

Mr. HEARMAN: It is not only the Merredin Road Board. In any case, I am only suggesting that if the Minister wishes to take "The West Australian" to task, and asks it for a retraction, then he should ask the same thing of his own Government regarding the promises that were made during the last election. In common decency and fairness, I think that should be done. I think it would be difficult for the Minister to squirm out of this matter and he would have a job in front of him to suggest that what is sauce for the goose is not sauce for the gander.

On motion by Mr. Hutchinson, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 9.12 p.m.*

## Legislative Council

Thursday, 8th April, 1954.

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The Legislative Council met at 4.30 p.m.

### ABSENCE OF PRESIDENT.

#### *Election of Deputy President.*

The CLERK: I have to announce that the President, Hon. Sir Harold Seddon, is unavoidably absent. It is, therefore, necessary for members to elect one of their number, now present, to fill the office, perform the duties, and exercise the authority of the President during such absence.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, resolved:

That Hon. W. R. Hall be elected to fill the office, perform the duties, and exercise the authority of the President during the absence of Sir Harold Seddon.

[*The Deputy President took the Chair.*]

### AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT.

#### *Section "B," 1953.*

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I have received from the Auditor General a copy of Section "B" of his report on the Treasurer's statement of the Public Accounts for the financial year ended the 30th June, 1953. It will be laid on the Table of the House.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

#### *Third Day.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. H. S. W. PARKER (Suburban) [4.37]: I do not propose to detain the House at any length. There are a few matters I wish to bring to the notice of Ministers so that necessary action may be taken. One matter came to my attention recently. I refer to the accommodation—consisting of a number of houses, which can hardly be called houses, but are mere shelters of a very temporary nature, principally old Army huts—provided for evictees. Some of the tenants have been there for many months, if not years. They make no attempt to shift for themselves, and the result is that in some instances the areas have turned into slums.

The decent type of persons who were evicted and desired to improve their condition have done so by making some effort for themselves in the way of providing self-help homes, or by paying a reasonable rent for a proper home to house their families. But there are others, not of a very good type, who prefer to remain on a cheap rental, and keep the extra money, not to spend on their families or to improve their conditions, but rather to waste on an undesirable type of living which very often means the hotel, races and trots. The result is that in some cases the children are getting by no means a fair deal.

The remedy I suggest is that for the first six months, 12 months, or some period in between, the initial rent be set, as it is now, more or less nominally, because the accommodation warrants only a nominal rent. After that fixed period the rent could be increased, and it should be increased as time goes on, to approximately the rent which tenants have to pay for ordinary dwellings. In that event these persons would be encouraged, perhaps with a little bit of push, to improve their conditions and not continue to live in a deplorable state merely because the rent is cheap.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Where would they get homes?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: We were told that the shortage would be overcome in two years.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: What about a tenant that had to go out in the meantime?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: If the hon. member changed the Government, I could tell him, but I cannot answer his question because I have not the information that is in the possession of the Government. When I was a Minister, we were able to prevent the sort of thing I am mentioning.

The Minister for the North-West: Did you not put people into army huts?

**Hon. H. S. W. PARKER:** Yes, and we put them out, too. Unfortunately they did not attempt to move for themselves, but preferred to stay in the slummy atmosphere at a cheap rental. The Government would help such people greatly by forcing them to pay higher rents, which would be an encouragement to get out and find better homes.

As to poliomyelitis, I was greatly interested to receive the replies to the questions I asked yesterday and I thank the Chief Secretary for giving such full information. The position is as I suspected. I do not blame the medical man at all, because he has to be cautious. If a case cannot be diagnosed, the doctor has to take every precaution until it can be. When I was a small child, I was sent to the doctor, and he told me to go home and go to bed and he would call to see me on the morrow. That advice was quite sound. If the cold or runny nose developed further, he was on the right side in advising me to go to bed. I did not worry about going to bed, but the doctor was quite right.

The same thing applies at the present time. If one goes into a chemist's shop one will see a pamphlet about polio, mentioning the initial stages, headache, pain in the back, and so forth. Doctors tell us that those symptoms may be expected with influenza. A doctor told me, "Never mind what other medical practitioners say, science knows nothing whatever about polio. Science cannot tell you how it is developed and passed from one person to another."

**Hon. Sir Frank Gibson:** He has a lot to learn.

**Hon. H. S. W. PARKER:** He is a specialist.

**The Minister for the North-West:** Does he still collect his fees?

**Hon. H. S. W. PARKER:** If I were a medical practitioner and a patient showed the symptoms that I would have diagnosed last year as influenza, I would, realising that it might turn out to be polio, take no risk but report it as a suspected case of polio. I think doctors should report such a case. No harm is done by their doing so, but the harm is done when the department advertises the case as another suspected case of polio. It is not even suspected; it is reported because of the possibility that it might turn out to be polio. This is where the Minister has failed lamentably. He has allowed it to go forth, not only to the Eastern States but also to the Mother Country, that we have an epidemic of poliomyelitis here.

**The Minister for the North-West:** He does not make the newspaper headlines.

**Hon. H. S. W. PARKER:** No, but he encourages them.

**The Minister for the North-West:** He merely gives the figures.

**Hon. H. S. W. PARKER:** Yes, suspected and not suspected; but he does not say that those suspected cases are all bunkum. The Minister should have exercised control over his officers to prevent that sort of thing from happening. He should have supplied the newspapers with the facts and not leave the newspapers to imagine them.

Let us consider this point. Her Majesty went into the country and the food for her lunch was conveyed there from the "Gothic". From the very place where the Queen and Royal Party had their lunch, food is being exported to England. If that were known, I believe the export of that food would be stopped. The Queen could not shake hands with anybody or eat any local food. No other person was allowed to land from the "Gothic." In view of those facts, would anyone blame the people in England if they declined to take any food exported from this State?

**The Minister for the North-West:** Who is responsible?

**Hon. H. S. W. PARKER:** Primarily the Minister for Health for not correcting the false impression that had been created; and, secondly, the Premier for not attending the conference in Adelaide.

**The Minister for the North-West:** Do you not think the Queen's physician had anything to do with it?

**Hon. H. S. W. PARKER:** He could only be advised by our health authorities and had to accept the advice given him. And what advice was he given? A case every six hours!

**Hon. Sir Charles Latham:** Every three hours.

**Hon. H. S. W. PARKER:** Worse still, and all bunkum!

**The Minister for the North-West:** That was the fault of the newspapers.

**Hon. H. S. W. PARKER:** The Government did nothing in any shape or form to correct the wrong impression that had been created. Until the information given by the Chief Secretary yesterday appeared in the newspaper this morning, the public had a very different opinion of what was happening, and it is remarkable that since the information was published, no case has been reported.

**Hon. Sir Charles Latham:** There has been a falling-off in the number of cases since the House met.

**The Minister for the North-West:** And the doctors' harvest has ended.

**Hon. H. S. W. PARKER:** The doctors have been told to report every case of influenza until it is proved not to be polio.

**Hon. C. W. D. Barker:** Do you not think the doctor did a good job in controlling the outbreak?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: How many cases that were reported as polio turned out to be otherwise? I think it was 66 per cent.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Is not that better than risking a serious epidemic?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I should like members to note that type of argument, that we should adopt that course and jeopardise our trade. Officers and men of the "Gothic" were not permitted to land and the money that they would have spent ashore was lost to the State, simply because somebody had issued wrong and hysterical reports to the newspapers, thus allowing the papers to come out with hysterical headlines. And the Government did nothing.

The Minister for the North-West: How could you prevent the newspapers from carrying headlines?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: By giving a statement of the truth, and to my knowledge no such statement was made by any Minister. I trust that the Government will yet take the matter in hand and make known the truth so that the public will understand the position. The present outbreak is nothing like so severe as that of 1948.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Thank God for that!

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Exactly; but we were told that it was infinitely worse.

The Minister for the North-West: By the papers.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: The Minister keeps on repeating that, but what on earth did the Government do to check the newspapers?

The Minister for the North-West: What could it do?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: The newspapers were not responsible for the placing of those pamphlets in the chemists' shops.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Is it not better to educate the people and tell them what to expect?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Tell them what to expect! They have been told to expect polio.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Dr. Hislop in speaking yesterday took a different view.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I am glad that Mr. Barker was not in charge of the Health Department. Otherwise, he is so anxious to give us polio that all of us would have had it.

Another matter with which I wish to deal is parking, and I trust the Minister concerned will do something about it. One has only to drive along Hay-st., and especially the western end of its central portion, to see that there is often room for only one vehicle to move. Cars and

trucks are often double-parked on each side of the street, and both sides are always fully occupied by vehicles single-parked. The same position applies in the greater portion of Murray-st., and I feel that something should be done to prohibit double-parking. In my view, no parking at all should be allowed on the south side of Hay-st., and vehicles should be permitted merely to set down and pick up passengers there.

A similar rule should apply in Murray-st., although perhaps it should have reference to the north side of that thoroughfare. Parking in Wellington-st. also presents an urgent problem, and attention is necessary to the position in St. George's Terrace from Milligan-st. to Barrack-st. Of course, people will ask, "Why should we not park our cars?", and members know that the existing regulations allow parking for half an hour. I do not blame the police for the fact that cars often park for more than half an hour, as that regulation is impossible to police.

Hon. H. Hearn: It is a good source of income.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: That may be so; but I maintain that parking should be permitted on one side only of the thoroughfares I have mentioned, and then for not more than a quarter of an hour, while double-parking in the city should be made a serious offence. I would like the Minister to give consideration also to the problem of parking in Victoria Park. True, the main road through that suburb is now Shepperton-rd., but the traffic in both that thoroughfare and Albany Highway is becoming dangerous. On Friday afternoons and Saturdays, one sees vehicles double-parked along a considerable section of Albany Highway, and frequently there is double-parking on both sides.

I have had occasion to write to the Commissioner of Police asking him to put in more cross-walks there, and his first reply, in December, was not quite satisfactory. I have written to him again, but he has not yet had time to attend to the matter. I would emphasise that more cross-walks are required in Victoria Park. There are several now across the main road outside the schools, and they are most necessary, but unfortunately they are not used on Friday afternoons and Saturdays, when people are doing their week-end shopping. I trust that the Minister will ask the Commissioner of Police to examine the position, in order that something may be done about it. I will close by supporting the motion.

On motion by Hon. L. A. Logan, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 4.54 p.m.*