

much to reduce the sheep population. The dingo is making its appearance in the inner parts of the pastoral areas and is taking a big toll of the stock. I believe that in certain areas the dingoes have taken as great a toll as has the drought.

There are many other matters on which I should have liked to speak, but as time is passing, I shall leave them until later in the session.

MR. ANDREW (Victoria Park): I formally second the motion.

On motion by Hon. Sir Ross McLarty, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE PREMIER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 4.30 p.m. on Tuesday next.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 4.3 p.m.

Legislative Council

Tuesday, 22nd June, 1954.

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

QUESTIONS.

BUS SERVICES.

As to Provision of Shelters.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON asked the Chief Secretary:

On the 8th September last year, I asked the following questions:—

(a) In view of the promises given in the Premier's policy speech at Northam on the 22nd January, 1953, and published in "The West Australian" the following day, that bus shelters would

be provided for waiting passengers, will the Minister please say what action, if any has been taken in this regard?

(b) If any such action has been taken, will he indicate at what points shelters will be provided?

(c) How soon will installation commence?

To which the Minister replied as follows:—

(a) (b) (c) Arrangements are being made to convene a representative conference in an effort to achieve the desired results.

Is the Chief Secretary now in a position to furnish the required information?

The **CHIEF SECRETARY** replied:

The financing of a scheme for bus shelters is at present the subject of discussions between the Premier, the Minister for Transport and myself. Immediately I am in a position to make a definite statement I will do so.

HOUSING.

(a) *As to Applications for Rental Homes.*

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH asked the Chief Secretary:

How many applications are in existence at the State Housing Commission at the present date—

(a) for Commonwealth-State rental homes;

(b) for war service homes?

The **CHIEF SECRETARY** replied:

(a) Applications for Commonwealth-State rental homes at the 31st May, 1954, numbered 10,494.

A recent survey indicated that a large percentage of the older applications registered with the commission are from persons whose housing problems may have been solved.

As a result of the present landlord and tenancy legislation, there is considerable unrest among tenants of privately owned houses causing a marked increase in the number of applications made to the commission for rental homes. In the first five months of this year, 2,132 applications were received for rental homes, and 557 of these were received in May.

(b) Applications for war service homes at the 31st May, 1954, numbered 2,361.

(b) *As to Accuracy of Press Statement.*

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH asked the Chief Secretary:

Was the Minister for Housing correctly quoted in "The West Australian" of the 15th June, when he predicted that within 18 months there would be scarcely any delay between the time of application and the supply of a home, and was reported to have stated on the question of rents of State Housing Commission homes that because they cost more than £2,000 to build they could not be let cheaply?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

The statement of the Minister for Housing was that the period between the lodging of applications and the allocation of houses was now being reduced owing to the building rate of the State Housing Commission having been increased to nearly twice what it was two years ago, and that in about 18 months' time any waiting period should be comparatively short, but in his opinion there would always have to be some waiting period since no organisation such as the State Housing Commission could embark on a year's programme of 4,000 or so houses without there being applications first.

He also stated that as houses now cost in excess of £2,000 to build, people could not expect a rental as cheap as was possible when houses were built prewar and immediately postwar at about £800.

(c) *As to Rental Homes, Geraldton.*

Hon. L. A. LOGAN asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) How many Commonwealth-State rental homes are under construction in Geraldton at the present time?

(2) How many is it proposed to build in the next 12 months?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) Five Commonwealth-State rental homes are under construction at the present time in Geraldton and a contract for a further five has been let.

(2) The number to be erected during the coming year will be determined when the amount of loan money available for rental homes is known.

GOLDMINING.

As to Situation at Sons of Gwalia Mine.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) Is the Government aware of the serious situation which exists at the Sons of Gwalia Mine, Gwalia?

(2) If so, in view of the far-reaching consequences involved, will the Government give the matter urgent consideration?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) The company and the Government have discussed the position in detail, and close consideration is being given at present to the company's representations.

AGED WOMEN.

As to Admission to Hollywood Hospital.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES (for Hon. F. R. H. Lavery) asked the Chief Secretary:

As there are over 900 applicants for admission to Mt. Henry, Woodbridge and Havelock-st. branches of the Aged Women's Home, and when the new wing at Mt. Henry is partly completed towards

the end of September, there will only be 150 beds available, with a further 150 about the end of February, leaving over 600 applicants still to be accommodated, will the Government give consideration to effecting an arrangement with the Commonwealth that a number of beds at Hollywood Hospital be made available for bedridden patients?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

Although the hon. member's figures are all overstated, the problem exists. Many unsuccessful efforts have been made to secure the use of these empty beds for hospital purposes. It seems unlikely that a request for this purpose would be more successful.

NORTH-WEST.

As to Freight Concessions to Kimberleys.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER asked the Chief Secretary:

Now that the drought has lifted in the Kimberleys will the Government give consideration to granting freight concessions on State ships, on stock brought to the district for purposes of restocking, particularly in the case of Mt. Anderson station which has had exceptionally heavy losses?

This question has been directed to the Chief Secretary, although it concerns the Minister for the North-West. I do not mind the Chief Secretary answering it, as long as the Minister for the North-West, the Minister most vitally concerned, has been consulted.

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

With all due deference to the hon. member, I shall answer the question.

Because special rates already apply on ewes for restocking, it is not the intention of the State Shipping Service to grant further concessions.

Referring to the second part of the hon. member's request, no departure can be made from general concessions to give preferential treatment to individual pastoralists.

RAILWAYS.

As to New Diesel Engines.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH asked the Chief Secretary:

In connection with the inaugural journey of the new diesel engines on the Perth-Kalgoorlie line—

(1) When were these diesel engines ordered?

(2) (a) Who was invited to make the inaugural journey;

(b) What was the total cost involved?

(3) Is such cost to be debited—

(a) to the Premier's Department; or
(b) the Railway Department?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) November, 1950.

(2) (a) Members of the Government and Opposition members comprising Sir Ross McLarty, Sir Charles Latham, Sir Harold Seddon, Hon. C. H. Simpson, Hon. A. F. Watts, Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham and Mr. J. Hearman. In addition, representatives of the English contractors, the Chamber of Commerce, the Chamber of Manufactures, civic authorities and the Railways Commission.

(b) Approximately £1,100, including fuel costs and wages of staff. Had the inaugural special with guests not run to Kalgoorlie, it would still have been necessary to conduct a trial trip with a full complement of coaches over the Perth-Kalgoorlie section to ascertain the capabilities of the new diesel locomotive in carrying out the proposed faster schedule.

(3) The Railway Department.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Second Day.

Debate resumed from the 17th June.

HON C. H. SIMPSON (Midland) [4.33]: In the first paragraph of the Speech delivered by His Excellency the Governor on opening day, there was an intimation that the purpose of calling Parliament together at an early date was to enable urgent consideration to be given to legislation dealing with rents and tenancies. Although the Speech was delivered by the Governor, all members understand that it was, in effect, a statement of Government policy and was prepared by the Government of the day.

Before dealing with the items that appear in the Governor's Speech, I wish to offer the courtesies which are customary at this stage of the session, and to congratulate those who have been honoured by this House and those who have been honoured by the vote of the electors, either as new members or by being re-elected. Pride of place must go to you, Mr. President. I feel sure that you will receive the co-operation of all members of the House in the discharge of the duties of your high office. I am certain that you will discharge those duties without fear or favour, affection or ill-will. To the newly-elected members, I say that during the initial stages we all try to help those who come into this Chamber, and I think that applies to all members, irrespective of party affiliations. We sincerely trust that their sojourn here will be a pleasant one and that on many of those questions which are of a non-party nature we shall achieve some degree of unanimity.

At this stage I would like to congratulate those members who have been returned unopposed. As some of us know from experience, it is a nice feeling to

realise that one has been returned unopposed because one knows that the electors have sufficient faith to leave one free from the distractions and expenses which always accompany an election. This is a fitting occasion to pay tribute to those members who are no longer in this Chamber, either because of retirement or defeat. It is no reflection on new members to say that we will miss some of those individuals who are no longer with us.

In our former President, Sir Harold Seddon, we had a member who was in this Chamber for about 30 years, a large slice of his life thus having been given in the service of the State. He discharged his duties honourably, honestly, and to the best of his ability; and it was not his fault that, owing to the hazards of parliamentary life, he was not accorded a vote of confidence on this occasion. During the period he was here, he made many valuable contributions to the debates; and, in the office of President, he discharged his duties with dignity and distinction.

While here, we develop friendships with individuals on their worth as men, irrespective of party affiliations, and it would have been ideal if we could have had with us the new members as well as all the old ones. Hon. H. S. W. Parker gave an almost equally long term of service to this Parliament, having been on different occasions, a member of each House. He was a cheery soul that we came to know and like; and his legal knowledge was valuable when we had to decide points of law that cropped up in our deliberations. As most members know, his father was a prominent member of the Legislative Council before the inauguration of responsible Government. In fact, it was he who went to London to present the case to the Imperial Parliament for the granting of responsible government to Western Australia. Not long after he returned he was appointed a judge and was for some time a Chief Justice of the State. So it can be said that two members of the Parker family have given very valuable service to the State.

Mr. Frank Welsh was a very old identity here. Like Mr. Parker, he had seen service in both Houses. During the latter years he had not the physical vigour perhaps, similar to that which he had been able to summon in the earlier years, but he was always a fund of information regarding the North-West and was a valiant supporter of its interests. Mr. Jack Cunningham was a younger man and it was the will of the electors that he should retire after only one term. But whatever his chosen avocation may be, I think he will find that his term in Parliament and the knowledge and experience he has gained here will serve him in good stead wherever he happens to be.

I notice that with the retirement of Sir Harold Seddon the oldest member of the House is now the Leader of the House,

Hon. Gilbert Fraser. I do not suppose we will call him "Dad," or anything like that, but sometimes it is nice to realise who has the seniority from a service point of view.

I want to congratulate our new member, Mrs. Hutchison, on her initial speech in this House. I do not agree with all she said; but I feel that on questions of a non-party character, particularly with reference to those of a social nature, there will be occasions on which her knowledge and experience will be very useful to the Chamber, and I can assure her that we will always listen with a good deal of interest to what she has to say. I feel, however, that she deserves a certain measure of sympathy in being called upon to deliver her maiden speech on opening day.

A maiden speech is always an ordeal for any member, but it is particularly so on the opening day when one has had no chance of seeing how others have behaved in similar circumstances. One is also necessarily circumscribed in the time one has, and it is possible that one could be embarrassed by the big gathering that is always present on such an occasion. In the circumstances, I think Mrs. Hutchison did quite well. But the question is: Is it quite fair? I am inclined to take the view the present Leader of the House took two years ago. It is rather interesting to recall at this stage exactly what he did say. When speaking to the Address-in-reply on the 5th August, 1952, he said:

Whilst I am a great one for sticking to old customs, there is one custom which I think should be altered. I refer to that of asking a new member to move the Address-in-reply debate on the opening day. Taking everything into account, it is too much of an ordeal to ask a new member to move the Address-in-reply. One other feature is that the hon. member is fresh from victory at the ballot box and has probably a number of things to speak about, whereas the time he has on the opening day is generally about a quarter of an hour or 20 minutes. This does not allow him to extend himself. Summing up, there is no justification for keeping to the old custom of asking a new member to move the Address-in-reply. Whoever might be the Government next year, I hope this will be kept in mind.

I mention that, not only because I agree with it, but because it does seem inconsistent on the part of the Leader that on the very first occasion he has the chance to put his theories into practice he promptly departs from that practice.

The Minister for the North-West: Following the precedent of the previous Government.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: I am quoting the Minister's remark and the suggestion he made. I entirely agree with him.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: The matter is entirely in his hands.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: That is so.

The Minister for the North-West: Not necessarily.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Do not tell me the other House determines what we do here!

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: I want to make it quite clear that I am not being in any way critical of Mrs. Hutchison. As I have said, taking all things into account, she did very well. I think everyone will agree, however, that it did deprive her of the opportunity of at least saying something she might like to have said.

The Minister for the North-West: She will get that opportunity on the Supply Bill.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Do you not think the circumstances were extraordinary?

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: Once more I repeat I do not wish to be critical of the speech made by Mrs. Hutchison, but there were one or two remarks that she made with which I do not entirely agree. One is her reference to the action of this House in relation to rents and tenancies; and at a later stage I intend to make some comments in that regard, because I believe that the remarks she made, in all good faith, were not strictly in accordance with fact. I do not blame her for that, but there it is.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Possibly her advisers were wrong.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: That may be so. I would now like to deal with another remark made by the Leader of the House when speaking to the Address-in-reply two years ago. He took exception to the action of the then Government in putting, as he termed it, political matter into the Governor's Speech. He claimed that the Governor should not be identified with items of a contentious nature. On that occasion the reference made was to the disastrous railway strike and the need for bringing in amendments to the Arbitration Bill. The hon. member then said:

I will not argue whether that paragraph is true or not. The point I am making is that this Speech is known as the Governor's Speech and it is wrong for any Government to have a speech drafted which may in any detail involve the Governor in a local political argument. I think it was ill advised to include a paragraph of that description and I hope it will not be repeated.

In the first paragraph of the present Speech we now find that reference is made to a rents and tenancies Bill. That is

surely a contentious matter. Without going through the Speech in detail I would like to quote the following:

Following the defeat of price control legislation last year the price level has risen considerably. The basic wage has been pegged by the Arbitration Court. Wage and salary employees are now 6s. 3d. per week worse off than they were six months ago. An appropriate price control measure will be introduced, and also a Bill to provide for the automatic quarterly adjustment of the basic wage.

It seems to me that rents and tenancies legislation is certainly a contentious matter, as is price control. Another contentious point is that we are going to be asked to pass legislation to direct the Arbitration Court. If those are not items that would come under the heading that the Chief Secretary previously included as contentious I do not know what are.

Hon. H. Hearn: It was a different Government writing the Speech!

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: Maybe. But if it was wrong to do it then, it is wrong to do exactly the same thing now. Dealing with the Speech as a whole, it is a good story. Throughout, there is a picture of progress, an atmosphere of optimism, of prosperity. I think the Government will be generous enough to acknowledge that at least part of that move towards prosperity can be credited to the previous Government, which initiated projects that are bearing fruit today. I am glad to say there is record production, and a growing export from our secondary industries; and diesel locomotives that are coming to hand are improving our railway service. These, as was indicated in the answers to questions today, were ordered by the previous Government; and 1,900 new wagons added to the rollingstock will enable the railways to accept all traffic offering. Those wagons also were ordered by the previous Government.

The Chief Secretary: We all take in one another's washing, you know.

Hon. H. Hearn: But do we wash it?

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: Do we all do it as well as we might? In regard to housing, in 1953 there were 7,642 dwellings as against 7,730 in the previous year. The figures are fairly close, but there was a drop of 88.

The Chief Secretary: Not on the part of the Government; by the private builders.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: That is the total number.

The Chief Secretary: Yes; I know. But that is why the drop occurred.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: I will mention that later. Of the number erected, the State Housing Commission was responsible for 3,218, or 42 per cent.; and private

builders for 4,424, or 58 per cent. The actual building rate was down, but the Government did strike an optimistic note in indicating that there was a record production of sawn timber and no shortage of seasoned timber. That, coupled with the statement of the Minister at Collie, which I believe is substantially correct, that the housing shortage is expected to be overcome within 18 months, seems to indicate that the materials are available for the construction of an adequate number of houses. That should have some bearing on the rents and tenancies legislation to be introduced; because, obviously, if there are enough houses to accommodate the population, the question of controlling rents should be on the way to being solved, since competition between landlords would surely overcome the difficulty if there were alternative houses that people could occupy.

The Chief Secretary: There is a gap to be bridged, though.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: That is something we can discuss. I do not intend to deal with any of the legislation that may be coming down; that would not be right. The figures do not disclose—though I have the Chief Secretary's assurance at the moment—that it is not the building rate of the Government which is down, but that of the contractors. It seems to me, following that line of thought, that if there were the demand for houses such as has existed, with plenty of timber available, and apparently all the necessary machinery and workmen procurable, the indication is that there is a slackening in the demand for buildings to be put up.

The Chief Secretary: What about £ s. d.? That comes into it, you know; and also industrial building.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: That could be, to a certain extent; but there is the other implication as well. The point is that the housing position seems, on those figures, to be relatively stable. Mrs. Hutchison said that "the people have given a decided answer." If her line of thought was that the result of the election on the 8th May indicated that the people were in favour of the adult franchise, I am afraid that I cannot agree with her conclusion. We have to remember that of the ten seats, five non-Labour were not contested and the members were returned unopposed. So apparently the electors in those cases were not at all worried as to what the franchise was.

The Chief Secretary: There were practically six unopposed.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Your vote was not too big, anyhow!

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: If it is admitted that five seats were contested, and that Labour won the whole five, then surely

if that can be done on the present franchise, that should be good enough to enable the Labour Party to carry on. All that it has to do is to contest all the seats and win sufficient to give it a majority in this House. If the party has a majority in both Houses there is nothing to prevent its doing what the Constitution provides it may do. A fact that has rather intrigued me is that one of the planks of that party's policy is the abolition of Upper Houses. I am wondering what would be the attitude of the Labour Party in Western Australia if the state of affairs were created that I have indicated.

Hon. Sir Frank Gibson: The same as that in New South Wales.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: This plank has been in existence for over 30 years. There was a time when a Federal Labour Government not only had a substantial majority in the House of Representatives, but in the Senate it had 33 out of 36 members, and at any time during the existence of that situation, it could have secured the passage of resolutions in both Houses of Parliament without any trouble, and could in that way have decided to submit a referendum to the people on this question. However, that was not done. Instead, the members of the Senate were increased from 36 to 60, and I think that is an indication of the party's feeling in the matter.

About two years ago, at a Labour Conference in New South Wales, the question whether this particular plank should remain in the party platform was brought up. Nothing happened. But this month there was a similar conference of the A.L.P. in Sydney when a motion to abolish the Upper House was defeated by 107 votes. As a matter of fact, one speaker told the mover of the motion that he was living in the past; that, at the time when that plank was included in the platform, there were only two Labour members in the Upper House in New South Wales, but that now the position was such that the Labour Party would have control of that House in the next 18 years, so why worry? From that, it seems to me that it is not the principle which matters; it is the power. The principle is all right provided the party does not have power; but it is all wrong when power moves its way. I should explain that the Upper House in New South Wales is not elected by popular vote but at a joint sitting of both Houses; and if one party has a majority, naturally the nominee of that party will be elected to any vacancy that might occur.

I have said that I have no desire to pick out for discussion at this stage any items foreshadowed in the Governor's Speech as being the subject of legislation. This is a House of review, and it is our duty to wait till legislation comes here before we indicate a preconceived attitude. But there is a suggestion in the Speech that certain legislation will be brought

down, and I think it is permissible to express an opinion in regard to the general trend. It seems to me that the different matters that have been listed to be dealt with fit into a pattern. We know—and I am sorry to have to say this—that in another place, and particularly on the part of the members of the party on the opposite side of this Chamber—there has been a hostile attitude towards the Upper House and the decisions we come to from time to time.

I cannot help thinking that in the legislation submitted last year there was a suggestion, almost an intention, to make the measures as objectionable as possible. I would think that had there been a real desire, as there should have been, to achieve something, it would have been better to approach the problems involved gradually, rather than to demand acceptance of measures which it was known would not be acceptable, at least to this House.

If, for instance, the rents and tenancies Bill had been brought down in a spirit of conciliation rather than of blunt demand, I think that possibly something could have been done. After all, we had a conference on that Bill in December last, and the outcome—whether good or bad—was the result of deliberations between representatives of both Houses and all parties. It was accepted by them, and the two Houses endorsed the provisions agreed upon and drafted into the report.

The Chief Secretary: It was accepted because it was a case of that or nothing.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: The point is that the agreement was reached between the representatives of the two Houses. At a most embarrassing part of the year so far as we were concerned—that is to say, in the middle of a Legislative Council election campaign—the Government brought down a Bill dealing with rents and tenancies. It called Parliament together to study that measure; and I cannot help thinking—though I may be wrong—that the final result was exactly what the Government intended it to be.

The Chief Secretary: No.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: I am assured of that by the Chief Secretary; but it seems to me that actions speak louder than words. Most of us believed, after the 1953 conference, that the decisions reached would give a breathing space of four months, in which the situation could be approached in the same way as it had been approached by the previous Government. Under more critical conditions, that Government provided 175 evictee homes. I will admit that they were not up to the regular standard, but they did provide shelter for those people who had to be accommodated.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: They are better than those which many of the pioneers of this country possessed.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: In the last couple of weeks I have seen quite a number of those homes, and the tenants seemed to be quite happy.

The Chief Secretary: I hope you are not proud of those houses. Are you?

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: The homes are quite comfortable inside, though they may be small. The occupiers have developed a sense of house pride.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Some of our best citizens have worse homes! And we have had the benefit of those buildings being provided.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: Let it be remembered that most of those homes were sold on fairly easy terms—£5 down, and £6 10s. per month. That is equal to a fairly small rental when one has a home to occupy.

The Chief Secretary: What is the good of a home in which one cannot put furniture?

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: As a matter of fact, young people who do not want to burden themselves with heavy expenditure would welcome occupying houses of that kind. They are quite up to the standard of the homes provided for soldier settlers on the land, and a good deal better than many houses that are to be found in country areas. The value of such a house to the occupants is that it is their own and they can build on to it. They can develop a garden, run a few fowls, and make the block to some extent self-supporting. From time to time, as circumstances permit, they can spend their odd cash in improving it and eventually make it a very fine place in which to live. I saw one property where the man concerned had done most of the work for himself and had added two front rooms as well as having the roof tiled. That house now compares favourably with the other homes in the vicinity. The Government could have done that in the four months' grace which it had, but refused to do so.

The Chief Secretary: When we build homes we want them to be decent and not just dog boxes.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: These are not dog boxes. Many young couples starting off in life would prefer them as they would then not have the same amount of debt around their necks. At the end of that four months' Parliament was called together; and despite the fact that the Opposition in another place and in this Chamber proposed to remedy one admitted defect in the legislation which had emerged from the previous conference, and to extend a further four months' grace in order to give a breathing space, that offer was deliberately refused.

The Chief Secretary: You could not agree among yourselves on that point.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: I think we could.

The Chief Secretary: You could not. One of your members moved another motion, which was successfully carried.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: I understand there was an underlying desire to agree to that, but it was felt that it might be reserved as a bargaining point at a conference. I know that the general feeling was very much in favour of it, and I am sorry that I did not call for a division on that point.

The Chief Secretary: One of your own colleagues had a different motion on it.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: If I am correct, the Chief Secretary, who was offered that four months and admitted it was difficult to turn the proposal down, said he wanted till the end of this year, which was, in effect, eight months. My contention is that, had the four months been accepted, a further amendment could have been moved to extend the time and we could have ascertained the feeling of the House in that regard. However, I will now deal with other matters.

I have before me a circular which I intend to read to the House. It was issued during the recent election and bristles with distortions of fact. I feel that this is an occasion on which some of the points made in that circular might properly be brought forward and refuted. The circular is headed, "Guilty Men on Trial", and the first charge states—

The Liberals do not believe in democracy. Practically every move that has been made to allow anybody to vote for the Legislative Council has been defeated by the Liberals.

The answer to that claim is that we believe second Chambers are necessary and require a different franchise in order to secure a different body of opinion in the House of review, so as to avoid the possibility of one Chamber becoming just a rubber stamp or echo of the other. We believe that our present franchise has given us a House which over the years has worked remarkably well and by no means along party lines.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: Are you happy that only one-third of the adult population has the franchise for this House?

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It has proved successful.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: It has proved itself.

The Chief Secretary: To whom?

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: I do not say that there should not be some amendments introduced. Possibly a convention of both Houses might discuss this question of revision and the correction of certain anomalies which some of us believe exist

in our Constitution. I suggested that last year. The second charge contained in this pamphlet reads—

The Liberals want an open go for profiteers. By throwing out price control the Liberals have made it possible for profiteers to exploit us and we have no protection whatever.

The answer to that—if anyone has read the debates—is that wherever controls, and particularly price control, have been cast aside there has been first of all a slight tendency for prices to rise, followed, as soon as competition has made itself felt, by an invariable drop in prices.

The Chief Secretary: That has not been the case here.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: It has been so in Canada, America, Belgium and Western Germany. Those are cases in point.

The Chief Secretary: You cannot include Western Australia in that.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: I dislike the continued reference to the Liberals. After all, the Opposition in this House is of a composite nature, but there is in this pamphlet no reference to my colleagues of another party who were all of the same mind as we were and joined in the deliberations and the decisions arrived at. The third charge is—

The Liberals do not care if you are evicted. Because of the action of the Liberals every tenant of shops and living accommodation can be thrown out in the streets on April the 30th.

As I have explained, if the amendments to the legislation which were proposed had been accepted, continued protection would have existed for a further four months and the position could have been reviewed while Parliament was sitting. Had that been done I have no doubt that this side of the House would have considered sympathetically any points that obviously deserved attention.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Do you agree that some protection was necessary?

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: We offered protection for four months, but that was not accepted. The fourth charge is—

The Liberals have no time for the workers. They have refused every attempt by the Government to have representatives of the workers on various boards and commissions.

The answer to that is that direct representation of the workers on commissions or bodies of control just does not work. There are other opportunities of consultation and representation by the unions which are never refused, and which serve the purpose in a very much better way than would insistence that the worker should be a member of the board. We do not think that would work out.

As regards having the interests of the workers at heart, I would point to what our Government did at the Midland workshops, where I think the great majority of the employees will agree that their interests were studied far more by that Government than they had been by previous Administrations over a number of years. We spent a lot of money on improving conditions and amenities at the Midland Junction workshops. We provided a good canteen there and also a canteen for the tramway employees.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Did you supply the wireless for them?

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: I am not sure about that; but at all events dining facilities were provided.

Hon. G. Bennetts: I think wireless will be found in all factories and workshops throughout Australia.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: These improvements had been promised, but had not been implemented before our Government took office. Now that those things have been done the result is satisfactory. The next charge is—

The Liberals will not allow cheaper insurance.

Our reaction to the proposal that the Government should enter the field of private enterprise is well known; but as the rates of the State Insurance Office are the same as the standard rates of the other insurance offices, I cannot see that the question of cheaper insurance enters into the picture. The next charge is—

The Liberals have pegged the basic wage. Labour moved to have automatic basic wage adjustments, but the Liberals said, "No." They believe in no price control or rent control, but pegged wages.

The question of wages is, so far as we are concerned, a matter for the Arbitration Court, and we do not think any Government should attempt to direct that tribunal. That is a principle in which we firmly believe and one to which we will adhere.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Are you referring to the State basic wage?

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: It is a matter for the Arbitration Court itself; and if one attempts to interfere with the functions of experts who have given the matter a lifetime of study, one treads on dangerous ground. A further charge is—

The Liberals insist on the colour bar.

I cannot recall any occasion upon which we have raised any point about colour. My own view, which I have stated in this House on a number of occasions, is that a man's colour should not matter provided he has the other qualifications which make him a decent citizen, and is one who can

take his part and enjoy the privileges as well as assume the responsibilities of full citizenship. We believe that the citizenship provisions in the Acts relating to natives, which permit those desirous of citizenship rights to apply for them, can be administered with discretion; and, in our view, those who are capable of assuming such rights would have no difficulty in obtaining them.

I will not bother to read the other extracts at this time. The Boxing Day holiday was one matter in regard to which we were criticised; but, again, the deciding of that question was the prerogative of the court. We do not believe that the Government should interfere with what is essentially a function of the court. As regards the factories legislation, the law as it stands permits any garage proprietor to open his premises at any hour he likes and close them whenever he wishes, and it allows him to cater for public convenience. We think that is a question which can be solved along economic lines. It is hardly conceivable that all the garage proprietors would keep their premises open until midnight because one or more of them decided to do so. Under the existing law they have freedom to do whatever they like, and what they wish to do is generally governed by what it pays them best to do.

In the matter of workers' compensation, we considered the Bill that was brought forward, and agreed to a schedule which made allowance for the change in the cost of living since the previous adjustment; and we felt that, having regard to the capacity of industry to bear the load—particularly the mining industry—if we went too far along those lines and allowed very large benefits, many industries would suffer greatly and some of the mines would possibly not be in a position to carry on. We feel that we have a responsibility to the State as a whole and that it would be a tragedy if a number of our mines had to close down because they were called upon to bear too heavy a load.

I will ask a few final questions in a friendly way. The pamphlet from which I have quoted has at the bottom the signature of the campaign director, Mr. Chamberlain, and so he must take full responsibility for the statements he makes in it, whether they are true statements or gross distortions of the facts, as I claim they are. First of all, I ask the question: Why does the Government demand all these things and also that the Legislative Council shall accept its demands? Is it a lust for power, or is it a desire to push people around? For instance, is it a lust for the power to override local government authorities in some circumstances, in one case, for example, by putting up a block of flats at Subiaco, despite the protests of the Subiaco Council and the people con-

cerned, when those flats could just as easily have been erected at some point served by our railways or, better still, in smaller and separate structures which would allow a family to grow up in much more pleasant surroundings?

The Minister for the North-West: What is wrong with the Subiaco surroundings?

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: Our suburban railways have been losing a tremendous amount of money. The Government of which I was a member realised the position and made a desperate effort to try to relieve it. After the metal trades strike, when the people were faced with no railway service whatsoever, it cut down on the schedules so that a full service was given at peak periods and a skeleton service at other times. However, one of the actions of the present Government was to restore those services in full.

Our idea was that, with the procurement of the diesel rail cars on order, which would give a fast and frequent service, but which would be run more cheaply and reduce the cost, as against the lack of the traffic which had drifted away, there was the possibility of bringing the credits and debits somewhere into balance. But those railway lines have been run at tremendous loss during the past 12 months. It would have been an ideal opportunity to site those flats, if they must be built, close to those railway lines. It would have boosted the traffic and provided much-needed revenue.

The Minister for the North-West: But did you not put buses alongside those railway lines?

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: I think that could have been corrected because at least some of the buses could have been re-routed to avoid the competition between bus and rail traffic. In any case, there is ample land not served by Government buses which could have been used, and it could have been practically guaranteed that the existing rail services would have gained more patronage.

Finally, I want to offer the Government some friendly advice. We, in this growing State, have a very great future. We have almost immeasurable opportunities for development and, because of the discovery of oil, outside interests have been aroused and have become keenly interested in Western Australia. At present, for the money which is necessary to develop our State, we are dependent to a great extent on what we can get from the Commonwealth either by way of grant or loan. The position of our primary producing industries is not as bright as it was, and the time is coming when the revenue from that source, either by way of loan or taxation, must of necessity be less. Therefore, if we require money to develop this State—and we do—we will

have to rely on interested people outside to come in and provide the necessary money.

If we are framing legislation, we must be careful to make it as attractive as we can, so that those people will not be discouraged from coming here. We followed that policy years ago in regard to mining, with the result that people engaged in the mining profession regard our mining legislation as being amongst the best in the world. We were very careful not to frighten away any capital or to discourage those who had already invested their money in this State.

In the near north developments are occurring which, to any one of us, must be disturbing; and it is our responsibility to try to develop this State as fast as we can, so that we may hold it not only for ourselves, but for future generations. That is why I suggest that the Government, in framing the measures listed in the Governor's Speech, should refrain from making them too restrictive, because that is the very thing which would discourage capital from coming here. I have much pleasure in supporting the Address-in-reply.

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

House adjourned at 5.36 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 22nd June, 1954.

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

QUESTIONS

EDUCATION.

As to Admission of Communists to Training College.

Mr. ACKLAND asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Has he seen, or has his attention been drawn to a letter appearing in "The West Australian" of the 2nd June, 1954, in relation to the type of student admitted to the Teachers' Training College?

(2) Has the Education Department the authority to determine what persons shall be admitted to the Teachers' Training College?

(3) Is such authority based solely on academic qualifications?

(4) If not, what qualifications are necessary to secure admittance to the college?

(5) Is there any foundation for the statement appearing in the letter above referred to that "despite the opposition of the principal of the Training College, many active communists who make no secret of the fact are admitted as teachers"?