I have referred. I cannot understand why the Government failed to try to do something in this regard. It is especially necessary now, in view of the conditions that will prevail for some considerable time.

It is not for me to say that the members representing the far North should take certain action, but I have here articles from the Press, which I have read with much regret, dealing with that great empty space of which I have read since I was a youth, and which possesses such wonderful potentialities and possibilities. That area is being neglected and it is beyond my comprehension why this Government, which has a fellow-Labour Administration in the Commonwealth sphere, does not approach the Commonwealth Government and say, "We cannot finance that portion of the State." The ex-Premier acknowledged that the mere handful of people in this State had not the money necessary to open up and develop the far North, so why, in the name of all that is equitable and just, does not the Government of this State make some arrangement with the Commonwealth Government to take over that area and give it and its people an opportunity? I am reminded of the excellent appointment made by this Government in connection with the settling and rehabilitation of those of our men who are coming back from war service. I think the Government has chosen very wisely. Any member who has not had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Fyfe would find it worth his while to contact that gentleman, because he

is one fitted in every way for the responsible and important position to which he has been appointed. I support the motion.

HON. W. R. HALL (North-East) [5.43]: I also wish to say how pleased I am that the war against Japan has been successfully terminated by the victorious Allies. I hope this will be the end of all wars and that, when peace is signed in a few days' time, it will mean that we will be able to live in peace and happiness for all time. My sympathy goes out to the relatives and friends of the men who made the supreme sacrifice, and I hope they have not made it in vain.

I wish to bring under the notice of the House the position of the goldmining industry. The Commonwealth Government left the industry with only 4,000 odd men to keep it going until the termination of the war. I propose to show how little assistance the Commonwealth has given and how little it intends to give the industry now. The Speech informs us that a sum of £50,000 is to be contributed by the Commonwealth Government towards the rehabilitation of the industry. Considering the state of the industry today, several times that amount will be required to restore it to its pre-war condition. The ex-Minister for Mines, who, I admit, did a wonderful job, made a statement that the industry would absorb 20,000 men when the rehabilitation period arrived. I consider that his estimate was very greatly exaggerated. I was born on the Goldfields and to the best of my recollection the maximum number engaged in the heyday of the industry was only 15,000 odd, and I fail to see how it can absorb 20,000 when our Servicemen return.

I am pleased that in the recently appointed Minister for Mines, we have a man who represents a mining constituency, is familiar with the industry and should have a very definite and clear-cut view of its requirements. On the other hand I regret that when the Premier was allotting the portfolios, he gave the Minister for Mines more than one. I cannot see why he should be burdened with the portfolios of Railways and Transport as well, because the mining industry is of sufficient importance to have a Minister of its own. That in itself would be a full-time job for any

Minister. All eyes in Western Australia are turned towards the Goldfields, and the job of the Minister for Mines will be a full one without asking him to attend to railways and transport as well. The railways also are of sufficient importance to warrant the appointment of a Minister to look after them alone. I regret to say that there are unemployed men on the Goldfields at present.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Are you sure of that?

Hon. W. R. HALL: I am positive of it. Several men who have returned from this war approached me and I got them jobs on the Kalgoorlie Road Board in order to keep them going because they could not get work in the mining industry. It is well to make clear to members precisely what the position on the Goldfields is.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Why cannot those men get work on the mines?

Hon. W. R. HALL: The Government or the mining companies or the rehabilitation authorities are not yet completely ready to deal with the men returning from the war. Evidently the war ended a little too soon for the Commonwealth and State Governments to be prepared, and if men return in thousands, there will be a state of chaos before they can be re-absorbed in the industry.

Hon. C. B. Williams: What about the deputation to the Prime Minister recently when the industry asked for men? Yet you tell us that men are out of work!

Hon. W. R. HALL: Before the mining companies can start another shift, they will require 200 or 300 men. Until they get, say, 300 men, it will not be possible to start another shift, and to attempt to do so would be false economy for the companies. I hope the men will be returned in batches so that they can be absorbed in additional shifts on the various mines. That is the answer to Mr. Williams. The industry will need considerable time in order to get back to its pre-war production. We have a large number of mines that will not start operations again or, if they do, will not be re-opened for a considerable time.

For the information of members I will mention some of the mines that have been closed down and give an idea of their pro-

duction in the year before closing. The Gladiator, situated 235 miles north of Kalgoorlie, closed down in 1942 and in the previous year produced 18,000 tons of ore for 4,876 ounces of gold. Cox's Find, which employed a large number of men, in its last year of production, 1942, yielded 5,636 tons of ore for 3,236 ounces of gold. The Lancefield, situated two or three miles north of Laverton, closed down in 1940 and in its last year produced 49,179 tons of ore for a return of 11,690 ounces of gold. The Sands Retreatment Co., Morgans, situated towards Leonora on the east side of Laverton, closed down in 1941 and from sands retreatment produced 1,942 ounces of gold. From 600 to 1,000 men have gone away from the mines north of Kalgoorlie, and some time will elapse before they start again. Consequently, I fail to see how the industry is going to cater for 20,000 men in the rehabilitation period.

One of the essentials of rehabilitation mentioned by Mr. E. H. H. Hall is housing, the shortage of which seems to be affecting every town in the State. If 20,000 men return to the Goldfields, many of them will have to sleep in tents, because the people who are there now cannot get the houses they require. But for the Air Force establishment which has been there for some years, the Goldfields would be in a very bad plight, and the presence of those men has tended to make the housing problem more acute, and when our Servicemen return, I do not know how they will fare for homes. The Government is behind the times in not having plans ready to put into operation. Whether it be the Commonwealth Government or the State Government that is to blame, I do not know.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Both.

Hon. W. R. HALL: Probably both are to blame. I understand that a lot of machinery was taken from the mines by the Commonwealth for use in munition factories, etc. A special effort should be made at once to get all that machinery replaced. Otherwise, the seriousness of the position will be accentuated. In the north country, where men follow the occupation of mining and people have to live, there is one bright spot, namely, the Sons of Gwalia mine at Leonora. The people there have to battle along with a train service only two or three times

a week, but they are fortunate as compared with the people of Laverton, who have to manage with one train a fortnight, though I believe there is some subsidiary service as well. Requests have been made by Mr. Seddon and others over the last few years for a Diesel electric coach to be put on that line so that the people may obtain at least the necessities of life. It is saddening to visit the north country and see the plight of those people. However, they do not cause their Parliamentary representatives very much trouble; they take it. They are doing a fine job, and are struggling along hoping the time will soon come when they will be able to rehabilitate themselves and get a greater kick out of life.

Reference has been made on several occasions to the condition of the railways. I am quite aware of what the railways have done during the war years. They have done a wonderful job, but this does not absolve those in authority from the charge that the carriages are filthy and infested with vermin and, further, that the lavatory departments are a disgrace. I do not mind if a train runs a little late; we can put up with that, knowing that it is unavoidable, but there is no excuse for insanitary conditions. I know that one of our members was bitten by vermin while travelling on a train. This cannot be denied. The least the department can do is to see that the carriages are clean and that the rugs used in the sleeping coaches are properly disinfected and are free from vermin. The same rugs are used year in and year out, and I believe that some of them are as old as I am.

Hon. C. B. Williams: How old are you? About 44?

Hon. W. R. HALL: I want to be fair to the Railway Department. During the war years it has transported many men and much material. I know that the rolling-stock is in a state of disrepair and that the manpower difficulty has no doubt prevented it from doing certain things, but I must impress upon the Minister that it would be in the interests of the health of the travelling public if these matters were attended to so that when people travel, they may do so in reasonable comfort.

I listened attentively this afternoon to what Mr. E. H. H. Hall had to say with respect to hospitals in the North. I wish

to speak about the district hospital at Leonora. It is an absolute disgrace to the Government, which to some extent subsidises it. I assure members that the statements I am about to make are true, and the Government should take every step possible to expedite the remedying of the existing state of affairs, in order that sick people at Leonora can be cared for as they should be. A few months ago I had occasion to visit Leonora and I inspected the hospital. I found that the morgue had rotted away; it was white-ant eaten. If I recollect aright, a door was missing. The morgue itself was situated only a stone's throw from the hospital, which is of pine construction. The hospital board has been trying to obtain the Government's consent to plans to rebuild the hospital.

Correspondence has passed between the board and the Health Department, but I think it is six months since anything has been done. It was only a couple of days ago when the morgue was rebuilt. I found three native women cooking in the kitchen for the patients. The kitchen was a kind of lean-to, and consisted of three sheets of iron. It had no protection. It is an absolute disgrace to the authorities responsible to allow sick people to be cared for in such a building. I hope the Government will expedite the plans and have the building reconstructed as early as possible. People in our outback districts have enough trouble without having to contend with such conditions when they are sick.

When dealing with the mining industry I forgot to mention our prospectors, the men who blaze the trail for those who eventually come and secure the big rich mines. Our prospectors as a class are almost extinct and those who remain are unable to procure tyres for their vehicles. Some of them have vehicles 29 years old and consequently modern tyres cannot be used on them. According to the Liquid Fuel Control Board, prospectors have a No. 5 priority, but it is not high enough when it comes to procuring tyres. I have received letters from prospectors on no fewer than four occasions. They are old men and live at Leonora and Kalgoorlie. One is a turned-down miner who is trying to earn a little extra to supplement his small pension. These prospectors informed me that they had been unable to procure permits to buy tyres. It is regrettable that these men in their old age

should be refused tyres for a Ford T truck or an old vehicle that will only take them out into the bush 10 or 12 miles. They use about a 23-inch tyre, whereas 16-inch tyres are required for the later modern vehicles. I am sorry that the powers-that-be have refused permission to these men to obtain tyres to carry on their work.

That brings me to the subject of Commonwealth departments which in some instances are manned by upstarts; and I feel that the quicker some of the Commonwealth regulations are lifted in respect of things required by civilians, the better it will be for the Commonwealth Government, the State Government and the people generally. While I feel that in some instances the regulations have achieved good results, in other cases the result has been to retard progress. A person attending at some of the Commonwealth Government offices today must hand in a note stating his business before he can interview the official concerned. That remark does not apply to our State Government officials, nor to all of the Commonwealth Government departments.

Hon. C. B. Williams: It does not apply to the Pensions Department.

Hon. W. R. HALL: That is so. I wish to bring one or two other subjects to the notice of members. One is the matter of payments under the Mine Workers' Relief Fund. Members have heard before, at least those members representing mining constituencies, about this matter. I would be lacking in my duty if I did not bring up the position of the turned-down miners and their families on the Goldfields. I am of the opinion that the turned-down miners and their families should get an increase in their weekly payments from the fund, so as to bring the payments at least up to the basic wage for the district in which they reside.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Hear, hear!

Hon. W. R. HALL: Under the Mine Workers' Relief Act, beneficiaries under the fund are compelled to apply for the old-age or invalid pension, as the case may be, and the relief fund supplements the pension, which is 27s. per week for a single man, or double that sum in the case of a married man.

Hon. C. B. Williams: If both are eligible.

Hon. W. R. HALL: Yes. The various Commonwealth Governments—not merely the present one—have been approached with a view to exempting from the means test applying to old-age and invalid pensioners the payments made by the relief fund to beneficiaries. I regret that no success has been achieved as a result, and so we find these unfortunate people in the same position today as they were at the inception of the fund. The board established under the Act consists of five members, two being representatives of the employers and two representatives of the employees, together with a chairman, who is the resident magistrate and is nominated by the Government. I maintain that the Government could, if it so desired, at least instruct its representative to vote for increased payments to the men, women and children coming under the fund. I am sure the representatives of the workers would do likewise. I sincerely hope the Government will give this suggestion its serious consideration. As I have mentioned before in this Chamber, the days of the men under this fund are numbered; and it is the duty of all concerned to make their remaining days as happy as possible. They should not have to struggle along on a measly pension, with no opportunity to derive some pleasure out of life. If their pensions were increased their lot would undoubtedly be happier.

Much has been said in this House about education. As I have already stated this evening, a matter which vitally affects my constituency is the insanitary condition of the schools. Recently, two schools in Kalgoorlie, particularly one, were in a disgraceful state so far as sanitation was concerned. People today in Western Australia are forming themselves into associations called parents and citizens' associations and they are doing an excellent job.

Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. W. R. HALL: They are bringing pressure to bear upon the Government to get for their children the education which they are entitled to. The parents and citizens' association at Kalgoorlie sent an ultimatum refusing to allow the children to attend school because of the insanitary conditions prevailing there. I am a member of the local authority and had a health inspector sent to the school. He made an inspection and condemned the place under the

Health Act. As a result, pressure was brought to bear in certain quarters, and, although it took many weeks, the out-houses were finally put in a proper condition for use by the schoolchildren. They had got into such a condition as to be unfit for use even by sheep. We are stepping out on the wrong foot when we try to bring up our children in unhealthy surroundings. We should give our children a right start in life, particularly as far as health matters are concerned. I hope the Government will take steps to ensure that all these places are put in proper order.

Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. W. R. HALL: I understand that the sanitary conveniences at Government buildings generally are in a parlous condition. A septic system ought to be installed at all schools.

Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. W. R. HALL: We cannot have the sewerage tank system at all Kalgoorlie schools, because they are too scattered. We have a sewerage system in the municipality, but I consider that septic tanks ought to be installed wherever possible in those places to which the sewerage system does not extend. There is nothing further I wish to add, except to say that I have very much pleasure in supporting the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.14 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 23rd August, 1945.

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