

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, PRECEDENCE.

On motion by the Minister for Education, ordered—

That on Tuesdays and Thursdays, Government business shall take precedence of all motions and Orders of the Day.

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

On motion by the Minister for Education, Sessional Committees were appointed as follows:—

Library.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Nimmo and Hon. J. T. Tonkin.

Standing Orders.—Mr. Speaker, the Chairman of Committees, Mr. Nalder, Hon. J. B. Sleeman and Mr. Rodoreda.

House.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Cornell, Mr. Yates, Mr. Graham and Mr. Styants.

Printing.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Hutchinson and Hon. E. Nulsen.

House adjourned at 8.20 p.m.

Legislative Council

Wednesday, 8th August, 1951.

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

QUESTIONS.

HOUSING.

As to Small-Unit Homes Erected.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) How many small-unit houses have been erected since 1947?

(2) In what districts, and the number in each district?

(3) In respect to Fremantle, how many of such houses have been made available to State Electricity Commission employees?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Two hundred and twenty-seven.

(2) Bassendean, 2; Bayswater, 2; Belmont, 60; Carlisle, 2; Claremont, 24; Fremantle, 10; Manning Park, 43; Midland Junction, 9; South Perth, 75; total, 227.

(3) Three.

ROADS.

As to Great Eastern-highway.

Hon. W. R. HALL asked the Minister for Transport:

Is the Minister aware—

(1) That several times during the last three months the road between Souther Cross and Woolgangie on the Great Eastern-highway has in places been impassable to vehicular traffic?

(2) That at various periods several cars and trucks using this highway have been bogged, causing considerable expense and inconvenience to the owners of motor vehicles?

(3) That repeated requests have been made to the Main Roads Department to keep the road graded where it is in a bad state of repair?

(4) Will the Minister endeavour to have the section of the road referred to continually graded until such time as it is bituminised?

(5) Can the Minister supply any information as to when the bituminising of this section of the Great Eastern-highway will be completed?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) There have been no reports of impassability.

(2) Overloaded vehicles have damaged lightly-constructed sections in wet weather.

(3) Yes.

(4) Yes.

(5) Summer of 1953-54, if bitumen is available. It is expected that there will be a black road—that is, either a surfaced or primed road—throughout towards the end of 1952.

The total length still to be surfaced is 72 miles, and this will involve 900 tons of bitumen.

It is hoped to do about 35 miles of surfacing this coming summer, but only 10 miles of bitumen for this is on hand.

Tenders have been let for 6,000 tons of bitumen but tenderers have stated that owing to shipping troubles and shortage of steel for containers, neither quantity nor date of delivery can be guaranteed.

AUSTRALIAN POUND REVALUATION.

As to Estimated Return to Wheatgrowers.

Hon. A. L. LOTON asked the Minister for Agriculture:

If the Australian pound were brought to parity with sterling, what would be the estimated return per bushel to wheat-growers in Western Australia, for the season 1950-51, having regard to the latest cost of production figures?

The MINISTER replied:

About 8s. 4½d. per bushel at growers' siding.

PENSIONERS.

As to Hardships through Basic Wage Increases.

Hon. G. BENNETTS asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) Will he bring under the notice of the Premier the hardships being experienced by old-age and other pensioners living in the Goldfields districts because of the ever increasing cost of living?

(2) Is he aware that there have been many rises in the basic wage, without any increase to pensioners?

(3) Does he know that Goldfields pensioners are on the same rate of pension as those pensioners living in the metropolitan area, while the Goldfields basic rate and cost of living are much higher?

(4) With a view to bringing about an improvement in these conditions, will the Minister request the Premier to place these matters before the Prime Minister at the next Premiers' Conference?

The MINISTER replied:

(1), (2), (3) and (4) Pensions throughout Australia are fixed on a flat rate. Any alteration is a matter for the Commonwealth Government.

NATIVE AFFAIRS.

As to Incidents at Cosmo Newbery Mission Station.

Hon. W. R. HALL asked the Minister for Transport:

Will the Minister lay on the Table of the House all files relating to a series of incidents which occurred at Cosmo Newbery mission station in connection with alleged assaults between natives and the Acting Superintendent (T. P. Griffin) during April, 1951, which culminated in Police Court proceedings at Laverton and Kalgoorlie?

The MINISTER replied:

The only objection to the file being laid on the Table of the House is that it may be required at any time. It is suggested that the hon. member examine it at my office where it will be available.

SUPERPHOSPHATE.

As to Authority for Requiring Statutory Declaration.

Hon. A. L. LOTON asked the Minister for Agriculture:

Will he advise under what Act of Parliament the Acting Director of Agriculture has issued documents to users of superphosphate asking that a statutory declaration be completed?

The MINISTER replied:

The information is sought without any Act of Parliament.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 1), £9,000,000.

Standing Orders Suspension.

On motion by the Minister for Transport, resolved:

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable a Supply Bill to pass through all stages at any one sitting.

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

On motion by the Minister for Transport, Sessional Committees were appointed as follows:—

Standing Orders.—The President, Hon. H. S. W. Parker, Hon. A. L. Loton and Hon. G. Fraser.

Library.—The President, Hon. J. G. Hislop and Hon. L. A. Logan.

House.—The President, Hon. J. A. Dimmitt, Hon. Sir Charles Latham, Hon. W. R. Hall and Hon. H. Hearn.

Printing.—The President, Hon. E. H. Gray and Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham.

MOTION—CONDOLENCE.

Late Mr. L. L. Leake.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT
(Hon. C. H. Simpson—Midland) [4.45]:
I move—

That this House place on record its sincere appreciation of the services rendered to Parliament by the late Lancelot Luke Leake who, at the time of his passing, occupied the positions of Clerk of the Legislative Council and Clerk of Parliaments, and express its deep sympathy with his widow and the members of his family in the irreparable loss they have sustained by his decease; and that the President be asked to convey the foregoing to his widow and family.

The late Mr. Leake died on the 16th April after a protracted illness. He passed away at a comparatively early age and his death was a severe blow to Parliament. He was a capable, conscientious officer and a friend and adviser to all members. His father was Hon. George Leake, K.C., C.M.G., who was Premier and

Attorney General of Western Australia from May, 1901 until his death in June, 1902. His grandfather was George Walpole Leake, who was one of the nominated members of the first Legislative Council under responsible Government from the 24th December, 1890 until the Council became elective in 1893. His great-uncle, Sir Luke Leake, was Speaker of the Legislative Council from 1870 to 1886.

The late Mr. Leake was born at Perth on the 11th May, 1890. He was educated at Perth High School, later known as Hale School. From 1913 to 1915 he was Associate to the late Mr. Justice Burnside. He served in World War I from 1915 to the cessation of hostilities. Subsequently he joined the Commonwealth Public Service. He was appointed Clerk Assistant of the Legislative Council and Usher of the Black Rod in 1932, and Clerk of the Council and Clerk of Parliaments in 1937.

I think it may be claimed that a precedent has been created in the moving of a motion of condolence to the relatives of one who was not actually a member of the Legislature, but who nevertheless fulfilled the duties of his office in a very efficient manner. Although not himself a parliamentarian, the late Mr. Leake had political associations of great significance as far as this House and this State are concerned. His father was a Premier of the State and his grandfather and great-uncle were prominent in Legislative Council affairs. He himself was a great friend and a ready adviser, and he was a man who was very fully informed with regard to the forms and procedure of the House. Many of us have cause to remember with gratitude the advice which he was able to give us on many occasions. We always found his advice reliable and he never failed us.

HON. J. A. DIMMITT (Suburban) [4.49]: Although the passing of our Clerk, Lancelot Luke Leake was not entirely unexpected, as we witnessed the steady deterioration of his health for some months during the previous session, at the same time we were deeply shocked when we heard of his death. All of us will miss Mr. Leake, but particularly will the Chairman of Committees and the Deputy Chairmen miss the ready help that he always gave them at the Table. He had a quaint and whimsical sense of humour, but at all times he had a jealous regard for the dignity of this House, the maintaining of its traditions and the safeguarding of its landmarks. Today we look back with a degree of gladness in that we were able to enjoy the benefit of his advice for so many years. At the same time we experience a deep sense of sadness when we realise that no longer will we be able to seek the advice and guidance which he gave so freely as the result of his wide

knowledge of parliamentary procedure and practice. In seconding the motion, I hope that his widow, his two daughters and his son will gain some comfort from the knowledge that Bill Leake—as he was known to all who knew him—was so well regarded by members of this Legislative Council, both past and present.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [4.51]: In supporting the motion, I commend the Minister for Transport for having moved it and having thus shown his sense of justice and sympathy. The late Mr. Leake was at all times accessible to every member of this Chamber. He was of great help to me, both as a Minister and as a private member, and one could always rely safely on Luke Leake to give unbiassed advice, as he was above party politics. We all miss him very much both as an officer of this House and as Clerk of Parliaments. His death must have come as a great blow to his wife and family, and I hope that the passing of this motion may be of some small comfort to them.

HON. R. M. FORREST (North) [4.52]: I wish to associate myself with the motion, as I knew the late Mr. Leake for as long as or perhaps longer than most other members of this Chamber. In 1900 and 1901, Mr. Leake and I attended the Perth High School which is now known as Hale School. The Minister for Agriculture, Hon. G. B. Wood, was also there. Mr. Leake and I were great friends during the 18 months that I attended school with him, and remained friends until the time of his death. I join with other members in supporting the motion.

THE PRESIDENT [4.53]: I wish to associate myself with the remarks of previous speakers. Mr. Leake was well known to all of us and, as has been said, his advice and help were always available to every member. I will convey to his widow and family the sympathy that this House feels towards them.

Question put and passed; members standing.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Second Day.

Debate resumed from the 2nd August.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [4.54]: I have been a member of this House for 29 years, but cannot recall that ever before did we have such a disastrous loss of members in a short time as has occurred since last session. We have dealt, in motions of condolence, with the passing of our late Governor, Sir James Mitchell, the late Hon. Hobart Tuckey and the late Hon. W. J. Mann, and it is my wish now to refer to the loss sustained by Parliament in another place through the passing of Mr. Tom Fox, member for South

Fremantle and Mr. Harry Shearn, Independent member for Maylands. Both those gentlemen were very highly regarded. I knew Mr. Harry Shearn well and was acquainted with the work he did and the great interest he took in local government affairs. The people of Maylands will miss him deeply and his death was a loss to the whole State, as well as to his bereaved wife and family.

Mr. Tom Fox was a servant of the people. For many years he was an energetic secretary of the Waterside Workers' Union. He did splendid work while in that position and, on being elected to Parliament, he remained a true servant of the people. He would never agree that a constituent was in the wrong and he had some amazing successes in the many cases he handled on behalf of constituents. Though a layman, he was one of the best authorities on workers' compensation that I have ever met, and I believe he knew more about that legislation than do many solicitors. He always overworked himself, and his death will be felt keenly by many hundreds of workers in the South Fremantle and Fremantle districts. It is unusual for Parliament to suffer such disastrous losses as it has recently sustained through the death of four members, our late Governor and the Clerk of Parliaments, in such a short time.

I wish now to extend a cordial welcome to the new members in this Chamber. I knew Mr. Henning before his election to this House and am sure that, as a farmer and as a public representative and social worker in his district, he will be of great assistance to the people he represents. I feel that he will be of assistance to this House also, and I desire to congratulate him on his maiden speech in this Chamber. A member's first speech in Parliament is always a great ordeal, but Mr. Henning made a success of it. This House needs capable representatives of the farming community and I am sure Mr. Henning will be outstanding in that regard. He comes from a prosperous district, and it is my hope that he will represent it for many years with the same degree of success as was achieved by his predecessor. Mr. Murray does not come here as a new-chum, but as one experienced in parliamentary procedure; and, having served his apprenticeship in another place, he may be able to teach us something in this Chamber. I know he will represent his province capably, and I trust he will have good health and success in his work in this House.

We are living in a very difficult and dangerous period. Never before in our history have the Commonwealth and State Governments been faced with such tremendous problems. I will not take the usual course of criticising the Government and making all sorts of complaints. The outlook is now so grave that we must be absolutely fair in any attack we make on the administration. We must do

everything we can to further progress in solving the difficulties of our country, and I shall therefore keep my remarks on as high a level as possible. The reintroduction of compulsory military training will place a big strain on both primary and secondary industry through the loss of the large number of young men who are going into camp, but everyone must realise the absolute necessity of such a procedure. Those who knew me many years ago would be greatly surprised if they could hear me now, because over the years I have always been resolutely opposed to compulsory military training.

When I was young, I thought world peace could be best achieved not by an increase of armaments and preparations for defence, but by mutual understanding between the nations of the earth. I suppose that there were thousands of people who had the same opinion as I, and I state openly that I have never thought Soviet Russia would turn out to be such a menace to the world as it is today. Its attitude is contrary to my expectations, learning and experience as an individual who has tried to do as much as possible to assist in public affairs. I repeat that I never imagined that the U.S.S.R. would be such a menace to peace on earth as it is. We cannot ignore the advice of experts and members of all parties of the Commonwealth and European nations who are our allies and are forced to train our young men in the defence of our country.

I am most concerned about the number of apprentices that are being taken from industry. I was greatly amazed at a statement which appeared the other day in "The West Australian" by a prominent member of the Architects' Board, who criticised the workmanship of men in the building industry today. Every member of Parliament, particularly those representing metropolitan provinces who have to face up to the numerous claims from people seeking houses, will agree with what I am about to say. In my opinion, the workmanship of carpenters, bricklayers and other tradesmen in the building industry is better than ever before in the history of the State.

I take particular interest in this subject, and I consider that the sweeping statement which this architect so unwisely made is a reflection not only on the workmen concerned but also on our technical education system. I therefore deplore that statement, and I was very pleased to see the reply by Mr. James in today's issue of "The West Australian." It was a very fine reply, and he is to be commended for it. One cannot achieve any good by trying to cry down the work of the tradesmen or anybody connected with the building industry. What one must do is to try to encourage them to work more rapidly and endeavour to solve the difficulties we are experiencing. I will deal further with that subject later.

I think it can be said that our greatest problem today is the way inflation is spiralling, and something must be done quickly to stem it. Everybody seems to be greatly concerned about it, but the job must be done by the State and Commonwealth Governments. Last session, in another place, Hon. A. R. G. Hawke, who is now the Leader of the Opposition, propounded an extremely strong case for stemming the rise of inflation by pegging prices. I read every word of his speech, and he made out a very good case. Unfortunately, his advice was ignored and today inflation is far worse than it was then. The New South Wales Government has now decided to peg prices.

Hon. L. Craig: And wages?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: No, prices. If prices were pegged, wages would be pegged automatically.

Hon. L. Craig: Not on your life!

Hon. E. H. GRAY: They would be; because if prices were pegged, there would be no alteration in the basic wage.

Hon. L. Craig: What about imported goods?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Every person is trying to get what he can out of everyone else, but the Arbitration Court judges would be able to deal with the position more effectively than they are doing today if prices were pegged. We must do something to stop this "dog chasing tail" business.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Do you think it will increase production?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I think the pegging of prices is the answer, and the New South Wales Government has decided to do it. I earnestly hope that the State and Commonwealth authorities will get together and that the Minister for Transport in his reply will give the House definite information as to what the Government proposes to do to cope with the present dangerous position. I repeat that one way to do it is to peg prices for a start. Inflation and the grave housing shortage are two major problems confronting the State. Every member of this House recalls vividly the debate on the Increase of Rent (War Restrictions) Act Amendment Bill last year and no one visualised that the Bill which was finally agreed to at a conference of members from both Houses would create such serious difficulties as those which are now being experienced by a great number of people.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Where are the serious difficulties?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: If the hon. member will attend the court and listen to the cases that are being heard before it, he will soon realise where the difficulties are.

Hon. E. M. Davies: If he will come down to Fremantle, I will show him a few.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: No one expected the outburst that arose following the passing of the legislation. I think all of us now see the wisdom of making some alteration to the Act; and whatever the Government decides to do, we should support the amending Bill when it comes forward.

Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: The 72 people who were turned out must be very happy with the prospect of entering their own homes.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I wish that statement were correct, but it is not. Even the Deputy Premier, Hon. A. F. Watts, made a statement in the Press strongly criticising some of the landlords who were applying to the court to have their tenants evicted. I ask the hon. member to read his own leader's statement criticising the selfishness of their people. I know the problems associated with the present housing shortage. Any man who tries, through a weakness in legislation, to regain his property at the expense of men, women and children when he does not require it for his own use but merely wishes to sell it at a high price, ought to be ashamed of himself and be put in gaol.

Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: He will be, if he is caught; I trust so.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: If the hon. member should live in the metropolitan area.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Are there any of those people out in the street without a roof over their heads?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: If the hon. member desires to see the conditions under which some people are living, let him go to Coogee Beach.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: They were there before.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: They were there because they had to be there.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Quite a number of poor people living in tents outside the town of Northam, but they are quite happy there.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Those poor people have an up-to-date kitchen and plenty of amenities, and are well fed by the Commonwealth Government.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: They are working for it.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: They are well fed, well looked after and enjoy all kinds of conveniences. It is incumbent upon the Minister to make a statement, because the amending Bill passed last session has been condemned and strongly criticised by judges of the Supreme Court and by magistrates. In all my parliamentary experience I have never seen any other legislation that has been so strongly criticised. It is indeed unusual for judges

and magistrates to adopt the attitude they have regarding the Increase of Rent (War Restrictions) legislation.

The Minister for Agriculture: Do you approve of their criticising Parliament?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: No, it is terrible when such a thing happens; there is something wrong somewhere.

The Minister for Agriculture: They say that Parliament was wrong.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: It looks as if Parliament was wrong.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Do you believe in majority decision?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Yes.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Then they are wrong.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: If one makes a decision, which is later found to be incorrect, then the obvious duty is, as in this case, to amend the Act and give the people justice. There is no doubt that things are happening which one could never have conceived could happen, and there is a great deal of injustice being done. The people who are most affected are, firstly, those sharing accommodation; secondly, tenants of homes; and, lastly, tenants of shops. The difficulties confronting shop tenants were debated in this Chamber and emphasised strongly last session by many members. Some shocking things have happened since the passing of that Bill. I would never have thought it possible for Australians to take advantage of weak legislation to deprive shopkeepers of their businesses, worth £2,000 or £3,000, but for which they obtained nothing.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: It was all right up to 1939.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Those instances have occurred in Perth since this legislation has become operative.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Can you quote some of them?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: If the hon. member thoroughly perused "The West Australian," he could read about them. It is a shocking thing to happen to the tenant of a shop. The occupier of a shop who endeavoured to obtain a lease but was refused one is the man who has been greatly affected; but, on the other hand, if he were offered a lease and refused it, he would have only himself to blame. It is a breach of business ethics to allow a tenant to occupy a shop for a number of years and build up a good business, and then for the landlord to come along at a convenient moment and deprive him of his livelihood. That was never intended under the legislation. We must do something to try to remedy the evil that was done by both Houses of Parliament last session.

I am not accepting any blame for it, because we tried to improve the measure. I fully appreciate the difficulties associated with this matter and I am satisfied that the State will have to face up to the position. I believe that a large number of people possessed of a fair amount of money are paying their passages from European countries to Australia. Their standard of living is not as high as ours, and their etiquette and sense of justice are not so high, and consequently they indulge in all sorts of nefarious practices and buy properties at tremendous prices. Properties at Fremantle—and I suppose this also applies to Perth—are being sold at four or five times their values, with the result that people who have been renting those properties for years have had to move out.

It seems to me that the scheme of migration as being carried out by the Commonwealth Government stands in need of some variation. In my opinion, too many of the people who are coming to Australia live in the cities. I have been greatly disappointed that the Commonwealth has not taken advantage of the opportunity offered by Holland, where there are hundreds of thousands of people desirous of coming here, and yet there does not seem to be so large a proportion of migrants coming from that country as from other parts of Europe. Primary producers and other people who have been accustomed to working on the land in Holland would constitute the best type of migrants we could have, next to Britishers. The Dutch people have had the best standard of living of any country in the world, including America, and their general conduct, ability and citizenship are well on a par with those qualities in our people. Consequently, every Dutch family brought here would be a great asset to the country.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Not if they stayed in the cities.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: If they would not go into the country, I would not have them here.

Hon. G. Bennetts: If more amenities were provided in the bush, they would go there.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I agree with the hon. member. I fear that Hollanders have been neglected to a certain extent, and that it would be beneficial to Australia if more of them came here. It would be preferable to have such people coming here, even if they did not have any money, because those who are not prepared to work are of little use to us.

Hon. A. R. Jones: A lot of them here will not work.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Then that is a bad advertisement for the officers charged with the responsibility of selecting the migrants.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: But you could not cut them out as you could do with horses.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I am satisfied that mistakes are being made in the selection of migrants to come here.

Hon. G. Fraser: Some members should go down to the Fremantle wharf and see them when they land.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: If we continue to allow numbers of the same type to come here as are arriving at present, it will be a mistake. The State should contact the Commonwealth authorities with a view to securing an improvement in this direction.

Increased migration is necessarily affecting the housing position considerably, and we shall probably suffer more in 10 or 15 years' time than we are at present as a result of a steady deterioration in our young people. Hundreds of families in the metropolitan area are living in rooms, and it is utterly impossible for them to live decently under such conditions. Although I appreciate the need for peopling Australia, I fear that we are building up a huge problem for the future and that the young people of today will deteriorate not only in physique but also in moral characteristics. We need to move more rapidly towards finding a solution of the present unfortunate position.

Housing is linked closely with the migration problem, as I have indicated. I am aware of the difficulties confronting the State and Commonwealth authorities. Recently I read a statement in the Press that proportionately more people are being brought to Australia than the United States of America received even at the peak of its migration policy. That peak occurred about 55 years ago.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: But the United States drained a lot of population from Canada.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: And a very large number went from Ireland and Italy.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I am referring to people who had previously migrated to Canada.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: If that statement is correct, it is a clear argument in favour of the Commonwealth authorities calling a halt to the present migration scheme and adopting a better system. While saying this, I appreciate to the full the necessity for doing everything possible to increase the population of the Commonwealth. At the same time, we should not overdo it and cause irreparable damage to our own citizens, as is happening today.

Last year we were hopeful that the housing position would improve, but I say definitely that it is far worse today than it was 12 months ago. The Housing Commission seems to be faced with a hopeless proposition in its endeavours to meet the requirements of the increasing

army of applicants for decent housing facilities. I do not intend to criticise the Commission, because I appreciate the extent of the problem and because I realise that it is faced with an unprecedentedly difficult task. I hope that the State and Commonwealth authorities will quickly reach some agreement on the steps to be taken to combat inflation. If they get together, I am satisfied that a solution will be found, but it is imperative that action should be taken quickly.

I wish to speak now of a very gratifying matter that I mentioned last session: I refer to the successful launching of the free milk scheme for school children. I am certain that this scheme will prove to be a great success. It has taken the sponsors of the movement 25 to 28 years to achieve this success. A small body of citizens in Perth and Fremantle decided to urge the adoption of the scheme, and it must be a matter for congratulation to those early pioneers to find that it has now been launched. Although several people with whom I have discussed the matter considered it unnecessary, seeing that people generally are now prosperous and could provide the milk for their own children, I am satisfied that its adoption, together with the provision of other amenities, will save the State hundreds of thousands of pounds in hospitalisation later on. Such amenities will be the means of producing a bigger, better and healthier race, and the Commonwealth and State authorities should be heartily commended upon its introduction. The scheme will undoubtedly impose a big strain on the staff of the Education Department owing to the shortage of teachers, but the scheme could not possibly be successful were it not for the co-operation of the teaching staff and of the parents and citizens' associations.

The Minister for Agriculture: What about the Milk Board and the producers?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The Minister is referring to a different angle.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is the principal angle, particularly the production side.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Will the Minister allow me to finish?

The Minister for Agriculture: I thought that should come first.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: We ought to give credit to the people who have to do the actual work. Without their co-operation, the scheme would be a failure. The head mistress of the Mt. Hawthorn school, Miss Harbeck, was the first teacher in the metropolitan area to start this movement and should be commended. I think she might well have been put in charge of the whole business as she is a first-class organiser and would be ideal for the job. It will not be sufficient to stop at the distribution of free milk. That, as I have pointed out, will be a good investment

for the people; but it must be followed by the adoption of other measures in order to obtain the most beneficial results for the children.

As I mentioned last session, it is absolutely necessary to encourage the parents and citizens' associations, wherever they are in existence, and to endeavour to get associations organised in centres where they are not operating today, in order that the requisite amenities and accommodation may be provided at the schools, particularly at the larger schools, so that the children may be served with a midday meal. I mentioned last year the great success of this scheme in Great Britain. I am not advocating that the local scheme should be exactly the same, but I am certain that it could be made a practical proposition if the education authorities and the Government took greater interest in the parents and citizens' associations and arranged for their members to do the work. A well-balanced meal should be provided each day, summer and winter, with a lighter meal, of course, in the summer. This arrangement would benefit the schoolchildren immensely.

The cost of such a meal would be much less than what it costs parents to supply their youngsters with cribs each day. The waste under any system where children take a lunch to school is terrific, and we cannot afford that waste these days. Consequently, the present method imposes a tremendous strain upon the mothers, particularly those with large families. They have to do the work, and there is the waste of food, which would be eliminated if the parents of the children attending these schools were rostered to do the work each day. As far as I can understand there has been no difficulty where parents and citizens' associations are functioning, in getting mothers and other members of the families to do the necessary work. They have been doing this for years at the Mt. Hawthorn school, and at some other schools and have achieved great success.

I sincerely hope it will not take as long to bring the meal scheme into operation as it did to bring the milk scheme into being. The milk scheme plus the midday meal arrangement would be a splendid investment for the Government of Western Australia, for the children and for the parents of this State. It would be a profitable investment because it would save hundreds of thousands of pounds in hospital costs later on. Therefore, I suggest to the Minister for Transport that he take the matter up with the Government and do everything else possible. The provision of accommodation is a big problem, but much could be done to implement this scheme despite the acute material shortage. The position that has arisen with the butter producers is scandalous. They are making a mistake in their present attitude of taking direct action. I thought they had more brains than to do that.

The Minister for Agriculture: I thought you would approve of it.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: That will bring no result. It is only attempted blackmail. I do not think any ordinary citizen of this State would oppose a fair price to the producers of milk and butter. It is lamentable that the State Ministers and the Commonwealth Government have failed to reach agreement. I can understand the State Ministers not agreeing with the Federal authorities. I think the solution of the problem lies in the granting of a subsidy. It is ridiculous to increase the cost of living by making a direct extra charge on the people. If we study the English position, we find that a tremendous subsidy must be paid on bread in England. The payment of a subsidy to dairy farmers is the only way to render real assistance both to them and to the people who have to pay. I realise that the Commonwealth Government pays over £16,000,000 a year in subsidies.

The Minister for Agriculture: Nearly £17,000,000.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: That is a tremendous sum, but the people pay it through taxes, and it is better to pay in that way than to increase the price of food and so affect the basic wage declared by the Arbitration Court. Therefore, I think a subsidy should be insisted upon by the States. I have discussed this matter with many people, and I express the view that the dairy farmers have the support of all Western Australians. It is not necessary for the primary producers to take direct action. It is a bad example to our people.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: You could not set them a much worse example than they already have.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The primary producers are always telling us not to take direct action. Against whom are they taking this step? Against the people who sympathise with them and who are willing to pay the price, either through taxes or wages. The dairy farmers are entitled to a fair price, and should have got it long ago. I believe a promise has been made that it will be retrospective. I cannot understand—Mr. Henning might be able to explain this—why the dairy farmers are going on strike.

Hon. A. R. Jones: What is the Labour Government in New South Wales doing?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: That is my opinion. The members of the public of Western Australia are well behind the dairy farmers and are prepared to pay. They would rather pay than be without butter. We cannot do without butter. The State should press for an increased subsidy. The answer to that will be that the last Labour Prime Minister, the late Mr. Chifley, opposed increased subsidies, and therefore Mr. Menzies will take the same course. I think that attitude is wrong, and I firmly believe that the effective

thing to do is to increase the subsidy and pay the dairy farmers a fair and just price for the essential food commodity they are producing.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Do you not think it would be necessary to increase taxation to do that?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: That is quite likely, but it is all right. It is the best way to do it. Someone has to pay for it. It will be a terrible calamity if inefficient State and Commonwealth Governments result in dairy farmers leaving the industry. That would be one of the biggest blows we could have to the welfare of Western Australia.

The Minister for Agriculture: Who do you blame for that?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The State and Commonwealth Governments; the Ministers.

The Minister for Agriculture: How?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Why cannot they get together and come to some agreement, and pay?

The Minister for Agriculture: We are going to do that.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I see by tonight's paper that the Premier has made a move. I hope the other Premiers will do the same thing. This unfortunate business, which threatens financial loss to Western Australia and the Commonwealth, should be quickly rectified by the Governments.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: Only New South Wales is refusing.

The Minister for Agriculture: Read the "Daily News" tonight.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I have done so. I hope that as a result of the Premier's action something will be done quickly. I trust, as Mr. Henning is going home this week end, he will persuade the farmers to take a sensible view. They will make a big mistake if they carry on with what they have suggested.

Hon. C. H. Henning: They have to take a vote throughout Australia.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I have seen that they are going to take a poll. I hope the result will be against the present proposal. It is a big mistake to tackle the thing in that way.

Hon. A. R. Jones: They will not go on strike.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: I take it that you are also opposed to unions striking.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Yes, I am. We have our legislation to provide justice to the working man. There are occasions when everyone makes mistakes, and the workers take direct action. But that is not the policy of the Labour movement. We want to see everything done by way of talks around the table, or through the Arbitration Court, and I want the farmers to take the same attitude. I can quite understand their righteous indignation, and

their desire to kick; but seeing that the Government, or the Minister for Agriculture, Hon. G. B. Wood, has agreed to retrospective payment, I think they could adopt some other attitude, because they are not so hard up that they cannot do without the cheque for a little longer.

The Minister for Agriculture: It is to be retrospective to the 1st July.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Yes. I want to speak for a minute or two about the requirements of the Fremantle district. I would like the Minister to give some definite information as to what has been done in regard to the Fremantle hospital site—that is, the site for the new Fremantle hospital. I commend the authorities for the renovations carried out at the hospital. A good job has been done, and first-class workmanship has been put into the renovations. Everyone, however, is on tiptoe wanting definite news as to whether the present hospital will be enlarged and a new building erected in the vicinity, or whether a new hospital altogether will be built somewhere else in the Fremantle district. It is essential, on a question of this character, that the people should be kept up to date on what is taking place, because sometimes town planning and hospital authorities make mistakes.

The people of Fremantle, and their representatives, want to know from the Government where the site is to be, so that if a mistake is being made they can make representations to rectify it. No one can disagree with the statement that the hospital is not large enough to deal with the present amount of sickness due to the increased housing and shipping at Fremantle. The Fremantle hospital is the one in Western Australia which caters for those who are sick among the crews and passengers of ships. It was realised long ago that the existing accommodation was far from sufficient to cope with the shipping requirements. Therefore, in fairness to the hospital board, the medical superintendent, the private medical practitioners in Fremantle and everyone else connected with the hospital, it is essential that a commencement be made as quickly as possible in deciding on a site for a new hospital. This matter was mentioned by the Fremantle representatives—the West Province members—last session, but we have received no information on the subject yet. I stress the fact that the matter is very important, and I hope that the Minister will be able to give us some information when he is replying to the debate.

I would like to know whether there is any news in regard to the opening of the new maternity hospital in East Fremantle. I understand that some time ago the Government acquired a property from the committee dealing with maimed

children. I would like to know how long it will be before that building will be ready to take maternity cases. I would not be fulfilling my obligations if I did not refer briefly to the present wheat and bread position.

The Minister for Agriculture: I thought you had forgotten all about wheat this time.

Hon. A. R. Jones: The bread is sour at any rate.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I wish to pay a tribute to the effective work carried on by Dr. Sutton since last session. He is doing a wonderful service to the bakers, the millers and the people of Western Australia. He is trying to do some organised work in this connection and he deserves every success. The officers of our Agricultural Department, too, particularly in the wheat section, are to be commended upon the splendid work they have done.

The Minister for Agriculture: You educated us to do it.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I am not claiming credit for that. I do not want to get any praise, but I do recognise the good work those officers are doing.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: All we want is a better loaf of bread.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: We cannot get a good loaf of bread until we get better flour and wheat. It has been accepted, without any qualification, that the varieties of wheat grown in Western Australia, chiefly by the Department of Agriculture, can produce the best flour available for making first-class bread. Therefore, I cannot understand why any farmer who knows his business is content to grow rubbish when it is possible to get the same acreage from first-class wheat which is being grown by the Agriculture Department.

The Minister for Agriculture: The same bushelage you mean.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Yes.

Hon. A. R. Jones: We are growing that sort of wheat today.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The hon. member is, but there are many farmers who are not. Dr. Sutton has been interviewing all the different organisations connected with this business, and next Wednesday he is getting together the operative bakers of the metropolitan area in order to address them on the question. Therefore, I think it only fair that he should be encouraged as much as possible, and that members of Parliament—particularly farmer members of Parliament—should do everything possible to dissuade farmers in the wheat areas from growing wheat that is useless for making good flour.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Do you think I could get an invitation to attend this meeting next Wednesday?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I think so. The hon. member should be a member of that union.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I know what the faults are today.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I think Dr. Sutton is to be commended for doing this work.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: He might be able to tell them what they ought to do.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: There is no doubt that the master bakers and the millers are to be commended for turning out bread which, under ordinary circumstances, would be impossible to produce; and the Research Institute of New South Wales—which has been set up by the New Zealand and Australian bakers—is doing a wonderful job. Every week samples of flour from Western Australia are sent to this research station, and advice comes direct from the station to the bakers telling them how to deal with this problem flour from which they have to make bread. I have no hesitation in saying that the quality of the bread baked in Perth is far better now than it was 12 months ago, despite the difficulties that have to be met with flour of comparatively low quality. However, I do stress the necessity for the Government, and particularly the Minister for Agriculture, to encourage the department in trying to get farmers to agree to the scheme put up by Dr. Sutton. Of course, the Australian Wheat Board will have to do the same thing. The proposition now is to segregate the special good quality wheats at the sidings. But I would go further; I would like to see something done in an endeavour to persuade farmers not to grow these unsuitable varieties of wheat.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is the answer.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Yes. Two or three years ago it was not possible to counter the argument put up by the farmers who said, "If we plant wheat of a certain variety and obtain a 30-bushel crop from that variety, can you expect us to grow your wheat, of stronger protein content, when we get only 18 or 20 bushels?" Of course, there was no answer to that. The farmers had to pay an increased price for this special wheat and little of it was grown. However, the position has altered now and wheat of a high protein content is being produced by the Department of Agriculture and is available all over the State, at a reasonable price. Therefore, it will be of advantage to farmers, to bakers and to millers, and of tremendous advantage in the export of wheat, if more farmers can be persuaded to grow wheat of a better quality. This will be particularly so when the present high prices start to reduce. We will have to meet the world's markets and the only way to do it is to produce wheat the quality of which can challenge that of grain grown

in any part of the world. I have mentioned this question on many occasions during previous sessions, and I think we are nearer success now than ever before. If the Minister put a bit more ginger into it I am sure he would be successful in persuading farmers to follow his advice. That would be of tremendous advantage to everybody in the community.

The Minister for Agriculture: I think you are a bit of an optimist if you think I can persuade farmers to do something that they do not want to do.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Superphosphate could be withheld from a man who produced bad wheat.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: That is a cure for the Minister.

The Minister for Agriculture: The hon. member knows that we have tried to do something.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: This is a serious question and its importance should be stressed. If it is possible to bake and deliver to the people of Western Australia—particularly those in the metropolitan area—high quality bread, it makes a tremendous difference to the temperament of those people. If a man has a breakfast, lunch and dinner consisting of bread of low quality, it makes him bad tempered.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: We must be very bad tempered up North, particularly with the cooks we have there.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: If a man is bad tempered, it has an effect upon his work and decreases production in industry, whereas good bread would have the effect of making a man more cheery and more contented and would enable him to work with his boss in doing everything possible to increase production.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: Do you always blame the wheat or the baker?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: A good baker can make fair bread with low quality flour, but it is not possible to make first-class bread with inferior flour from inferior wheat. If we could get wheat of a high protein content, it would improve the quality of bread tremendously and everybody would be better tempered and more satisfied. The master bakers, too, are concerned with the export trade, and I am hoping to see the day when we will be on better terms with the Asiatic people. One way of doing this is to sell them high quality products. In this country, it is possible to make fair bread with bad quality wheat; but in tropical countries it is impossible to make good bread with quality flour. Members can imagine the indignation and unrest among people who have to pay a high price for a low quality product. Therefore, it should be the aim of the Government to send away high quality wheat and high quality flour. But the millers cannot do that unless

wheat of a high protein content is produced. I apologise to members for taking up so much time on this subject, as I have done during the last three or four sessions, but I think it is worth while because it is an important point.

There is one other matter on which I wish to touch and which affects the fruitgrowers of Western Australia. This question also concerns the Minister for Agriculture. Many thousands of people have to struggle into the office of the Department of Agriculture to fill in a form and pay 1s. for the registration of each orchard they possess. What amazes me is that the Minister has not made a move to increase that registration fee. The registration of orchards was started many years ago in order to provide funds to combat the serious effects of fruit fly on the fruit industry. If I remember rightly, questions were asked at that time as to whether the sum stated would be sufficient to provide a team of inspectors in the metropolitan area to carry out effective work. The position is that there are not enough inspectors on the job, and if some of those who have retired could be brought back into the department—provided they are in good health—it would be of immense benefit. It is wrong that the fruitgrowers of Western Australia should be exposed to the menace of fruit fly while no effective action is taken in the metropolitan area.

I suppose the big majority of people in the metropolitan area have a small number of fruit trees in their backyards. They would all be prepared, I am sure, to pay a larger fee, up to about 2s. 6d. per annum, as long as they received service for that fee. Years ago we used to pay 1s. registration and received visits from the inspectors. We had a very capable inspector at Fremantle and he used to keep people up to the mark. Today the man who is alive to the danger of fruit fly and takes necessary action to eradicate it is handicapped by the fact that his next-door neighbour, or people in the vicinity, do not take the same precautions and there are insufficient inspectors to go round and check up. I think that where fruit fly is found, the inspectors should cut down the trees affected.

The Minister for Agriculture: I am surprised how little you know of the work I have done on fruit fly.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The Minister has not done anything in Fremantle.

The Minister for Agriculture: I have got £10,000 from the Government for this work.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I am trying to point out that some effective action in the metropolitan area is necessary, and I am not denying the Minister's statement. However, it is necessary to stamp out this evil in the metropolitan area as it is worse

ere than it has ever been before, because inspections, or very few, have been made. There is not the staff to do the job. I know that there has been no inspection at my place for years.

Hon. G. Fraser: Not since George Aberle left.

The Minister for Agriculture: We will see you get inspected tomorrow.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: As Mr. Fraser says, there has been no inspection since George Aberle left, and he was a baker too. That man was a competent inspector. People who followed his advice had no trouble with fruit fly. The fruit fly is a menace and the lack of control is not fair to fruit-growers. I therefore suggest to the Minister that he increase the fee from 1s. to 2s. 6d.

The Minister for Agriculture: It is not a question of the money. It is a matter of getting more inspectors.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Does not the Minister want the 2s. 6d.?

The Minister for Agriculture: We want more inspectors. The determining factor is not money.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: In that case I suggest that the Minister bring back some of the inspectors who have retired. It is not good enough for a man in one street to spray his trees and three others do nothing about it.

Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: It is not good enough to have three spraying their trees and one doing nothing about it.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: That is so. It has got to be done effectively.

The Minister for Agriculture: We will see you get more attention in the future.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: It is not the attention I want. What I do want is to see that the people who take an interest and pride in their fruit trees are protected, and that those who do not bother have their trees cut down. That would be a great safeguard to the fruit industry. I think it is a big mistake to allow the fruit fly to increase in the metropolitan area, as it must be a grave potential danger to those who have to grow fruit for a living. I support the motion.

On motion by Hon. J. McI. Thomson, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.2 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 8th August, 1951.

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

QUESTIONS.

FREMANTLE HARBOUR.

As to Navy Support of Up-river Extension.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN asked the Premier:

In view of the statement in Mr. Tyde-man's report on the Fremantle harbour, paragraph 184, lines 10 to 13, and paragraph 292, on what authority did he make the statement in "The West Australian" of the 26th July that the Navy did not agree with seaward extensions from the defence standpoint and favoured instead up-river extensions?

The PREMIER replied:

On the advice of Navy Headquarters, Melbourne, over the signature of A. R. Nankervis, Secretary, Department of the Navy.