

Mr. WILD: I have not; but they will be placed there immediately.

On motion by Mr. Tonkin, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 1.36 a.m. (Wednesday)

Legislative Council

Wednesday, the 8th July, 1959

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

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

1. *This question was postponed.*

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ELECTIONS

Right of Housewives to Vote

2. The Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON asked the Minister for Mines:

In view of the Minister's refusal to consider adult franchise for the Legislative Council, will he, at least, consider granting the democratic right of a vote in the Legislative Council to the housewives of Western Australia?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

The Government does not contemplate changing the system which continues to operate satisfactorily in the interests of Western Australia.

3. *This question was postponed.*

BLACK ROCKS, DERBY

Construction of Deep-Water Jetty

4. The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND asked the Minister for Mines:

- (1) Has the Brand Government halted work and planning commenced by the Hawke Government for construction of the deep-water jetty at Black Rocks, Derby, which was requested by an all-party State Parliamentary delegation to Canberra in 1955 and approved in 1957 by the Federal Government which is meeting the full cost?
- (2) If this is so, what is the reason for further delay?
- (3) If such is not the case, when will work commence on foreshore works and jetty construction?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (1) The whole question of deep-water ports for the West Kimberleys is currently examined, and investigations are being continued in connection with the Black Rocks proposal, with particular reference to ocean bed conditions.
- (2) Following the Commonwealth Government's approval of the Black Rocks proposal, re-soundings were made, and these proved that there was less depth at the proposed jetty head position than was recorded in the soundings taken in 1951 and shown on the plans of the submission.

The position was reported to the Minister for Works on the 17th February, 1959, and subsequently a naval lighter was taken over from the Navy. Further investigations are in hand to test the ocean bed conditions at possible jetty head sites in deeper water. The altered conditions would necessitate a substantial increase in the length and cost of the jetty structure.

- (3) Covered by No. (2).

TRAFFIC LIGHTS

Installation at Intersection of Guildford and Garratt Roads

5. The Hon. G. E. JEFFERY asked the Minister for Mines:

Further to my question of the 8th October, 1958, will the Minister inform the House—

- (1) What priority has now been allocated to the installation of traffic lights at the intersection of Guildford and Garratt-rds., Bayswater?
- (2) When is it expected that work on the installation of these lights will commence?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (1) The installation of traffic lights at the intersection of Guildford-rd. and Garratt-rd., Bayswater, has been placed in the top priority group.
- (2) It is expected that work on the installation will commence early in August.

DENTAL CLINICS

Restrictions on Treatment

6. The Hon. J. M. THOMSON asked the Minister for Mines:

- (1) Why is the income of a person taken into account when applying for treatment for himself or his family at a dental clinic?
- (2) (a) is any income group debarred from treatment;
(b) If so, what is the income limit?
- (3) On what basis does the department assess the income of—
(a) the general public;
(b) farmers?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (1) Income is taken into account in an endeavour to assess whether a patient is eligible for treatment at a dental clinic or by a private practitioner.
- (2) (a) Yes, but income alone does not determine eligibility. Eligibility is restricted to persons of limited means—people in low income groups, members of large families where the children are dependants of the wage-earner, and pensioners.
(b) I have an assessment chart available which I will hand to the hon. member, and this indicates the manner by which assessment is made.
- (3) The basis of all assessments by the dental hospital is the average weekly income, and in all cases child endowment is excluded.
(a) Generally, the wage-earner is on a fixed weekly income; but in cases of wage earners whose income is affected by seasonal fluctuation, the average weekly income is determined. Due consideration is given to the effect of assets held and debts outstanding. The assessment figure is then applied to the eligibility chart according to the family unit status.
(b) Difficulty is experienced in arriving at the average weekly income of a farmer, and it is necessary to request the applicant to produce proof of his income based on income tax figures.

Perth Dental Hospital ASSESSMENT PROPORTION CHART For Use in Metropolitan and Country Clinics

Units in Family				Percentage of Hospital Scale of Fees					Ineligible
				Nil	25%	50%	75%	100%	
				£	£	£	£	£	
One	....	....	....	Under 4	4-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	Over £9 per week
Two	....	....	....	Under 8	8-9	9-10	10-11	11-14	Over £14 per week
Three	....	....	....	Under 9	9-10	10-11	11-12	12-15	Over £15 per week
Four	....	....	....	Under 9	9-11	11-12	12-13	13-16	Over £16 per week
Five	....	....	....	Under 10	10-13	13-13½	13½-14½	14½-17½	Over £17½ per week
Six	....	....	....	Under 12	12-14	14-15	15-16	16-19	Over £19 per week
Seven	....	....	....	Under 13	13-15½	15½-16½	16½-17½	17½-20½	Over £20½ per week
Eight	....	....	....	Under 14	14-16½	15½-18	18-19	19-22	Over £22 per week

NOTES:

- (1) Child endowment is not to be included as income for assessment purposes.
- (2) This table is to be a guide, the assessor to have discretion to reduce the percentage, taking into consideration the whole of the family financial circumstances.

The following may properly be taken into consideration:—

- Past sickness and unemployment.
- Medical and hospital accounts being paid off.
- The expense of dental treatment required for the whole family.
- Assets and debts.
- Home purchase instalments and other commitments.

NAPIER-BROOME BAY*New Port*

7. The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND asked the Minister for Mines:

What arrangements have been made with the funds made available by the Commonwealth Government to establish a new port in the vicinity of Napier-Broome Bay, for the purpose of servicing millions of acres of pastoral properties in the areas which were opened up and leased by the previous Government?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

The funds provided by the Commonwealth Government in this connection were authorised for—

The carrying out of extensive investigations in the Napier Broome Bay area to decide the most suitable and economic method of serving the North Kimberley area.

The prolonged wet season in the North and East Kimberleys, together with urgent demands on our hydrographic and engineering surveyors at North-West ports and at the Ord River area, has made it impracticable so far to finalise arrangements for this dry season.

RAILWAY ROLLINGSTOCK*Construction Outside Midland Workshops*

8. The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND asked the Minister for Mines:

For what reasons is it the intention of the Government to have new rollingstock for the W.A.G.R. constructed outside of the Midland Junction Workshops?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

Government policy is to call tenders and let contracts to private industry for certain items of new rollingstock. The exact extent to which this will apply has yet to be determined and is contingent on the current preparation and examination of a five-year plan for the workshops.

Another reason is the variable demand for new rollingstock and availability of loan funds. This creates an erratic demand for labour which can better be handled by private industry leaving greater stability of the labour force in the workshops.

DEPARTMENTAL DISMISSALS*Government's Policy*

9. The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND asked the Minister for Mines:

Does the Government's policy of dismissal from Government Departments relate to labourers only or are the professional and administrative staffs to suffer a similar fate?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

It is quite incorrect to state the Government has a policy of dismissal from Government departments. The only dismissals effected under Government policy are in the Architectural Division of the Public Works Department to give effect to the policy of the Government to have work done to better advantage by tender and contract instead of by day labour. As I informed the hon. member yesterday, work on hand at present is sufficient to maintain professional and administrative staffs at the existing level and it is not anticipated there will be any reduction.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY*Fifth Day*

Debate resumed from the previous day on the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply, to which the Hon. H. C. Strickland (North) had moved an amendment to add the following words:

We wish to protest strongly against the Government's policy of deliberately sacking many of its employees, and against the Government's expressed intention to sack additional large numbers in the future, as this policy is creating unemployment and hardship and widespread feeling of insecurity and unrest.

We wish also to protest strongly against the action of the Government in depriving many deserving single unemployed persons of supplementary help.

THE HON. G. E. JEFFERY (Suburban—on amendment) [4.41]: I rise to support the motion so ably moved by the Hon. H. C. Strickland. I support it because I believe it to be a statement of facts. I will read the first portion of the motion as moved by Mr. Strickland in order to refresh the minds of members. I consider that what this motion says, in essence, is what is taking place in the mind of the public at this moment. It is as follows:—

We wish to protest strongly against the Government's policy of deliberately sacking many of its employees, and against the Government's expressed intention to sack additional large numbers in the future, as this policy is creating unemployment and hardship and widespread feeling of insecurity and unrest.

The tragedy of the situation is the complete insensitivity of this Government to public opinion. The Minister seemed to take a delight in reporting that the Government had no intention of deviating from its policy, which I suggest it should do. The Government should have another look at it before putting it into actual practice.

I draw the attention of members to some comments of the Minister for Works. I think they appeared in last Sunday's paper. He said something to the effect, "I do not care if 10,000 come along; our case is so strong that they will feel embarrassed". He was making that statement in regard to people being present in the gallery of the House to hear what took place.

It sounded like the blare of grand massed bands, but in performance it was as the wheezing of an asthmatical tin whistle! I felt sorry for the Minister in this Chamber because it was just impossible to put up a good case. To my mind he was placed in a most unfortunate situation.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You need not feel sorry for me.

The Hon. G. E. JEFFERY: Much has been said about a statement attributed to the Premier. I am going to read exactly what he said in his policy speech delivered at Dongara on the 3rd March. I will read it so that I will not be accused of misquoting. This statement is quite clear; and I also agree that a statement made on the 13th March is equally clear. The public had the right to believe that anything said after the original statement is what stands. If a statement were made after a period of 10 years, surely one would not refer to the original statement as the basis for current action.

I will quote the exact words from page 9 of the policy speech, of the 3rd March. They are as follows:—

Our public works programme will be based on forward planning. We will obtain a survey of our anticipated requirements over five years and lay down a programme to be commenced each year.

We will progressively change over from day labour work to the letting of contracts.

Tenders will be called for all Government requirements.

Keen competition for jobs will save thousands of pounds for the State.

I have quoted all I can find on the subject, so members cannot accuse me of trying to put words into the mouths of other people.

In its indecent haste to carry out the sackings, the Government forgot the five-year plan. I am not blaming the Government because the five-year plan has not been brought forward. I am trying to be fair, and I know that before anything can be done there should be a master plan. No one should oppose me on that statement.

The Minister for Railways said that the five-year plan for the railways would not be gone ahead with until the new commissioner had an opportunity of going into the question. That is fair enough. However, I suggest that the indecent haste taken by this Government has thrown industry into turmoil; and many more people than those who work for the Government have been affected. Any member with a metropolitan constituency, or one who lives in an industrial suburb, will bear out my statement.

After the original policy speech on the 3rd March, each party during the election campaign was invited to submit its point of view; and, under the heading "Eight Days to Go" in *The West Australian* of the 13th March, the Leader of the Liberal Party, who is now Premier, stated in the first four or five lines—

Our policy in industrial relations is to recognise that people are the most important factor in industry.

I could not agree more with the principle of that statement. I do not intend to read the second paragraph, but I will let members know what is in the final paragraph. It is as follows:—

The Hawke Government is making absurd charges that Liberal intentions are to close all State trading concerns, fire their employees, reduce wages and lengthen working hours. We will fire nobody nor close any concerns down.

Last night, by way of interjection, I asked a speaker if he were aware that people were being sacked in other than Public Works undertakings and he said that I appeared to know more than he did.

The only information I have is what I obtained from the daily Press, and I have read that some 39 workers have been dismissed from the State Engineering Works comprising the following tradesmen:—15 carpenters, 6 plumbers and 10 boiler-makers. It was also said at the time by the Minister for Works—he does not know which comes first, the chicken or the egg—that these sackings were not the result of Government policy, but were caused by a falling off in orders. I suggest that orders are falling off because of Government policy; and the sackings are the result of Government policy, despite the fact that the Premier said that nobody would be sacked.

It must be rather an unusual situation for any one who works in the Public Works Department. I think it is an amazing situation, particularly when one looks at the other States of Australia, where there are Liberal Governments which are freer in outlook than the present Government of Western Australia. There is a Liberal Government in South Australia, led by Sir Thomas Playford; in Victoria, there is one led by Mr. Bolte; and in Queensland, one led by Mr. Nicklin. Each and everyone of these Governments maintains a Public Works work-force.

This Government, by disbanding the Public Works day labour organisation will be left only one thing to do: It will have to call tenders. Collusive tendering will creep in, and as a matter of policy the Government should maintain some portion of the present day-labour organisation to provide a buffer between itself and some unscrupulous people with whom it may otherwise be forced to do business.

Much has been said about the numbers. Using the Minister's figures, he said that in March, 1953, there were 1,191 workers in the Public Works section. I point out that at that time Sir Ross McLarty was Premier, and he and his Government were defeated. Sir Ross McLarty created an ideal situation when he saw fit to employ 1,191 men. In October, 1958, again using the Minister's figures, there were 2,045 employees.

I wish now to speak of the 200 people whom the Labour Government was forced to sack. Much has been said by interjection, and in debate, on this subject. The records will show that because of the inability of private industry to employ these people, the various building trades unions made approaches to the Government to see whether the Government could employ the men who were out of work. If my memory serves me correctly, the Minister suggested he could not employ more men, because obviously the funds available would become depleted more quickly if he did that. The unions went away and said that they appreciated the situation, but that the Government should employ the men.

The men were employed, and as a result of committing the Treasury to greater expenditure, the general funds did become exhausted. That is the position which faced the Government; and the building trades accepted the dismissal of the employees because they were told the truth in the first instance.

There is a vast difference in sacking men because of lack of funds, and sacking men because it is the policy of the Government to destroy something worth while. I suggest that those members who have travelled in the Eastern States know that the Public Works Department in Western Australia has done a wonderful job for our State in the post war years. Frequently we see in the paper that the Principal Architect has been commended, and so have the actual works carried out by his department, by people of authority from all over the world.

This is a most important feature, and the Government would be ill-advised to proceed with the complete disbandment of the Public Works Department. It is ironical, too, for me, as a tradesman, to realise what the building trades have done to assist the Government, and the people, in the breaking down of their own conditions in the post war years. I think any member who has any connection at all with the building trades will recall the people who were allowed into the building trades, even against the better judgment of the unions. But the unions and the tradesmen have the community at heart, and they accepted a situation which, normally, they would not accept, because the cry was for homes, schools and other buildings in respect of which a back log had been created during the war years when such works could not be carried out.

A lot of people today are screaming about the amount of work the Public Works Department did, but for a number of years those people were not concerned with tendering for Government work because too many lucrative jobs were being done outside. Today, a lot of these jobs have dried up, but many people who have never done a Government job in their lives are waiting on the Government doorstep to do Government work. This again is the American attitude of, "Spoils to the Victor." A lot of people in Western Australia are doing work that they have never done before. They will plunder what they can, and when the plunder ceases, they will stop. This is a bright outlook for the State. The present position will leave a scar on our industrial forces. Many parents will do everything they can in order to apprentice their sons to other trades. We will face again the position we were confronted with as a result of the depression, because the building trades will not be attractive for the purpose of apprenticing lads.

Much has been said about the standards of workmanship. We have been told that the price of Government work has been dearer than if the work had been carried out by other means. No doubt that is so, but if we measure the price against the quality of the work, we find, because of the lower cost of the subsequent maintenance, that the price is actually cheaper.

I read in the *Weekend Mail* some 12 or 18 months ago, a scream against the substandard buildings at Manning Park. At that time the press was not so much concerned with the fact that private enterprise had constructed these buildings, but with the supervision provided by the State Housing Commission. The paper sought to blame the supervision. The work of some of the contractors employed there showed that the Housing Commission would need to have as many supervisors as there were men doing the work.

Great play has been made by the present Government on the anti-employer attitude and the anti-private industry attitude of the late Labour Government of this State. I suggest that a look at the record will show that a lot of jobs were done for many people because of money given to those people by the Labour Government. Let us look at the Blood Bank in Wellington-st. This building was constructed by private enterprise; but it would not have been attempted except for the generous donation made by the Labour Government. We are told of the efficiency of private enterprise, and of the saving that can be achieved by letting work to private enterprise. In this regard I mention the Tuart Hill High School. A contract for the building of this school was let to a private contractor, but he had to surrender the contract because of his faulty estimation of the job. Surely it was not the fault of the Government, that the Government was placed in the position of having to take over that work.

Look at the Chest Hospital, the contract for which was let to a private firm. We will see how the circumstances of that job measure up with the so-called anti-employer attitude of the Labour Government. The contractor reached the stage where his funds had run out, but the job was not completed. The Government had a look at the position with the result that the contractor—a reputable one—was kept in business by the sound commonsense of the Labour Government which advanced further funds for the completion of the job so that the people of the State could enjoy the amenity of the hospital.

These are things which, for many years, have not been told to the general public, and I wondered what chance the people had of learning the truth when this Government had such a favourable Press. I am not going through a wearisome recapitulation of everything that has happened in connection with the discharge of the

sewer at City Beach, and how it miraculously ceased on the 21st March; or the invidious position that arose in connection with a certain journalist who, today, is an employee of the Government, as a reward for certain services given to the Government. These things speak for themselves. Need I say more about that?

The fear complex goes much further than just to the people who work in the Public Works section of the Government. I have had individuals come to my home—including a young chap on the brink of matrimony—wanting to know where they stood in their jobs.

If we want a good response from the worker, we must have loyalty. Many men have given loyal service to the Government, despite the good conditions that were offering elsewhere. The men in the employ of the Public Works Department enjoy better conditions today than do the workers in private industry, but a few years ago the position was different because then everyone needed a house, and the sky was the limit with the result that much better money could be made by workers in private industry than by the men in the Public Works Department; and a lot of people worked outside.

I suggest that the men put out of work by this Government—many of them 45 years of age, and some in their 50's—are going to be hard pushed to find a job in the industry in which they have been trained. It is all very well to say that they can get jobs as railway fettlers in the back-blocks, or be found employment in some other occupation, but I consider there is a terrific waste if men are trained to do a certain job in the community and are then told that they must do something else.

Many men are leaving the building trade today and are taking a much lower wage than that to which they are entitled, and are doing work completely different from what they were trained to do; and they are doing this work and receiving the smaller wage because they consider a regular income is better than the instability they have experienced in the building trade in the last few months.

The feeling of insecurity that everyone talks about, does exist. These people are all wondering what is going to happen next. The feeling of insecurity has permeated throughout the Government service. One wonders where the chill axe of the Liberal Government's economic policy will strike next. The feeling of insecurity does not apply only to the building trade section, but also to the professional officers.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: That is your imagination.

The Hon. G. E. JEFFERY: In my electorate there are people who can hold their jobs in any sphere. What I am saying is not as a result of my imagination. These people reside in my Province, which is in

the same as that which the Minister represents. Perhaps I am much closer to the people than is the Minister, because I live amongst them. I am talking of workers in Government instrumentalities. I live at Bassendean. The Minister should look at the place where some of these employees live. I have served an apprenticeship to a trade. There is no need for the Minister to go "umph!" or anything of that nature.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Where do you think I live?

The Hon. G. E. JEFFERY: These men are at least entitled to retain their positions. I suggest, also, that, with two or three weeks' unemployment today, in the present economic circumstances, despite the so-called wave of prosperity, which is non-existent, and despite years of work, the average worker who is buying a home and rearing a family, has not a big bank balance behind him. The fact of being out of work for two or three weeks put a scar on his economic circumstances which remains for a number of years.

I have pleasure in supporting the amendment, and I hope the Government will take a second look at the situation that exists today, and modify some of its ideas and expressed intentions that have led the people to believe that there will be a complete disbandment of the Public Works work force, and the work forces of certain other instrumentalities. Men are being put off from the Tramways Department; and some in the State Engineering Works, and, indeed, the Railways, will also feel the pinch.

I suggest to the Government that it have a second look at this matter; it should come back to earth and adopt a realistic programme and, if for no other reason, the Public Works force should be maintained at some level as a buffer against those who would tender in such a way that the Government would not save one penny. I have much pleasure in supporting the amendment moved by Mr. Strickland.

THE HON. R. C. MATTISKE (Metropolitan—on amendment) [5.0]: I rise to speak as strongly as I can on the motion to amend the Address-in-reply. At the outset I feel that I must refer to some of the remarks just made by Mr. Jeffery when he spoke about collusive tendering, and unscrupulous persons who were dealing with the Government. I think they are very strong words to use against an industry which has done so much in this State in the post-war period.

It is an industry which has enjoyed a very good employee-employer relationship; it is one which, fortunately, has kept very clean through the operations of the Builders' Registration Act, an Act which is almost unique in that it is in force here but in no other place in the world. Many

other countries are trying to institute similar legislation. Therefore, to use such strong terms is certainly not in the best interests of the industry in this State.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: They are factual.

The Hon. R. C. MATTISKE: I would remind members that the principal purpose of a Government is to govern, and not to embark upon trading concerns. In certain of its activities concerned with governing it is necessary for it to embark on public utilities, such as water supplies, railways and things of that nature; it is also necessary, in certain special circumstances, for it to embark upon trading concerns. Where it is necessary for a trading concern to be inaugurated, because private enterprise is not in a position to do so, and where it is necessary to permit the development of a particular area or a particular phase of an industry, there is every justification for it; but there is no justification for a Government to embark willy-nilly on trading concerns.

We have read with regret what has happened in the building industry field in recent years. Let us look at the results of the State Building Supplies, or its two wings the State Saw Mills and the State Brickworks. Thousands and thousands of pounds of the taxpayers' money have been lost through those two channels during recent years at a time when private companies which have been decried so much by the Opposition in this House, have been able to sell their wares at the same selling price, pay income tax, payroll tax, sales tax and countless other charges which the Government does not have to meet, and still return a profit to their shareholders.

Look at Wundowie. Only last year we had a debate in this House about what has happened up there. Thousands of pounds have been lost on that project.

The Hon. E. M. Davies: Tell us what the Royal Commissioner had to say.

The Hon. R. C. MATTISKE: There was the attempt by the Government last year to inaugurate a second blast furnace in the South-West. I venture to say that that was not for purely State trading reasons; in my opinion the Government of the day had ulterior motives but, fortunately, they were not able to proceed with the project otherwise this State would be losing many more thousands of pounds of the taxpayers' money.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Tell us about the sackings.

The Hon. R. C. MATTISKE: I will.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Do you agree with them?

The Hon. R. C. MATTISKE: It is the policy of the present Government to have its work done by public tender. It was the policy of the previous Government to have it done by day labour.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Not all of it.

The Hon. R. C. MATTISKE: The Hawke Administration built up the day labour force to such an extent that that Government hoped that all Government work would ultimately be done by means of the day labour force.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: That is incorrect.

The Hon. F. D. Willmott: To such an extent that they could not pay them.

The Hon. R. C. MATTISKE: That is so.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: That is wrong.

The Hon. R. C. MATTISKE: In 1958 Mr. Tonkin had to dispense with the services of over 200 employees of the Public Works day labour organisation; and he stated publicly, when he was hauled over the coals by Trades Hall, that he should have sacked another 250. How were that other 250 maintained? Purely by treating the Public Works Department as a charitable institution. That seems to be the only answer.

When these men were sacked from the Public Works day labour organisation, which was under the control of the then Minister for Works, no attempt was made to watch the interests of the people concerned by having them placed in other employment. Mr. Strickland wanted to know what happened about the previous sackings, and I have just told him what occurred. There was no march on Parliament House then; there was no hue and cry at that time; those 200 odd employees were simply told overnight that their services were no longer required and nothing was done to get them other employment.

On the other hand, when this Government came into power it said it was going to carry out its previously enunciated policy of doing its work by private enterprise on the public tender system; but before doing so at least it contacted all the various phases of the industry and stated that it was the Government's intention to dispense with people on a quota basis so that a certain number of different tradesmen would be dispensed with each week. A liaison officer was appointed in the Public Works Department so that he could "liaise" with the two builders' organisations, the Master Plumbers' Association, the Master Plasterers' Association, the Electrical Contractors' Association and the various other phases of the building industry in addition to the Employers' Federation and the Commonwealth Employment Service.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: And have they absorbed them all?

The Hon. R. C. MATTISKE: Each week a list is sent to each of these organisations giving the details of the persons who will be retrenched in 14 days' time. The industry is given 14 days' notice before these

individuals are sacked so that arrangements may be made to employ as many of them as possible.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Why sack them at all?

The Hon. R. C. MATTISKE: Why did Mr. Tonkin throw 200 of them out last year?

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: There was no money; it was not done as a matter of policy.

The Hon. R. C. MATTISKE: It is the policy of this Government to carry out its work by private enterprise and not by day labour, as was the case with the previous Government. Because of that this Government is doing all in its power to get suitable employment for these individuals. But there are factors which govern even that and the principal one is that there must be work upon which these people can be engaged. Until such time as the Government is making sufficient work available by contract, other work that is normally available in the industry must necessarily be insufficient to enable the complete absorption of all these men. But with the gradual letting of contracts the position will soon rectify itself. It stands to reason that, if there is a given quantity of work—regardless of whether the work is to be done by private contractors or the Public Works day labour organisation—the employer can have only a certain number of employees, and the position must equate itself.

There is another angle—which is a little unfortunate—in this regard: Normally at this time of the year there is a lull in the building industry. Through inclement weather, the end of the financial year, and other factors, there is normally a lull in the industry at this time. Those are the factors which aggravate the position, but the difficulties are not insurmountable. Within the next two or three months, as these persons are retrenched from the Public Works Department, they will be absorbed by private industry.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Who will keep them for the next two or three months?

The Hon. R. C. MATTISKE: It is a gradual process which must be spread over a period of approximately two years, if the whole of the 1,900 people are to be retrenched. It is a slow, gradual and weekly rate of retrenchment.

In his speech, Mr. Jeffery mentioned the work performed in the State, which reflects to the credit of the Public Works Department. There is no denying that. It is not only to the tradesmen that that credit is due. The persons to whom the bulk of the credit is due are those who originally designed the buildings and supervised their construction. In that regard I would pay a very great compliment to the Principal Architect of the Public Works Department,

whose capability as an architect is recognised not only in Western Australia and Australia, but in many other parts of the world. Some of the buildings he has designed are a great credit to him, and through him to this State.

Reference was also made by Mr. Jeffery to the construction of houses in Manning Estate. Let me now give a little instance of what happened in the course of the construction of State houses. A couple of years ago when Mr. Brownlie was Chairman of the State Housing Commission, complaints were received by a certain builder, who was carrying out the erection of a group of houses in an estate, that the workmanship and material used were inferior. I might say that it was a good standard of workmanship for that day, and the materials supplied were merchantable quality materials which were then available, and for which top prices were paid.

At my request, in my capacity as secretary of the building organisation to which this person belonged, the Minister for Housing (Mr. Graham), together with Mr. Brownlie and the builder concerned made an inspection of that particular group of houses. Mr. Graham was satisfied that the workmanship and materials were all that could be asked for. Upon leaving that group of houses Mr. Brownlie drew the attention of the Minister to a row of fences which were definitely irregular. The builder admitted that they looked pretty irregular.

Then Mr. Brownlie proceeded to pick out certain faults in the first house. The builder agreed that he himself thought there were faults. The Minister then made a complete inspection of that house and condemned many points. When the builder agreed with him, the Minister asked the reason for the faulty workmanship. The builder said, "I am not building that group. That group is being constructed by the day labour organisation of the Public Works Department."

The Minister then said, in front of Mr. Brownlie and this builder—I challenge the Minister to deny having said it—that if such work was all that the day labour organisation could turn out, he would make sure that its activities were greatly curtailed in the future. Do not let us think that all poor workmanship is attributable to the individuals not engaged by the Public Works Department.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: What year was that? It is a fairy tale!

The Hon. R. C. MATTISKE: Reference was also made by Mr. Jeffery to the cost of the work being done through public tender, as against the cost through the day labour organisation. We have seen that, in the last two months, where tenders aggregating over £1,000,000 were let, there has already been a saving of £76,000; and that is in a comparatively

small batch of tenders. As the prices quoted are firm, the builders must construct to those prices. It is obvious there will be a saving of at least that amount to the Government. I say at least that much, because looking back at the estimates for the works performed by the day labour organisation, there were many cases of under-estimating.

I have not the actual figures with me, but they were published quite freely in the Press a few years ago. Regarding the cost of Royal Perth Hospital, the original estimate was increased again and again, so that ultimately the cost to the Government was several hundred thousand pounds more than was anticipated.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: What was the cost of the Chest Hospital?

The Hon. R. C. MATTISKE: Let us look at the actual cost of the Medical School, as compared with the original estimate. There is no way of binding the Public Works Department to any estimate it makes. If the actual cost exceeds the estimate the work must still proceed. No action can be taken to penalise any of the individuals responsible for making errors and miscalculations. But when similar jobs are let through private tender, there is redress on the part of the department, because a fixed quote is given, and that is the maximum cost.

It was mentioned by Mr. Jeffery that in the case of the Chest Hospital a special arrangement was entered into with the builder, because he exceeded his contract price. I do not know the details as that was a Federal Government matter. I feel sure that before making any additional payments, that Government must have been satisfied that they were well and truly merited.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: What about the Tuart Hill school? The tender was up by £20,000.

The Hon. R. C. MATTISKE: There has been some loose talk, as published in the Press, about strikes taking place in connection with this matter. We all know what is behind it. Mr. Griffith quoted recent Press reports to the effect that Mr. Chamberlain said that this was the first step towards the unseating of the Liberal Government. Those behind the move are endeavouring to use this instance as an avenue for propaganda to build up public opinion against the Liberal Government. Unfortunately for Mr. Chamberlain and those well-known Communists associated with this movement —

The Hon. E. M. Davies: Who are they? Name one.

The Hon. R. C. MATTISKE: — no such public opinion has been created. In fact their action has reacted against the very people who are trying to cause agitation. I sincerely hope that the people employed in the building industry will not heed any

of this propaganda, and will not be incited into taking action which they will greatly regret, should they take it.

Since this talk of strike action, many builders have asked me about the position should any of their employees go on strike. The employees, themselves, do not want to take that step, but they are fearful that they may be forced into doing so, and into paying the penalty for it. I would warn those tradesman to proceed very cautiously, otherwise they could impair their rights to long service leave for a start.

Therefore, I sincerely hope that they will not take any notice of the tactics which are at present being employed, and which we have seen employed so often in the past by Communists.

Dealing with the State Engineering Works, I would like to say that in this Chamber it has been stated that approximately 80 persons have been retrenched from those works. Let me correct that statement. There have been 39 workers retrenched. As is the case with the building industry, there is an officer to act as a liaison officer between the W.A. Chamber of Manufactures and the State Engineering Works. A list of the persons whose services are to be dispensed with is sent to the Chamber and the State Engineering Works, and of the 39 shown on the one and only list sent to the Chamber of Manufactures, the whole lot have been re-engaged.

There are others who have left the works voluntarily and who have also been engaged by private industry. I understand, on the authority of the Chamber of Manufactures, that if any further retrenchments should take place in the near future or even in twelve months' time, provided the present normal trend continues, they will be absorbed immediately by private contractors.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: You may be able to kid other people but you can't kid us that that is true.

The Hon. R. C. MATTISKE: I am not kidding anyone, and Mr. Lavery should know that these figures, supplied by the Chamber, are authentic; and if he likes to query that the whole of those 39 were not re-engaged, then I will be only too happy to couple him up with the individual in the Chamber who can show him exactly where they are employed.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Who said there were —

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. R. C. MATTISKE: The Hawke Administration last year issued a directive that in future all work for Government instrumentalities must be done by the appropriate Government concern, and when this was applied to the State Engineering Works, immeasurable harm was inflicted on the metal trades industry of the State.

As the result of that action and of the general lack of confidence in industry and commerce in the State, the firm of Bradford Kendall (W.A.) Pty. Ltd. which had been operating a foundry in Fremantle since 1951, was forced to close down. Also the Bassendean plant of the Commonwealth Engineering Co. Ltd. was forced to close down through lack of orders. Tomlinson's, a firm which has a world-wide reputation and which, in competition with other engineering firms throughout the world, was the successful tenderer for a considerable quantity of rollingstock for the Ceylon Government, was forced to curtail its activities to the extent that hundreds were thrown out of employment. Tomlinson's viewed the situation so seriously that it was stated freely in the Press that the firm was contemplating shifting from Western Australia to South Africa. What a fine thing for a Government which was sending Mr. Tonkin around the world in an endeavour to attract other industries to this State! At that time there was considerable unemployment in other private firms engaged in the metal trades industry.

The Hon. E. M. Davies: In other States.

The Hon. R. C. MATTISKE: Some figures obtained by the W.A. Chamber of Manufactures from a fairly extensive survey of a cross-section of the community, in which data was obtained from 28 organisations of varying sizes, reveal that there was a sharp decline in employment in the July-August, 1958, period compared with the average for 1956-57. From this survey it was evident that there was an overall fall in employment in this industry of 17.8 per cent. Tradesmen engaged in structural steel fabrication decreased by 21.2 per cent., while the unskilled persons in miscellaneous industries decreased by 32.3 per cent.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Who prepared those for you?

The Hon. R. C. MATTISKE: There was no squeal at that time, nor was there any squeal when we had a very serious drift from this State of skilled workers who previously were engaged in this industry.

The Hon. E. M. Davies: At Kwinana.

The Hon. R. C. MATTISKE: Skilled workers in the metal trades industry do not grow on trees, and it was a very serious blow indeed to this State when we lost such a large number at that time, and, from the very latest information that I have obtained from the Chamber of Manufactures, it is stated that in twelve months' time we will be in the same unfortunate position as we were in 1950 when there was such a serious shortage of those artisans.

Furthermore, it is very difficult to reconcile the action of the Hawke Administration in closing down these works at a time when it was urging people to buy local products. How absurd it is when on

one hand people are being asked to buy local products, and on the other the ones engaged in the manufacture of those products are being debarred from carrying on! It is absolutely absurd.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Who wants rollingstock?

The Hon. R. C. MATTISKE: It is interesting to note further that in reply to a question by the then Leader of the Opposition last year, the Acting Minister for Works stated that in 1951-52, the turnover of the State Engineering Works was £488,000 and that this increased to £890,000 in 1957-58. Naturally, with the increase in prices and the normal expansion of the country, one would expect the figures to go up; but not to be practically doubled; and for the whole of that work to be done, there must naturally have been a great move from private industry on the part of skilled artisans. That is precisely what happened when these other organisations were forced to close down or curtail their activities.

The State Engineering Works, with the drive given to it by all the Government orders previously carried out by public tender, was able to absorb large numbers of those workers; and now, because—as a result of the change of Government—that work is again being carried out on a competitive tender basis, there must naturally be a drift from the State Engineering Works to private employers. It is to the great credit of private employers that they are absorbing these workers as quickly as they can and that there is virtually no unemployment so far as the metal trades industry is concerned.

The Hon. E. M. Davies: More is being sent back to the Engineering Works to be done.

The Hon. R. C. MATTISKE: There was no talk of strikes at that time, because it was the policy of that Government to carry out this work by day labour, the same as it is the policy of this Government to do the same work cheaper and more efficiently by public tender.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: That will have to be found out.

The Hon. R. C. MATTISKE: Admittedly, there were protests. I myself had been engaged in certain deputations to Ministers asking that they do this or that. The Ministers after hearing the arguments did not alter their policy of socialisation and day labour. We did not then arrange for lockouts or nonsense of that sort, but simply accepted what was to be by the then Government.

And now that there is a change of Government, with a change of policy, it behoves the Opposition to accept what is being done and not endeavour to foment trouble, which will serve no useful purpose at all in changing the position, but which can only create further lack of confidence

in this State and disrupt the life of every individual citizen of Western Australia. The amendment states that the mover of the motion protests strongly against the additional large number of men to be sacked in the future and that, too, is a very sweeping statement.

We all know that the previous Government created, in Subiaco, a vast and up-to-date printing works, which could cope with far more than the normal requirements of Government work. In order to use that works to the full and to further the socialistic policy of the Government, a directive was issued by Mr. Hawke, to the effect that all Government departments, boards, trusts and so on must have their work done by the Government Printing Office. In doing that he had no regard at all for those individuals who are employed in the printing industry. Their position was grave and, had it not been for the change in Government, I have it on the authority of the Master Printers' Association of Western Australia that the printing industry in this State would have suffered a blow from which it could never have recovered.

In the printing industry there are individuals who have imported machinery in recent years to carry out certain jobs, and who, under the policy of the previous Government, would simply have wasted their capital, while the persons trained to operate those machines would have found that their efforts had been wasted. Had it not been for the fortunate change in Government there would have been, in the printing industry also, chaotic conditions.

There are various other industries, also, in which the previous Government tried to implement its policy of socialisation; but, because that policy has now been reversed, the present Government is accused of contemplating sacking further individuals in the future. That is not the position at all. The Government wants private industry to have the opportunity to compete fairly for the work, so that it may be done to Government specifications at the lowest price.

That is the only sensible thing for any Government to do, if it has regard for those who have to pay for the work to be done. I sincerely hope that the House will not agree to the amendment. We all know, as was stated by the Leader of the House, that the effect of the amendment—if agreed to—will be practically nil. In previous years there have been amendments to the Address-in-reply, and they have had no practical effect at all. The present motion is simply an avenue for propaganda of a certain type, which we all regret to see coming into our lives in Western Australia. It is not in the best interests of this Parliament, of the State or of any individual, that such conditions should enter into our lives; and therefore I strongly oppose the amendment.

THE HON. E. M. HEENAN (North-East—on amendment) [5.35]: I think that most arguments for and against the amendment have already been capably stated to the House and so I see no reason for speaking at great length in support of the amendment. I support the amendment and I feel that it might be as well at this stage to read it again to the House. It states—

We wish to protest strongly against the Government's policy of deliberately sacking many of its employees, and against the Government's expressed intention to sack additional large numbers in the future, as this policy is creating unemployment and hardship and widespread feeling of insecurity and unrest.

We wish also to protest strongly against the action of the Government in depriving many deserving single unemployed persons of supplementary help.

In his concluding remarks, Mr. Mattiske stated; "This amendment is simply an avenue of propaganda of a certain type, not in the best interests of the State." While listening to the debate I was impressed by the speech delivered by our new member, Mr. Ron Thompson who, in my opinion, supplied a lot of facts, figures and other data in support of the arguments he put forward. It stands out clearly, in my recollection of his speech last evening, that the Premier (Mr. Brand) made unambiguous statements to the Press, stating explicitly that his Government had no intention of sacking men.

In the election propaganda of the present Government, it was clearly said that no sackings were to take place and that everything would be directed to obtaining better conditions for all concerned. Mr. Ron Thompson quoted the *Daily News*, where the Premier said, in effect, "We will fire no-one," and *The West Australian*, where the Premier said, "We will restore employment and good conditions." Mr. Strickland, in moving the amendment, and other speakers in supporting it, have made clear beyond question the fact that hundreds of men have been sacked. Many employees, particularly of the Public Works Department, have resigned their positions, presumably in anticipation of being put off. In my opinion that is hard to reconcile with what the Press said during the election campaign and since then.

In my opinion what has taken place is very close to a breach of faith on the part of the Premier and his Government. I say, without equivocation, that had this outcome been known to the people of Western Australia during the election campaign, the result would have been far different. Mr. Mattiske made a profound statement. He said that a Government's duty is to govern. He did not go beyond that and, as far as it goes, I

suppose everyone would agree, because a child in the third standard would know that Governments are elected to govern the country. But of course there are many implications arising from the phrase "to govern."

In my experience and understanding one of the first duties of Government is to see that the people of the country are properly and adequately employed—

The Hon. G. Bennetts: And not stam-peded.

The Hon. E. M. HEENAN: Surely it is not the function of any Government to create unemployment! Economic conditions, as we know them today, and seasonal conditions, cause a certain amount of unemployment, without any Government deliberately making the situation worse than it already is; and that is undoubtedly what has been done. There are many members of this House more familiar than I am with the dire conditions that exist at present; but I have been in contact with many friends who are unemployed and who say that it is very difficult to obtain employment in many industries—and particularly in the building industry—at the present time.

Why the Government, which is supposed to stand by its policy of improving conditions, seizes the present time of the year to sack men and cause mental distress to them and their families, is beyond me. The situation is bad enough for the breadwinner, these days, without finding himself unemployed and with a wife and family to support, as well as an obligation to pay the rent, fares, school fees and so on.

When an unemployed man has to meet all those charges his lot and that of his family quickly becomes desperate. He may have to meet payments on a refrigerator or furniture, as well as pay his rent and so on, and in no time at all his economic situation becomes chaotic. Not only does the unemployment of the worker affect himself and his family; it also affects the furniture people and others, whom he cannot pay, and so the whole economic fabric of the country is damaged.

Once again I tell Mr. Mattiske, the Minister and others concerned, that if they wish to seek for first things for their Government to do, I would recommend that the first essential is to find and maintain employment at the highest possible level.

Great stress and play has been made on the policy of the Government. The Government is obsessed with the so-called policy of private enterprise, but as we know the economic set-up today, private enterprise and State enterprise go pretty well hand in hand. However, the members of the Government have become obsessed with the idea that private enterprise must be sponsored and fostered at all costs; with the idea that should the State undertake

anything, it is abhorrent and cannot be tolerated. That obsession, if it persists, will, I am sure, bring about the fall of the Government.

Mr. Mattiske said that we are using this motion as propaganda. If it is propaganda used against the Government which is committing an act which is foolish and unwise, we are on the right track. That hon. member charged the members of my party with fomenting trouble, and he warned some workers of the dire consequences. However, I urge him to be more realistic and to try to use his powers of persuasion on his own Government to adopt a more sensible policy. If its policy is the sponsoring of private enterprise, well and good, but it should bear in mind that in past years in Western Australia, private enterprise and Government enterprise have worked fairly well together.

A large working force has been employed by the Government for many years and some men have been in service for 20 years. Surely, whatever Government is in power, and irrespective of the arguments for private enterprise or State trading, this State has an obligation to those men and the families dependent upon them, instead of the Government callously, at this time of the year, sacking them and leaving them unemployed until such time as they can find other jobs.

The men who have been employed in the Public Works Department for 15 or 20 years have reached an age when they will not get much consideration when seeking employment from a private contractor in the building trade. It is a bad set-up and I am sure that if the people of Western Australia had an opportunity tomorrow to review the decision they made at the last general election, they would quickly do so, because the electors did not vote for this Government so that it could sack people and break up a satisfactory state of affairs that had been in operation for some years.

The motion for the amendment to the Address-in-reply is well merited. The arguments advanced by Mr. Strickland, Mr. Wise, Mr. Thompson, Mr. Jeffery, Mrs. Hutchison and other Labour members far outweigh in merit the arguments of other speakers. I am sure that if merit alone counted for anything, this amendment would be carried. Unfortunately, the decision will not be made on a question of merit, but will be resolved by weight of numbers, and the amendment will be defeated. However, I will vote for the side in support of the amendment.

THE HON. A. R. JONES (Midland—on amendment) [5.50]: Before I speak to the Address-in-reply, I take this opportunity to congratulate the Leader of the House upon his appointment and also his colleague sitting by his side, Mr. Logan. I have already congratulated them privately, but I would like my congratulations to be

recorded on this occasion. I wish them every success in the performance of their duties.

I have listened with great interest to the whole of the debate on this amendment and to the last speaker in particular. I am wondering how he formed the opinion that the motion before the Chair was well based because, from submissions that have been made to date, I cannot see that any weight can be placed upon it. If the position were as bad as has been stated, I am sure that we would know more about it than we do. I admit that probably the numbers of unemployed that have been submitted to us are not quite correct, but I do not think the situation is as grave as some of the speakers supporting the amendment make out.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: There are none so blind as those who will not see.

The Hon. A. R. JONES: I agree wholeheartedly with the Minister for Works for tackling this question, because it merely carries out what the Government promised it would do. I admit that perhaps more discretion could have been used. It is wrong to sack men without making provision for them to be placed in other jobs. However, I consider that the statements made by Mr. Strickland and Mrs. Hutchison are too silly for words, inasmuch as they said that there are so many men being sacked that no one cares what happens to them and the Government has no sense of decency or moral values.

We can all cast our minds back to the depression years of 1930, 1931 and 1932 when things were pretty grim and many of us carried our swags as did Mr. Strickland, on his own admission. I do not think any of us are ashamed of what we experienced in those times because we came through them with flying colours and none of us starved. Although unemployed men accepted dole money in those days, they did do some work in return for it. At present single unemployed men are being paid social benefits without their giving anything in return.

The Hon. E. M. Davies: Tell the Commonwealth Government to put more work in hand so that they may be employed.

The Hon. A. R. JONES: I think Mr. Strickland rather ridiculed the body of men who worked for the Public Works Department. I understand that there is a little over 2,000 of them. Mr. Strickland stated that these men are going to be sacked. If that is to be so and they are to be thrown out of employment for some time, it means that there is no building work offering at present upon which they can be employed. However, such is not the case, because the position in the building industry is not the same today as it was 12 or 18 months ago. I am sure these men dismissed from the Public

Works Department will not be long unemployed before they are absorbed by private enterprise. As far as I can gather there are no more than about 30 men unemployed at present.

The Hon. R. Thompson: You come down with me any day you like to the Trades Hall and I will soon show you whether there are only 30 men unemployed.

The Hon. A. R. JONES: Of course, I know that there are more than 30 unemployed in Western Australia because there are always a certain number of men who are temporarily out of work whilst they change their jobs. However, they would be unemployed for only about a week. The men I am referring to are those who have been stood down by the Public Works Department. Are there more than 30 unemployed ex-Public Works Department men today? Nobody seems to be able to tell me. The Minister shakes his head, apparently indicating that there are not 30 men unemployed.

The action of the Government in dismissing these men will merely mean that they will be working for another boss. Surely Mr. Strickland is not going to tell us that it takes 30 or 40 more men to do a job for the Public Works Department than it would if it were done by private enterprise. Surely Mr. Lavery or Mrs. Hutchison will not agree with that, because that would not be right, would it, Mr. President?

In my opinion there is not the great scare of unemployment that some people try to make us believe. I think that, perhaps, the matter could have been handled a little more judiciously; that contracts could have been let and time granted to private contractors to enable them to recruit the services of these men before they were stood down by the Public Works Department. If that had been done, no doubt some of these men who are now unemployed could have been saved some hardship.

The Hon. R. Thompson: That would have been a socialistic move, would it not?

The Hon. A. R. JONES: It is no use Mr. Thompson saying that. Mr. Heenan said, "Fancy putting people out of work at this time of the year!" However, what did the previous Government do just before Christmas? Does it matter whether men are dismissed at this time of the year or before Christmas? Such talk is all poppycock! I do not know whether the men sitting in the gallery are unemployed or not, but I hope they have enough good sense to sum up the position for themselves. All this noise has been created by people who want it created. It is serious indeed when responsible men like Mr. Strickland—now the Leader of the Opposition in this House—put forward such a

weak argument in favour of an amendment to the Address-in-reply. The second portion of that amendment is as follows:—

We wish also to protest strongly against the action of the Government in depriving many deserving single unemployed persons of supplementary help.

Naturally, a person has no desire to be unemployed. That would be the view held by 99 per cent. of good Western Australians. There is only about one per cent. of the population who have no desire to work, but they are hangers-on and leeches on the rest of the community. We are not considering those men at all because they are, "No-hoppers." Unfortunately, we will always have a certain percentage of those men with us. The average worker dreads the thought of becoming unemployed, but there are occasions when men, of necessity, must lose their employment. However, it is a well-known fact that many farmers who are carving farms out of virgin bush have plenty of work for men, but they have not the money to pay them. Despite the fact that some of the unemployed have been offered work at a reduced rate of pay, they will not take it and, I suppose, the unions will say that that is the right attitude for them to adopt. However, there is no sense in a person who is desirous of having a job done, paying a man full wages to do a job if he cannot get value for his money. I have no desire to see any unemployed in Fremantle, but, nevertheless, I would not like to pay a man the full basic wage if he could not earn it for me, because he knew nothing about the job I wanted him to do.

When times are such that there is not full employment, reasonable concessions should be made, so that those men could be at least taken into the country, found an honest living, and asked to do a certain amount of work for a reduced pay.

The Hon. R. Thompson: At a reduced rate! What about the price of wheat?

The PRESIDENT: Order! I shall name the hon. member if he does not keep order.

The Hon. A. R. JONES: There is plenty of work to be had providing the man who is prepared to offer that work is able to get his pound's worth of work.

The PRESIDENT: Will the hon. member please address the Chair?

The Hon. A. R. JONES: When the position arises that people are unemployed, and when they cannot find employment, they should be prepared to do some work for the money they receive. I remember that in the depression years of 1931-32, even though people were given money, they were expected to do a couple of days' work. I am sure that a decent type of man would be quite prepared to work for his pay rather than receive a hand-out. As I have

said, employment could be found provided the people concerned did not ask exorbitant wages for the jobs they might be doing.

I hope the House will fully consider this amendment in an effort to ensure that the Government will do the right thing. I do not see, however, how the arguments put forward can help us. The publicity we receive from this sort of thing serves no further purpose than to make the people who visit this place take a second look and wonder whether it would be wise to invest their money.

I do not know whether the Minister did not handle the position as well as he might have done; nor do I know whether the fault lies with the Press in playing these things up. I am not too sure where the fault lies, but I am concerned that men should find themselves unemployed. It is a great hardship. There are members on that side of the House who say that we on this side have no decency; that we do not pay as much attention to these problems as they do. That of course is quite incorrect, and I ask members to defeat the amendment.

THE HON. W. F. WILLESEE (North—on amendment) [6.3]: The amendment is divided into two sections; the second section being worded as an item of protest against the action of the Government in withdrawing the additional 17s. 6d. a week from single men who were receiving unemployment benefits. The Premier said that this additional benefit had been abolished with the proviso that it would be paid in cases where extreme hardship could be proved by the applicant. When we look into the question of an application for unemployment benefits—and it is necessary for one to make such application to obtain these benefits from the Social Services Department—one finds it is necessary to prepare a most comprehensive document, in which are included, many personal questions. This must be completed before the benefit is recognised and before the applicant can be paid.

I would say that any person who could establish in his own right the opportunity to receive unemployment benefits from the Commonwealth, should hardly be asked to move any further in this direction in view of a previous Government's acknowledgment of the situation in granting an additional 17s. 6d. over and above the amount paid by the Social Services Department.

I think the Government today can only create additional work in its own administrative department by investigating something that has already been proven, and is already genuine. I therefore feel that the second portion of the amendment is justified. I think it is quite legitimate that we should voice that protest in Parliament. I intend to be brief. There have been many speeches on this subject, and I do not intend to occupy the time of the House unduly.

With those remarks, and my unqualified support for the second portion of the amendment, I propose, briefly, to deal with the wording of the first portion of the amendment which reads as follows:—

We wish to protest strongly against the Government's policy of deliberately sacking many of its employees, and against the Government's expressed intention to sack additional large numbers in the future, as this policy is creating unemployment and hardship and widespread feeling of insecurity and unrest.

I do not dispute that the Government has a right to implement a policy in which it believes. It can be truthfully said that it won that right in the recent election, when it became the Government. But I do disagree with the method of implementation which the Government has employed. The position of the Public Works employees in particular should have been handled in a manner whereby the situation could have been frozen, as was done by the previous Government in the case of the railways.

I think a directive should have been issued that no new personnel would be taken on; that people reaching the retiring age would not be replaced; that resignations would not be replaced, and so on. The policy could have been implemented carefully, systematically, and without hardship to any particular individual. I feel there must be some effect on the future flow of tradesmen, when we find the Government taking an action such as it has in this case. I believe that apprentices of the future—boys leaving school this year, and about to be assigned to apprenticeships—must wonder what all this is about. If they cannot receive continuity of employment after having undergone a period of training and teaching in a trade, and if there is to be instability at the point when they become accomplished tradesmen, it will at once create grave doubts in the minds of applicants for artisanship.

We could suffer if this state of affairs continued unduly; we could suffer to the extent that in years to come there would be a dearth of good tradesmen, because they would feel that they were not getting their right and just consideration in the economy of the State.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: What percentage of tradesmen were employed by the Public Works Department—

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Minister will not interject.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Do not infringe Standing Orders.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: I feel that any person who is put out of employment, even for the briefest period of time, must suffer to a greater degree than has been the case previously. In saying that I am mindful of the hire-purchase grip

throughout the State. I believe it would not be beyond the authority and scope of the Government to do something to ensure that a person, during a period of unemployment, did not lose family possessions such as essential items of furniture; particularly if this was the result of a change in policy.

It would not take long for a married man with a young family to lose some of his very treasured possessions; things like refrigerators, washing machines and possibly suites of furniture, which today are bought on time payment. That, as we all know, is a recognised mode of purchase in these days. We should ask the Government to watch this point and to make some preparation for cushioning the impact of what could be a very great loss to a family man in a critical period of his life.

The Hon. A. R. Jones: I think that is the policy of the hire-purchase companies now.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: I do not think it is so in all cases; there are some cases where this does apply but I do not think it has universal effect. In view of the circumstances I have briefly outlined I consider the amendment justified. I believe it to be necessary and I accordingly support it.

THE HON. G. BENNETTS (South-East—on amendment) [6.12]: Like other Labour members I am, of course, supporting the amendment.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Why, of course?

The Hon. G. BENNETTS: At the outset I must say that I am surprised at the action of the Government. The Government said that it had a mandate to carry into effect the disbanding of day-labour, and the leasing out of work by contract and tender. If that were the Government's intention, I should have thought it would have been a better idea had the Government come to Parliament and said that it was its intention in 12 months' time to carry out this policy. The workers would then have had time to secure other employment; they would have been able to make provision for some of the obligations to which they had committed themselves.

We all know that the Labour Party represents the people of the working class, whereas the Liberal Party represents the big business section. There is no doubt that they work hand in glove with that section against the working class people. They must however employ these working class people. It was said to me a short while ago, "What is this home-wrecking Government we have? That should be its name, rather than Liberal-Country Party Government." I do not know whether the sentiment expressed is the correct one, but it certainly is in keeping with the Government's policy.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: If that was not so much tripe, I would ask you to withdraw it.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. G. BENNETTS: Had it not been for the people who protested against the action of the Government, I am sure there would have been a far greater number of sackings. The time has come when the Government should ease up on some of these sackings. I hope the Government will reconsider the position and decide to give the matter 12 months' consideration before doing anything further. Whereas the previous Government apportioned its work on a day-labour basis, the present Government, the moment it took office, let the work by contract and tender.

I do not know whether that was a good thing or not, but I do know it is always better to have full employment in the State; unemployment is no good at all. If there is full employment it naturally follows that the people will spend their money in purchasing food and other commodities.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The Hon. G. BENNETTS: As I was saying before the tea suspension, mention has been made to me that the present Government is a home-wrecking Government. I do not like using that expression—

The Hon. L. A. Logan: You do not have to.

The Hon. G. BENNETTS:—but it is a fact that many of these people in the gallery tonight have had their services dispensed with. Some of them are young and some are middle-aged. It will be hard for these people to find work in their own trades, and they might have to turn to something else. When people reach a certain age they are unable to carry out some of the occupations which may be offered to them. Therefore, hardship is being caused to these people. Even the young people have obligations because they are paying off their homes, and many of them have large families.

The Hon. A. R. Jones: How do you know?

The Hon. G. BENNETTS: I know that the only way working-class people are able to purchase various items is by way of hire purchase.

The Hon. A. R. Jones: What about large families?

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. G. BENNETTS: Judging by the look of some of them, they could have large families. If that were so they would suffer great hardship by being unemployed. I was engaged in railway work for 30 years, because I regarded it as a

permanent position. It gave me an assurance of an income each fortnight, and I was able to keep my large family by budgeting the money I earned.

Today, people have to pay up to £4 or £5 per week in order to meet the instalments on their homes. That is something which goes on from year to year and they require a guarantee of work in order to carry out their obligations.

As I remarked before, I would not have said anything about this matter had the Government said, "We gave the people an assurance we would revert to contract work. We are going to put this policy into operation but will give the people 12 months' notice before we make a start." Had the Government done this, people would have had time to look around for some other suitable employment. Many people were employed on the new Rural and Industries Bank building, but the Government did away with day labour and let the work out on contract, thus causing the men to be unemployed. It has been stated that a lot of these men are now employed by private contractors, but whether that is so, I do not know.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Not on that job.

The Hon. G. BENNETTS: If contractors do employ the men, they would certainly pick the cream and not worry about others over a certain age. The position in regard to age—where a person over the age of 40 finds it hard to get work—does not exist only in this State. During a recent trip to Melbourne, while waiting for a train on the Melbourne station, I met a chap who had come from Newcastle. He was 50 years of age. He told me that he was unable to secure work in Melbourne and had to obtain social service. Everywhere he tried for a job he was told that the age limit in most firms was 35 years.

The Hon. A. R. Jones: Life begins at 40!

The Hon. G. BENNETTS: I wish now to refer to a remark made by Mr. Mattiske. He said that the attendance of people in the gallery was communist inspired. I would say that most of the people in the gallery were decent living people. There may be some Communists among them, but I think these people are entitled to know what is taking place here and whether the Government is going to reconsider its policy. I think they have every right to come and listen to the debates in this House. It may put pressure on the Government if it sees that a lot of interest is being taken by the people affected.

The Hon. R. C. Mattiske: It is a pity a lot more do not do it.

The Hon. G. BENNETTS: Mr. Jones mentioned that perhaps some of these people could work in the bush at a lower rate of pay in order to keep their families

going with food. I think that is a step in the wrong direction. I would not like to see anyone offer their services for less than the basic rate of pay. The Australian people have to maintain a standard of living.

The Hon. J. G. Hislop: The Arbitration Court does that.

The Hon. G. BENNETTS: The Arbitration Court has set an example for the people in Australia.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member must proceed without interruption.

The Hon. G. BENNETTS: I was surprised to hear Mr. Jones make that statement. During the war a good job was done by those employed at the State Engineering Works in Fremantle. I have never heard their work faulted by anyone.

Mr. Mattiske mentioned that many of the foundries were closing down because there was not enough work to keep them going. Is that because their work is not up to the standard of that of the State Engineering Works? Perhaps a lot of the goods which were exported from the foundries in this State are now being manufactured in the countries to which they were exported.

Not many rail wagons are required; and I think one job done by a private firm was quite good. However, let us keep the workshops going at Midland Junction where there is a competent staff. I would say that the work performed in the Midland Junction Workshops on locomotives is very good. The P.M. engine was one of the highest-class steam engines built in the Commonwealth, and the best used on our railways, until one of the engineers made alterations to the standard and ruined the lot. The men working in these places are good tradesmen, and in all justice we should keep them there.

Mention was made that many of these people may have voted for the D.L.P. If they are now satisfied that by doing so it has been the means of allowing the Government to bring about this unemployment situation, I hope they will reconsider their action when the next election is held by supporting a Labour Government, which has always been the worker's friend.

One of the first things this Government did was to upset the operations of the Unfair Trading Commissioner. The Act under which he operates is one of the fairest that we have ever had in this State.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: What has this got to do with the amendment?

The PRESIDENT: Order! It is not the subject matter before the House.

The Hon. G. BENNETTS: It is causing unemployment.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I disagree, and the hon. member will proceed with the amendment.

The Hon. G. BENNETTS: Very well, Sir. I would like the Minister in charge of this House to correct me if I am wrong. The Minister in another place said last night that 20 persons per week would go out of the Public Works Department over the next 62 weeks. If that statement is wrong I would like to be corrected.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: There is a time and place to ask questions.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Especially awkward questions!

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: That is a correct statement.

The Hon. G. BENNETTS: Last night, mention was made in regard to married women causing unemployment. I fear that that is so, but I do not know what can be done about it.

The Hon. A. R. Jones: They are not in the building trade.

The Hon. G. BENNETTS: I support the amendment and hope that it will be carried.

THE HON. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM (South-East—on amendment) [7.48]: In all the speeches that have been made to the amendment, a phrase has been repeated which I have done my best to trace, but I have not been able to find its origin. The words used are, "This Government's declared policy of sacking Public Works Department workers." Those words have been used in a dozen different ways, but all carried the same implication; namely, a deliberately declared policy of the dismissal of Public Works Department employees.

Can any member show me where this policy has been declared either by word of mouth or in print? There is even a great divergence of opinion among Opposition members themselves. Last night, in another place, one such member spoke at great length, and repeatedly said he had attended meetings of the Premier and of the Premier's supporters, and that he had never once heard the Premier or anyone else declare that it was the intention to sack Public Works Department employees.

In this House tonight the same statement has been made by the Opposition. Apparently members cannot say where this statement was originally made. Yet, it has been said time and again that it is the declared policy of the Government to deliberately sack employees. The question has been asked: How many people have been dismissed? The exact figures have been given. According to *The West Australian*, in answer to a question that was asked, the actual figure is in the vicinity of 170. That is the number of men who have actually left the employment of the Public Works Department. Some have gone of their own accord, and some have been dismissed, but about 70 of them were

immediately absorbed into private employment. A great number—approximately 60—have still not registered for unemployment relief. The inference to be drawn from that is that they have found alternative employment.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: It is not.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: The hon. member is making a great speech under her breath. If she can refute these statements, I will be glad to listen to her because, for a long time, we have heard the unsupported statement that it is the Government's declared intention to do something; but not one member can tell us where that declaration was made.

The Hon. E. M. Davies: You know it is true.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: The nearest thing I can find to such a statement is that the Government declared its policy of changing from day labour to private contract, or the public tender system, and to bring about this change with a minimum of unemployment.

In other words, the stress all along has been on the Government's intention not to create unemployment. In fact, the unemployment position today among Public Works Department workers is less than it was when the Government took over. The figures cannot be disputed. The hearts of members bleed for these workers! That has been the definite impression which has been gained in this House and in another place. We have heard burning speeches of strife and upset. But I am amazed at the reticence of members when, at the end of last year, without any warning or preparation, some 200 employees were thrown on the labour market by the Labour Government.

The Hon. E. M. Davies: The Government had no money.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: The hon. member is proud to say that the Government had no money.

The Hon. E. M. Davies: Do not put words into my mouth. I did not say that.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: The Government had no money to maintain the employment of the force it had built up. Why did it not have the money? It was because, over a period, the Government had squandered a greater amount of money than had ever been made available to a State Government before. At the end of the period the Government found itself without enough money to maintain the work force which had increased from about 1,000 to 4,000 employees. So, at the end of the time the Government just had to dice them.

To me, that looks like an inept piece of management by the Minister. Tonight, another member said that certain things would not occur with a good Minister.

Here we have a case of a Minister who so ineptly managed his department that, almost within days, a work force of about 200 people had to be thrown out of employment; and no preparation was made for them to be absorbed by private enterprise. That occurred just before Christmas. Are we to believe that it is any less palatable for a workman to find himself out of work because he is sacked by a Labour Government instead of by a Liberal Government?

The Hon. E. M. Davies: Your Government is deliberately doing this.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: Of course not. These men were thrown out of work because of the ineptness of the Government. Prior to that time, the Government had issued a directive that all Government work had to be done by Government departments, knowing full well that the work taken from private firms would create unemployment. That was a deliberate campaign of slowly starving private enterprise, and forcing people on the labour market so that there would be a pool of unemployed. The work that was being compulsorily directed to Government instrumentalities, of course, found its way to the Government workshops, the Government printing works and so on. These departments had a glorious case to support a request that they should extend their works and increase the number of employees to cope with the work coming in. This forced feeding of an overfed baby ended at the end of the year when the Government could no longer go on feeding the baby; it had no money!

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: But we had a policy.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: After Christmas, another large group of workers were thrown, deliberately, on to the labour market.

The Hon. E. M. Davies: Who?

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: The teachers. Did not the hon. member hear about that?

The Hon. E. M. Davies: I thought they were married women.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: There was no "drumming" of the people to try to create unrest or lack of confidence in the Government of the day. What could be more conducive to a lack of confidence in a Government or a Minister than to have such things occur? This group of people were permitted to take their holidays, and return and start work again, and, after the date on which they normally expected to receive notice that their services were no longer required, they were suddenly faced with unemployment.

The Hon. E. M. Davies: Were they breadwinners?

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: The hon. member who says they were not breadwinners must have a very poor opinion of those people. They were useful members of the department, whether they were breadwinners or not. I presume that the money they earned was not just put into a sock. I suggest that a lot of them were widows who had been on call for a long time. In any case, there was no justification for those people being dismissed at almost a moment's notice, after being led to believe that their employment was safe.

We have heard that the employees in the Public Works Department had a right to consider that their permanence of employment was secure. Time and again their future security has been mentioned. What security was there for these 200 people at the end of last year; or for a large group of teachers at the beginning of this year? There was very little; and it is cold comfort to have members come here now and put on a show to try to deliberately create a feeling of lack of confidence in this State.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: It is politics, though.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: That is admitted, but it is not good politics.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Will you guarantee all the teachers employment?

The Hon. E. M. Davies: He is deaf; he cannot hear that.

The PRESIDENT: Will the hon. member resume his seat? I hope that the front bench of the Opposition will not interject so much. Members had their opportunity to make their speeches. The hon. member may proceed.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: The interjections do not upset me in the least.

The PRESIDENT: No, but they are not proper.

The HON. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: I bow to your ruling, Sir. I want to return to a text book case of work being done under the two methods—day labour and contract. Not many years ago, most of the Federal works were done under the day labour system. The Federal authorities had exactly the same troubles as we have had. They had a growing work force and the costs were far greater than if the work had been carried out by other methods of employment. So, the Federal Department of Ways and Works made the same decision that we, belatedly, are making now; namely, that the work would be done by contract.

At the present time, instead, as we usually found, of there being one major Federal project going on at a time in this city, with a fairly large work force for a long period, there are four major Federal

contracts in progress in this town, employing, in actual fact, nearly double the number that would, in ordinary circumstances, have been employed by the Commonwealth Department.

Also we find in Hay-st. that two buildings of much the same dimensions, and with the same need for special security, are being constructed. Both are banks and both are multi-storey buildings, and they both have to have similar security rooms. On one of them, where the work was being carried out by day labour, the excavations, which were of a cubic capacity of approximately the same as the other, were commenced five weeks ahead of the work on the Commonwealth Bank building.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Tell us when work will resume on the R. & I. Bank.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: Periodically one can find at both banks, circulars giving an outline of the men employed, the work completed, the stages reached and the materials used.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Tell us who stopped the work on the R. & I. Bank.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: Work on the R. & I. Bank, as far as I know, has not stopped.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: There has been nothing for two days.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: I understand it is to be completed by day labour to ground level. If I am not correct, I will stand being interrupted. But I am pretty sure I am right.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Do you support that?

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: Today the other job, which is carried out by contract, has all the concrete work completed up to the third storey. But the State job is still a hole-in-the-ground, and work is still continuing on its foundation. I have been told that a great deal of under-pinning and foundation work had to be done in connection with the Town Hall. I understand the cost was about £60,000.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: To be correct, £80,000.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: The other building is alongside a multi-storey building which had to be under-pinned. For this work all sorts of engineering "doo-dahs" had to be made.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Tell us why no work is being carried on at the Rural and Industries Bank.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: I will answer the hon. member. It is not difficult for members to think back and imagine a heap of sand with a man throwing a shovelful of sand a fair distance, and another man throwing a shovelful on to the side of the excavation, and a third man throwing it to the top;

and then the sand being wheeled in barrows round the excavation and dumped back down into the excavation behind the foundation work about 12 ft. away from the original dump.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Mind you don't fall down the open cut!

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: If members imagine that what I am describing took place 20 years ago, they are wrong, because that is what was being done at the Rural and Industries Bank two weeks ago.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Why is no work being done there now?

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: The work of shifting the heap of sand that had accumulated in the centre of the excavation, has been carried out by six men shovelling the sand and dumping it down again into the excavation, behind the concrete work, about 10 or 12 ft. away from the original heap.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Who stopped the work?

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: The same work was done on another job with a chain bucket which required the services of only one man.

The Hon. E. M. Heenan: Why did not you hop in and help?

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: There is always a helper in the House. I buttonholed one individual who did not have a shovel in his hand. I presumed that he was the foreman. I asked him what was the idea of doing the work in this way. He was very cagey and said, "Who are you?" I had no reason to disguise my identity so I said that I was a member of Parliament. He replied, "You go and ask so-and-so. I'm not talking." This was at the place where the hon. member says no work is going on.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Neither there is.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: If there is no work going on, there ought to be more supervision, because there are workers there and the place is like a beehive.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Who stopped the work?

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: We hear it said by members of the Opposition that Government members in this House have a very poor opinion of the work done by the Public Works Department, or Government employees, or even Midland Junction Workshop employees.

The Hon. E. M. Davies: You have made enough insinuations about it.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: We are just as observant as the Labour members of Parliament. I have ridden in the same carriages as Mr. Bennetts, and I have complimented the workers on

the work that has been put into those carriages. The same men, if they were not working for the Government, would be working for private enterprise. Those now working for private enterprise are doing the same sort of work, using the same skills and so on, so why should members of the Opposition say that, because men are working for one boss, their work deteriorates as compared with when they are working for another boss?

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: If that is so why change the position?

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: We do not agree with that idea at all. We subscribe to the view, as has been expressed before, that the Government's job is to govern and to do those things for the people which they cannot do, or cannot do better for themselves.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: Such as sacking them?

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: Like the teachers? Is that what the hon. member means?

The PRESIDENT: Order! The hon. member must address the Chair.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: It is very convenient for members to save their consciences by forgetting what happened several months ago, but remembering vividly what is happening now. It is better publicity at present than it was then.

The Hon. E. M. Davies: It's a pity you didn't remember what happened a few years ago.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: We rely on the good sound commonsense of the average worker today to know that he is being used, because it is obvious that that is what is happening. The workers are being used. Obviously they know it, and it must be disappointing to members of the Opposition to see these people sitting quietly in the gallery. I am sure that members of the Opposition expected these people in the gallery to be roaring and shouting; but it is not very complimentary to these men if that is what some hon. members expected. We find these people are quite orderly; they have come along to listen to what is going on and to form their own conclusions. They do not want to listen to the drivel that is going on in the background all the time.

The Hon. E. M. Davies: They are listening to you.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Are you a driveller?

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: There was an election not long ago and both parties expounded their policies. One party stated quite definitely that its policy was to create confidence in the State; that was the theme the whole of its discussion. Now we find that the Opposition is trying to create a lack of confidence, although

everywhere one goes one hears of the Brand-new Government that is doing such a good job.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: We are happy to belong to that Government.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: You are an actor.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: Members who hoped to create unrest and a lack of confidence in the future, are finding the pressure of their steam falling off.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: You should be in Hollywood. You are a real actor.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: What is expected to be accomplished by this amendment to the Address-in-reply?

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: A fair go.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: A fair go!

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Yes; and no sackings.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: That is the first time we have heard mention of a fair go. Probably, as experts in what should be a fair go, members of the Opposition should know what to do. Many people were dismissed during the regime of the previous Government because, according to those members who comprised the previous Government, it had no money. That Government had wasted money for so long that it had none left; so it should know what a fair go is. I do not blame those members for wanting to see a fair go.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: And no sackings.

The PRESIDENT: I hope the hon. member will stop interjecting.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: We should encourage the present Government to go ahead with its intention of giving a fair go, because there is no doubt that when the present Government's policy is in full swing, just as the Ways and Works Department is now in full swing, there will be more building work being carried out; this will result in greater employment, more buildings being erected and more money for everyone concerned. All the dire predictions which were made in the past did not come about, nor will they in this case, because the present Government is anxious and keen to see complete and full employment.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: That is right. Sack the people.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: We often hear derogatory remarks passed about free enterprise and profits—that dirty word “profits.” How can those supporters of free enterprise and profits make profits if half the country is unemployed?

The more employment there is the more goods there are produced, and the more goods produced the more progress is made, because more money is available and there is more prosperity in the State. I hope members in this House will see the sanity of the present policy of the Government and support it wholeheartedly.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: By sacking the people!

THE HON. E. M. DAVIES (West—on amendment) [8.6]: It would be quite obvious that I intend to support the amendment moved by Mr. Strickland; but as a preamble to my remarks I should like to ask you, Sir, to permit me to deal with one or two things that Mr. Mattiske said. I trust that you will not consider them to be outside the ambit of the debate. Mr. Mattiske made certain statements regarding Mr. Chamberlain and other Communists.

The Hon. R. C. Mattiske: I did not say "Mr. Chamberlain and other Communists."

The Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I take strong objection to it because there are no Communists in the Labour Party.

Point of Order

The Hon. R. C. MATTISKE: On a point of order, Mr. President, I object to the insinuation made, or the statement Mr. Davies has just made, that I used the words "Mr. Chamberlain and other Communists." I did not use those words and I ask for a withdrawal of the hon. member's remarks.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member has asked for a withdrawal.

The Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I have no intention of withdrawing, because Mr. Mattiske made a statement regarding the organisation of the galleries and said that it was done by Mr. Chamberlain and other Communists.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member has taken exception to it and under the Standing Orders you will have to withdraw your statement. I think you had better do so.

The Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I would like to see the report. I will have to be given some proof that I am wrong.

The PRESIDENT: I will have to call for the *Hansard* report of what Mr. Mattiske said if the hon. member wants proof of it. Does Mr. Mattiske intend to proceed with his request?

The Hon. R. C. MATTISKE: Yes.

The PRESIDENT: I will leave the Chair until the *Hansard* report is obtained.

Sitting suspended from 8.10 to 8.15 p.m.

The PRESIDENT: I find the following in the *Hansard* report—

Mr. Mattiske: Those behind the move are endeavouring to use this instance as an avenue for propaganda to build up public opinion against the Liberal Government. Unfortunately for Mr. Chamberlain and those well-known Communists associated with this movement—

The Hon. E. M. Davies: Who are they? Name one.

I hope the hon. member will now withdraw his statement.

The Hon. E. M. DAVIES: With due respect to you, Sir, I do not think there is much difference between what I said and what is reported in *Hansard*. In my opinion they mean the same.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member should not qualify a withdrawal.

The Hon. E. M. DAVIES: Without disagreeing with you, Mr. President, I withdraw what I said.

Debate Resumed

The Hon. E. M. DAVIES: Following on, Mr. Mattiske referred to the cost of building under the day-labour system; what he did not tell us was that when some of the costs were increased beyond the original estimate for the structures, there was an increase in the basic wage.

That brings to my mind the conditions following the last war when one could not get a contractor to build a dwelling house, except on a cost-plus basis; that is, when there was an increase in the cost of the materials or in the basic wage, it was added to the original contract price.

The hon. member went on further to refer to the Hawke Government's socialistic undertakings. I might ask what socialistic undertakings the Hawke Government brought into being. I can refer the hon. member back to not so many years ago when Mr. Brand, now Premier of this State, but who was then the Minister for Works and controlled the State Electricity Commission, took over from the Fremantle City Council and other local authorities the electricity undertakings.

During the negotiations he was informed that the Municipal Transport Board in Fremantle was not desirous of being taken over by the Government, because it had 16 years of its agreement to run. But the Minister, who is now the Premier, said, "I will bring down a Bill and cancel your agreement." He threatened to do that if the board did not come to heel and agree to the undertaking being taken over. So, as a result, the McLarty-Watts Government took over the electricity undertaking but left the transport service which was run in conjunction with it.

Today the interest received from the bonds which were issued for the taking over of the electricity undertaking has been used for running municipal transport; at least most of it. It ill becomes Mr. Mattiske to refer to the Hawke Government's socialistic undertaking. If there is any action in this State more socialistic than the one I have just mentioned, I have yet to learn of it. It ill behoves these people, who have no cause at all, to draw a red herring across the trail in an attempt to hide the trend from the people.

We have heard something about the construction of the Rural and Industries Bank. I understand that Mr. Strickland tried to obtain some answers from Mr. Cunningham, who apparently has been the works supervisor down there and seems to know a great deal about the matter! There has been no work done on that project for over a week. When the contractor was to take over from the Public Works Department, he was asked to continue the employment of the men who were being displaced from the Public Works Department. He said, "I do not want them. I do not want anyone from the Public Works Department. I am terminating the services of some of my own men whom I am employing elsewhere." So much for the statement made in this House this evening that there is no unemployment, and that an avenue of employment has been found for the men who have been displaced as a result of the action taken by the present Government.

I feel that Her Majesty's Opposition in this State would be falling down on its job if it did not bring down an amendment to the Address-in-reply, to at least place in cold print the action of the present Government in terminating the services of some people who have been employed by the Public Works Department for a good number of years.

It is well known that men are being thrown out of employment. There is no doubt about that. It is all very well to suggest that some of those men will have the opportunity of being absorbed by private organisations, but there are some who have not yet been able to obtain employment.

We have, from time to time, heard a great deal from the Government about the people of this country who served in the Armed Forces during the war, and what a grateful mother country would do for them. Yet we find there are ex-servicemen whose services have been terminated. What is more, there is a department with approximately 50 members, five per cent. of which are ex-servicemen who are suffering from injuries received during their war service.

The Hawke Government raised no objection to these men being given leave to receive treatment, provided they had a medical certificate to indicate that that was necessary. We find that the present

Government is telling us that it is going to introduce another system, and in doing so it will terminate the employment of ex-servicemen, who are partially disabled and who have been given work in the Public Works Department, and for whom arrangements had been made for them to receive the necessary medical treatment from time to time, so that they could carry on and earn a livelihood.

What is to become of these disabled ex-servicemen? Are they to be thrown on to the labour market? Will the private employer accept them and agree to their being given time off? Certainly not. Yet we find some people coming here and attempting to camouflage the issue by saying that such a thing is not intended and will not come about. I am just about tired of listening to this sort of thing.

These people who are employed in the Public Works Department have been part and parcel of our way of life. Some people prefer to earn their livelihood by going into business; others enter professions; others desire clerical work; and yet others, perhaps not so fortunate, have to take on labouring work.

The tradesmen and labourers are also citizens of this State. They entered the service of the Public Works Department believing that, at least, they would have security of employment until they retired. They also have to think about their homes and their families. It appears to me that the action of the present Government has been taken without due consideration being given to these factors.

I do not want to say anything personal against the Ministers of the Government; they have been elected by the people and they have taken their places in the Government; but they have not given real consideration to the result of their action, except to say, "It is our policy." Is it their policy to deprive people, who have been associated with the Public Works Department for so many years, of their livelihood?

I can say that the Mitchell-Latham Government of which you, Mr. President, were the Deputy Premier, made no attempt to do anything like what has been attempted on this occasion; neither did the McLarty-Watts Government in its six years of office. Those Governments utilised the Public Works Department for construction work, when conditions were difficult and labour was scarce.

What fate will those workers receive from the present Government? I am told that it is the intention of the Government, between now and Christmas, to displace at least 600 men from the Public Works Department so as to give effect to its policy.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Another 1,000 men.

The Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I am told it is 600. Even at this figure it is bad enough, but if it is 1,000, as mentioned by the hon. member, then it becomes still worse.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: The figure has been published in the Press.

The Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I am not one who finds out everything from the Press. I try to find things out for myself at times. While some of the reports in the Press are true, there are others which are not true. I do not know whether the figure is 1,000 or not. I take the figure mentioned by the hon. member as being correct. If there are to be 1,000 retrenchments before Christmas, I would like to know what is to become of them?

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: And what will be in their Christmas stockings?

The Hon. A. R. Jones: More people are being employed.

The Hon. E. M. DAVIES: We have heard that one before. I can remember a statement made by the Commonwealth Government to the effect that it would put value back into the pound. We are still looking for it; we have not yet found it. Probably some of the promises which have been made here and in other places on other occasions, will have the same result as the promise that value would be put back into the pound.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: You have more value in the pound today than ever before.

The Hon. E. M. DAVIES: The Premier stated that the Government had taken over a legacy from the Hawke Government of 500 unemployed in the building industry. I wonder if the Government has made an investigation to find out where these 500 men in the building industry came from, and what brought about their unemployment. Possibly someone will say that I am incorrect again. I say the 500 unemployed are a direct result of the Commonwealth Liberal Government's policy of restriction of credit.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Passing the buck again.

The Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I am not passing the buck at all. It is a restriction of credit. I am in a position to know, because we, in the Fremantle local authority, have made quite a lot of land available for industry. Some people tried to make out there was no industry which wanted to come to this State. Industry was prepared to come here and, indeed, arrangements were made to allocate certain land. One of the conditions of the grant was that in proportion to the acreage, a certain amount had to be spent on buildings and factories, and they were to be erected in 18 months. As a member of the committee dealing with this matter, I was called upon to judge, and to arrive at a decision.

We do not want to be hard on the industries. It was not their fault. They could not help what the Federal Liberal Government did in restricting credit so that the banks could not give the necessary loans for the industries to carry on. They had only to ask for an extension of time above the 18 months to enable them to arrange capital. Therefore it is idle for these statements to be made. The situation in regard to the legacy from the Hawke Government has been brought about by the Federal Government's restriction of credit which curtailed the necessary financial assistance to erect factories which are the very foundation of any country.

Further to what I have already said, there is no doubt about the fact that the State Liberal Government is bringing about more unemployment with its policy which is being adopted at present. I have a letter here, signed by the Premier, addressed to a man whose son served his apprenticeship in the Public Works Department as a plumber and who subsequently gave 18 years' service. When he heard talk about fitting the employees into some other position, he received two days' notice; and there were no employment plans for him. He got himself a job with a private concern. When he received his pay at the end of the week from his employer it was £1 short. When he said, "Excuse me. This is not my right pay," he was given another £1 and told that he was not wanted any more. I give that information to the House for what it is worth.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: It is not worth very much.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. E. M. DAVIES: The following is the letter to which I have just referred:—

I refer to your letter of the 26th May in connection with your son's dismissal from the Public Works Department.

This case has been the subject of a careful investigation and I find that your son and a number of other plumbers and carpenters were put off on the 30th April before the general system of retrenchment had been introduced and before any decision had been made as to the policy to be observed in carrying out retrenchments.

The men were put off because at that time there was insufficient work to keep everybody employed, and the retrenchments were left to the discretion of the Works Managers.

It will be seen, therefore, that your son's retrenchment did not come under a policy of "last on first off."

He did not even receive a week's notice or any pro rata long service leave payment. He was just dismissed with two days' notice.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: What is his name?

The Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I will tell you, because I am not trying to hide anything from the Minister. His name is Robertson and he lives at 71 Stephen-st., Fremantle. If the Minister desires any other particulars, I am afraid I cannot help him. I do not know where the son lives although it is somewhere in Fremantle.

In my opinion the Government has made a decision which is very wrong. It is no use anybody walking around with his head in the clouds. He must come down and put his feet on the earth, and he will find if he mixes with some of the people who depend on their weekly pay packets for food for their wives and families, that he is not so securely entrenched himself. The people who have come to the galleries of this House, have come because their livelihood has been threatened; not because they have been organised.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Not much!

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. E. M. DAVIES: And they have not come because somebody asked them to. They realise they have something at stake, and they have come of their own accord. I would say, without fear of contradiction, that if it was not for the policy of the Opposition, it would be very nice for the Government, because nothing would be said, but we as an Opposition are here to see that the Government does the right thing; or at least to try to put into its mind the idea of what the right thing is. If we are unable to succeed in achieving this, we can at least say we tried to point out to the Government the error of its way.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Hear, hear!

The Hon. E. M. DAVIES: The Government did not have its feet on the ground, and I feel that it has brushed aside the common people—the wage-earners. Its action will break up home life, which is the foundation of any country, and will create anxiety in the minds of the mothers, wives and children of those who have received notice of retrenchment.

The State Engineering Works has been mentioned. These works have been in existence for many years—I cannot remember the exact number—and were in force during the terms of various Governments. I have made mention of the Mitchell-Latham Government and the McLarty-Watts Government. The works were used to their fullest capacity and were a great advantage not only to the Commonwealth but to the Commonwealth of Nations in its efforts during World War II. Since then, the works have been the means of having some very heavy engineering jobs accomplished for various ships in the Fremantle Harbour; and as a result money has been brought to this State.

Similarly, the Public Works Department has had in its employment, men who have been engaged in various trades, and who believed they were secure until their retirement. Relying on this, they built homes. But because a Government has said that, as a result of its policy, it is going to do this or that, these people no longer have that security. What is to be the psychological effect on those who depend on the Public Works for their livelihood?

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: The Government had no mandate to do it.

The Hon. E. M. DAVIES: It claimed it had one. I remember that in 1947, when it had a mandate to bring down a Bill to broaden Legislative Council franchise, it never took advantage of it. It claims it has a mandate now because it has the support of two Independent members.

The single unemployed have had a great knock. These men, some of whom have no homes, are in receipt of social service benefits. If they take a couple of days' work, they lose those benefits and have to wait again for another week—

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: If they work seven hours they lose it.

The Hon. E. M. DAVIES: They have to wait for about a week before they can be registered again. They were not able to live on what they were receiving, so the Hawke Government—

The Hon. G. Bennetts: I can see a lot of breaking and entering occurring after this.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. E. M. DAVIES: The Hawke Government gave them 17s. 6d. extra benefit. But apart from these people, there are the widows who are endeavouring to keep their families together. They were receiving that 17s. 6d., but this, too, has been stopped.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: Shame on them!

The Hon. E. M. DAVIES: That was not their policy. No one said anything about it. If they had, they would not have been elected in sufficient numbers to form the Government.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: They would not have been, either.

The Hon. E. M. DAVIES: We have been given the feeble excuse that it is not done in other States. It reminds me of the time when the Workers' Compensation Act Amendment Bill was being discussed here. There was the question of providing cover between home and work, and work and home, but this House did not agree to the inclusion of the provision, notwithstanding the fact that most of the States, and the Commonwealth, had that provision in their Workers' Compensation Acts. Therefore, whilst the alleged reason for certain action is that other States have or

have not similar provision, that position is entirely ignored when dealing with another matter. I have never known the boots to be put in to so many by so few in such a short time.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Hear, hear!

The Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I would say to the Ministers in this House that they should take back to their Cabinet these ideas, and remember the biblical quotation, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

THE HON. L. A. LOGAN (Midland—Minister for Local Government—on amendment) [8.42]: May I commence by criticising the Leader of the Opposition for the wording of his amendment to the Address-in-reply. I do not object to the Opposition or anyone criticising Government Ministers or Government policy, but I do disagree with misrepresentation. That is exactly what this amendment is. It is absolute misrepresentation. The wording is—

We wish to protest strongly against the Government's policy of deliberately sacking many of its employees, and against the Government's expressed intention to sack additional large numbers in the future, as this policy is creating unemployment and hardship and widespread feeling of insecurity and unrest.

We wish also to protest strongly against the action of the Government in depriving many deserving single unemployed persons of supplementary help.

My interpretation of "sacking" is when a man is put off for some misdemeanour or for not carrying out his duty. He would not have the opportunity of getting back on to the job. That is my interpretation of "sacking," but there is a lot of difference between that and "retrenchment." The majority of those people have already been replaced elsewhere.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Have they all been?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Most of them.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: But have they all been?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Most of them, I said! Is not that sufficient? And the rest will be.

The PRESIDENT: Will the Minister address himself to the Chair and not across the Chamber.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Thank you, Mr. President. So much for the first deliberate mis-statement that people are being "sacked."

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Of course, it is policy.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: The second mis-statement is in regard to the "Government's expressed intention to sack additional large numbers in the future." When has any member of the Cabinet ever used that term? Never!

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: They have used "dismissal." What is the difference?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Therefore, that is another misrepresentation.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Rubbish. What will you do with the 4,000 railway men you are going to sack?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: The Railway Department would not have been losing £5,000,000 if, long ago, they had been found employment elsewhere.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: How could you employ them elsewhere?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: By creating jobs for them. They were only being paid as unemployed, as it was.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: What is wrong with leaving them in secure jobs?

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member must refrain from interjecting.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: I will, Mr. President.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: The Railway Department was losing £5,000,000 a year. I said I had no objection to the men being employed; but that we should not place the cost of the 4,000 men against the Railway Department. Had we not done that we would not have had a deficit of £5,000,000 for the Railway Department. It has also been said that there were none sacked from the Railway Department, but that is not so, and Mr. Strickland well knows it.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Nobody was sacked.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: They were put off. If the hon. member wants it that way, I am quite happy.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: It was done by the effluxion of time.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: This amendment has been moved simply in support of a policy for the favoured few; it apparently seeks to safeguard the employees of the Public Works Department, working under the day labour system. It seems to me to be a move for that favoured few, with no consideration given to the other fellows.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Their turn would come next.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Yes, with better jobs.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Are 4,000 the favoured few?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: We have endeavoured—and I, as Minister, am endeavouring—to administer the State on business lines. That is one of my duties when

dealing with public money. I am using those funds to the best advantage of the State.

How many members in this Chamber would attempt to build a house without first having plans and specifications prepared for it and without having a price estimated? Not one! They would have the nous to know that it is necessary to have an estimated cost; so why should I, as Minister, not know, before it is started, what a certain work is to cost the taxpayer? We can probably provide for some of the schools Mr. Lavery needs at Melville and Hilton Park, with the money saved. That must create more work and better opportunities for workers. The £46,000 to be saved on the Rural and Industries Bank can be spent somewhere else—that is only commonsense.

The Hon. G. E. Jeffery: What would happen if you got another job like the Chest Hospital?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Let us see some of the costs of day labour as compared with contract work. If we look at page 262 of *Hansard* for 1955, we find a question asked about the estimated cost of the State Insurance Office building. The estimated cost was £390,000; but it was said that because of an increase in the cost of materials the cost of the project would probably rise by 10 per cent. That meant £39,000 which, added to the original figure, gave a total of £429,000; and finally the cost of that building was £523,757, or 25 per cent. more than the original estimate.

The Hon. E. M. Davies: How long did it take to build it?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: A long time, and it is not a very good building now.

The Hon. E. M. Davies: You are about the only one who would say that.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: That is not so. The hon. member should work in it, or ask the staff who work there.

The Hon. E. M. Davies: It provides a beautiful view.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: There is a beautiful view from my office, but I am thinking about the workers and wage-earners, and the conditions under which they work. Those conditions are not good. That is why I say it is not a very good building. With all that money, we could have built a lot of schools and hospitals throughout the State—

The Hon. E. M. Davies: It is not very good accountancy.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Those are the actual figures. The hon. member may not like them, but they are correct. Let us now examine the estimated cost of the building at the University. The estimate was £500,000, and we have already been asked to supply another £288,000 with which to complete it. Had that project been completed for the estimated cost of

£500,000, we could have used the other £288,000 elsewhere for the benefit of the State.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: And we would not have had such a great deficit, either.

The Hon. R. Thompson: It would be better to have it completed by day labour.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: The University building will be completed by day labour, because it is the policy of the Government to cushion the effect of the change-over from day labour to contract work.

The Hon. E. M. Davies: I am glad to know that you have recognised it somewhere.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: We have recognised it at Albany, also, where the hospital will be completed by day labour. The Government's policy has been stated in the Press. Did not the hon. member read it?

The Hon. E. M. Davies: It might have been in the funeral notices.

The PRESIDENT: The Minister should proceed, and should take no notice of interjections.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: If members refer to *The West Australian* of the 7th May, they will find the statement regarding the 600 men being out of work. That statement was made by the secretary of the Building Trades Union.

The Hon. R. Thompson: It was made in the Legislative Assembly last night.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: *The West Australian* of the 5th May, 1959, states that the Building Trades Union claimed that 600 men would be paid off from the day labour force by the 30th June; but now, in July, have 600 men been put off? Of course not! That is the type of statement that is made, to put fear into the people—600 men out of work! Why do not some people tell the truth? They are not just game to stand up to it.

The Hon. E. M. Davies: Some people don't know what the truth is.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Was that the truth? Of course not! People should not say that there will be 1,800 men out of work within the next 12 months, or anything of that nature.

The Hon. E. M. Davies: Why make so many different statements?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: That was the Press statement by the Building Trades Union. I can stand up to any statement I make.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Why should anybody be out of work?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: It happens. Even Mr. Strickland put men off. Our policy will lead to more work, with benefit to Western Australia.

The PRESIDENT: Will the Minister address the Chair and refrain from noticing interjections?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I am sorry, but it is very difficult. A lot has been said about the State Engineering Works.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Beware of that subject. I know all about it.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: It was said that between October, 1958, and March, 1959, 43 men were put off from the State Engineering Works; and yet in that time 16 men left of their own accord and 27 were retrenched. I say that from October, 1958, to March, 1959, 43 men were replaced, and I believe that from the 25th March to the 23rd June, 1959, there were another 58.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Why should men be put off?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: When the hon. member had control of a business, did he carry 15 more staff than he required? Of course not! He is not that philanthropic, although he is willing to be philanthropic with somebody else's money, or at someone else's expense.

The PRESIDENT: The Minister must address the Chair.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: It is not hard to understand the reasons underlying all this. The unions run to the Press with deliberate misrepresentations in regard to sackings, and play on the fears of the people. Mr. Chamberlain himself said it was purely a political move—with nothing about the merits of the case at all and nothing about the policy. He simply said it was a political move.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: So it is.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: There is the answer—the hon. member playing on the fears of women and children she is supposed to be looking after. When we get our policy under way—with all the works going—there will be no fear in the hearts of the people; none whatever.

The PRESIDENT: Will the Minister resume his seat? If members continue to interject I will have to name them, and I do not wish to do that. Will the Minister now proceed, and address his remarks to the Chair?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: It might be advisable at this stage to let the House know what the figures are, and I do not think they can be contradicted. This information has been made available by the Commonwealth Employment Service. I will give details regarding unemployed applicants registered for building trade vacancies—adult males—in Western Australia. At the end of March, 1959, there were 79 bricklayers unemployed and registered with the Commonwealth Employment Bureau; while at the end of June, there were only 52.

At the end of March there were 214 carpenters registered, and at the end of June only 141. At the end of March there were nine fibrous plaster fixers registered, and three at the end of June. At the end of March there were 15 plasterers—solid—registered, and six at the end of June.

The figure for plumbers shows a discrepancy in the other direction. At the end of March there were 19 registered; and at the end of June, 32. At the end of March there were two tilers registered, and one at the end of June. For other skilled workers the figure was 16 at the end of March and 17 at the end of June. The total figures relating to skilled workers were 396 at the end of March, and 325 at the end of June.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: No comment about that!

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: The same applies to building labourers. At the end of March there were 116 registered, but at the end of June there were only 105. The number of semi-skilled men unemployed at the end of March numbered 26, but that figure was reduced to 20 at the end of June. So it would appear that the Government is already getting some results from its policy. The figures prove it.

I would remind members also that, although the Public Works Department labour force has been in existence for many years, the number compared with past years was much greater in October, 1957, and again in October, 1958. In 12 months the number of men increased by 600.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Yes, to build a high school.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Yes, a high school that could have been built much cheaper if done by contract. If it had been built by private enterprise, we would not have the problem of retrenching these men now and getting them absorbed in private employment. If we are anxious that the State shall be run on sound business lines, surely there is no other way! No-one would attempt to build unless he had proper plans and specifications; and no person would run a business with 50 superfluous employees, because such a person would soon go broke.

The Hon. E. M. Heenan: Government has sides to it other than the purely business side.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: The Government has many sides, but it is still the keeper of the public purse. I would like to know what the attraction is for men to be employed on the Public Works Department day-labour force as against being employed by private enterprise.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: I will tell you—security!

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: There is no security.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Oh yes there is.

The Hon. J. J. Garrigan: There is none now.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: There never has been, because the figures show that there is quite a variation in the number employed from month to month and from year to year. Therefore, I do not see where the security lies. In October, 1958, the number of men employed by the Public Works Department was 2,145; but in December, 1958, that figure had dropped to 1,891. Was there any security for those men who were dismissed? Where does the security come in? Let us face facts!

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: You are talking differently now to when you were sitting on this side of the House.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Members opposite do not like to hear those figures, but they are the facts. I have a list in front of me which shows the difference between the estimated price of public works in this State as between the work being done by day labour and contract. These figures show a disparity of £76,000 in favour of the tender system. To my knowledge, many country members have already approached the Minister asking for schools and hospitals to be erected in their districts. There is now a chance that their requests will be granted, because we have £76,000 more than we would have otherwise. That has been brought about by the Government implementing its policy. We can now get on with urgently needed public works.

I will now deal with the remaining part of the amendment to the Address-in-reply, which relates to single unemployed. It is rather strange that we have heard so much tonight concerning this section of the unemployed. In the last 12 months the Child Welfare Department paid out £205,550 for unemployed relief. Despite this, those members supporting the amendment are worrying about the retrenchment of 15 to 20 men. When I took over the portfolio of Child Welfare I thought I was going to be the Minister for Child Welfare and not the Minister for Social Services.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: There are too many immigrants coming into the country.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: We are committed to an immigration policy, and because of this the State is much better off. I found that the title of "Single Unemployed" was a misnomer. Very much so! I found that there were married men with families who were classified as single unemployed. I do not know how that was worked out, but it was a fact.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Did Mr. Mather work that out?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I do not know. But, as I have said, men with families were classified as single unemployed.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: That is a reflection on Mr. Mather.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I do not care whether it is a reflection on Mr. Mather or not; it is a fact.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: I am glad you have said that in the House so that it can be recorded in *Hansard*, because you will be made to prove it.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I can prove it, all right! Outdoor relief granted by the department to married women amounted to £164,264. Therefore, the Child Welfare Department of this State was subsidising the Commonwealth Government to the extent of a total of £396,000, that is, including £205,550 for unemployment relief.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: That is where you want to make your inquiries!

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: It must not be forgotten, also, that the money that was paid out to the single unemployed was taken into consideration by the Grants Commission when making its deliberations on what assistance we should be granted from the Commonwealth Government. We were therefore losing another £50,000 in that direction, and this State cannot afford that.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Grants Commission or not, you have to feed hungry people.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member will have an opportunity to speak later if he so desires. If he continues to interject, I will have to name him.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: I do not mind.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: That is the whole story. There was a total of 1,122 single unemployed being paid 17s. 6d. a week as at the 1st May, 1959. I would also point out that at some stage a direction had been issued by the Minister to the effect that when the Railway Department required men in any particular place they were to be drawn from this pool of single unemployed.

One body of men recruited for railway work never got past Northam, because I understand they got full and kicked up a fuss and were sent back to Perth. Another group who were sent to the country went ack willie and walked off the job. They had to return to Perth, too.

As a result of this direction issued by the previous Government, the position became so bad that the Acting Commissioner of Railways wrote to the Minister and implored him to break it down. He asked that he be allowed to take 50 per cent. of his labour requirements from the Commonwealth Employment Office because the type of man that he was getting from the pool of single unemployed was untirely unreliable. That was the position when I took over this department. The Government even did one man a good

turn. He classed himself as being a single unemployed person and was receiving 17s. 6d. a day assistance.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: You mean, 17s. 6d. a week.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Yes, 17s. 6d. a week. After this assistance had been stopped, he reapplied for relief. That man was living with a de facto wife with a child. I am not blaming him for it.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: Yes, good luck to him!

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: The point is that if that man had told the truth in the first place, he would have received greater assistance than that granted to him by the Child Welfare Department; namely, 17s. 6d. a week. Therefore, we have been able to assist him and several others like him.

The Hon. R. Thompson: How many?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Quite a few. I have no doubt the department will continue to help quite a few more.

The Hon. R. Thompson: You have assisted five; that is how many!

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Those five were assisted after they had been released from Fremantle gaol. The facts are that there were 1,122 being paid 17s. 6d. a week. I have received 20 applications for this payment of 17s. 6d. a week to be reinstated, but not one of those applications has been approved.

The Hon. R. Thompson: A different statement was made in another place last night.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: It was not.

The Hon. R. Thompson: You claim that five have been granted assistance.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I claim that five men were released from prison; and because they had no money or clothes, they were granted assistance, such as would be granted by any department in the circumstances. I have issued a directive that none is to starve. I have also issued a directive to my departmental officers that they shall grant assistance to any deserving case provided it is sent to me for ratification.

I have a responsibility to the State; and when I found that this large amount of money was being paid out to the detriment of the State, especially when our application for assistance is considered by the Grants Commission, I had no option but to cancel such assistance.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: You are a cruel individual!

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I know I am; but very often one has to be cruel to be kind. Many of these men did not want to be paid 17s. 6d. a week, because they regarded that assistance as a dole. They did not want to go on a dole; they wanted a job and not 17s. 6d. a week. It is our

intention, as a Government, to obtain work for them; to make jobs for them. That is what this Government will do if it is given the opportunity. But what opportunity can we have, when we get these statements in the Press—lying statements—about what is going on?

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Look out, or you will get named in the Press!

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: It would not worry me one iota.

The Hon. J. J. Garrigan: Did you get a favourable Press?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Not very; in fact, it was a very unfavourable Press. That does not alter the fact that I intend to do the job to the best of my ability, and in the interests of Western Australia. One cannot do more than that.

There is no need whatever for this amendment to the Address-in-reply. As I said earlier, it is a misrepresentation, because such a state of affairs does not exist. It was never the intention of the Government to deliberately sack people, or to carry out a policy which had as its purpose the expressed intention of sacking additional men.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: You did say it.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Who said it? Let the hon. member, on the Address-in-reply, give us the statement that was reputed to have been made. If she can do so, I for one will apologise. It was never said, and it is not likely to be. The amendment is a misrepresentation, and has no right to be considered in this House.

THE HON. J. J. GARRIGAN (South-East—on amendment) [9.17]: I have very great pleasure in supporting the amendment moved by Mr. Strickland. I would like to make it quite clear at the outset that any attack I might make will not be made on the Minister, but on the Government that represents Western Australia today. Mr. Logan made a remark about sackings. I do not care whether they are called sackings, retrenchments, or dismissals; all that matters is the pay envelopes that these people receive every Friday. I do feel sympathetic towards those who have been dismissed, or retrenched, through no fault of their own.

The people in the gallery tonight are the breadwinners; they are the heart and core of Western Australia; and this Government, in its most ruthless manner, saw fit to dismiss or retrench these unfortunate people. Some of them have homes which have been half paid for; some have motorcars which are half paid for; others have furniture and linos, etc., which have not yet been paid for. In spite of this, the Government has seen fit to dismiss these young people. What incentive have young apprentices to join the Public Works Department? They have no incentive

whatever, because they know it is likely that they will be dismissed before they are fully qualified.

The present Government has been given £1,000,000 more than the previous Government had last year. This Government has also been allowed a further £5,000,000 to develop the North-West. Yet the Government does not, or will not, transfer these people to other employment; they are put out on the street.

The Hon. A. R. Jones: The amount is £5,000,000 over five years.

The Hon. J. J. GARRIGAN: I thank the hon. member for the interjection. I do not intend to reiterate what has been said already. The Hawke Government had six years practically free from industrial strife. What little industrial strife occurred was soon settled by the Industrial Arbitration Court. My province covers a considerable area, and I know that the people in the great industrial town of Norseman are seething with discontent. This is also the case in the other great industrial towns in my province. I can say that without any fear of successful contradiction. They have no security whatever, because it has been taken away from them.

The Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: Rub-bish!

The Hon. J. J. GARRIGAN: The hon. member knows that is true.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member must address the Chair.

The Hon. J. J. GARRIGAN: Mr. Cunningham knows that to be true, and I do not have to reiterate it. If he knows anything about the feelings of the workers in Merredin, he will know that what I say is true. I am not talking about the miners, because they usually look after themselves. I do hope that the Government will take the advice which has been given to it by speakers here tonight. Mr. Strickland and others, better qualified than myself, have advised the Government to reconsider its decision on this question of sacking—or whatever the Government is pleased to call it. We only hope that the Government will accept the advice; and that, as a result, we will not have any undue unemployment in this State.

THE HON. J. M. THOMSON (South—on amendment) [9.22]: I do not wish to weary the House unduly at this late hour. Much has been said during the debate, but the fact that has been overlooked is that the position is not as bad as some members try to paint it. Members who have spoken in support of the amendment would have us believe that it is the intention of the Government to retrench every member of the architectural division of the Public Works Department. In his statement the Minister clearly indicated that this was not the case.

In the present instance there was an endeavour to bolster up the case. There has, however, been a desire to overlook the statements made. It was clearly stated by the Minister for Works that the only jobs that were going to be affected by the change-over from day labour to the contract and tender system were those in connection with the Rural and Industries Bank in Barrack-st.

He went on to say that the other work would proceed. There are, of course, many other public works, as the employees of the architectural division of the Public Works Department fully realise. It does not need us to tell these people what the position is, because they are fully aware that the only job that has been affected is that of the Rural and Industries Bank. I admit that to date there have been 150 men retrenched. I say "retrenched" because, as the Minister for Local Government (Mr. Logan) has indicated, there is a vast difference between sacking and retrenchment. Some people, of course, may consider it to be a technicality which is not worth considering, and we will let that pass.

At this stage I think we should really see what has taken place. The Government found employment for 66 men whom it had retrenched from the Rural and Industries Bank. There were 77 men who reported to the Social Services Department for benefits. That meant there were 144 accounted for. We have heard nothing about the balance of these people. The important thing to bear in mind is that, from the figures supplied by the Social Services Department on Friday last, there are 80 fewer building tradesmen out of work than there were when the Government took office on the 2nd April. That might not please some people who want to put up a case and emphasise it as they think best. But we must face facts and be honest with ourselves; we must be prepared to accept the truth.

The figures given by the Social Services Department were prepared by competent and capable men. These figures indicate that there are 150 more building tradesmen now working than there were at the change-over of the Government. I defy any ex-Minister, or any member of the Opposition in this House, to refute that statement.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Where are they.

The Hon. J. M. THOMSON: The hon. member can go out and find them.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Are you a master builder?

The Hon. J. M. THOMSON: No; I am a member of Parliament.

The PRESIDENT: Will the hon. member address the Chair?

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Are you a registered master builder?

The Hon. J. M. THOMSON: I am a member of Parliament; no, I am not a builder. I hope that will satisfy the hon. member.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: I hope the hon. member is truthful.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member will address the Chair.

The Hon. J. M. THOMSON: To my mind, the people registering this complaint are possibly attempting to kill an already dead duck. I say that on account of the apathy displayed by members associated with the building trades unions and other leading industrial unions in this State. If we are given an indication of what took place from time to time at the various conferences I think it will be established that they have not got the support of the entire trade union movement behind them.

That does not help them very much when they are trying to establish a case. Reference has been made to the case of the State Government Insurance building. In 1953 I asked a question as to whether the Government was going to build this under the contract system or by day labour. The Minister replied that it was the intention and policy of the Government to proceed with it on the day labour principle.

I then asked what the estimated cost was, and I was told that it was £390,000. That was the architect's estimate of cost for the building. We all know that within 12 months building costs rose to the tune of 10 per cent. This was added on, as Mr. Logan rightly said; and the figure amounted to \$429,000. The building was a sizeable one, and it took 33 months to complete; but from the 29th August, 1955, to the 28th November, 1958, it cost an additional 25 per cent. on top of the 10 per cent. they anticipated.

If we cast our minds back, we will realise that building costs did not rise by 25 per cent. They did rise in that time, and it may have been 10 per cent. But it was not 25 per cent. The question is: Where did the extra money come in? I would venture to say—

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: From members of Parliament who are registered contractors.

The Hon. J. M. THOMSON: I do not think the hon. member is serious. However, he can have his opinion, but it will not influence my thinking in any way. The point seems to be this: Why worry about the taxpayers and whether we have to pay 25 per cent. extra for the price of a building, so long as these people are kept employed? However, with contract work, these people will be adequately employed.

We cannot expect the Opposition to see eye to eye with us. They agree with the day labour system and we do not. Therefore, we will continue to disagree; and whilst we are the Government of this

State we will endeavour, to the best of our ability, to see that public money is expended in the most economic and efficient way. Considerable savings which are impossible under the present system, will be made on behalf of the taxpayers.

A lot has been mentioned about hardships, but I do not think they will be as bad as we have been led to believe. I am sure that in the very near future men who are out of work will be absorbed by the contractors who carry out public works.

One hon. member made a vile insinuation that a man was underpaid by £1, and when he raised the question with his employer he was told he need not come back next week. I think the hon. member should have been fair to the employer, and instead of just making that vile insinuation he should have told the whole story.

I hold no brief for any employer who desires to underpay his employees. This House, in conjunction with the other House of the Parliament of Western Australia has enacted laws to prevent such actions, and a person has a right to appeal to his union and the Arbitration Court so that a matter such as this can be dealt with in the Industrial Court. We have heard vile insinuations and suggestions, but let us be fair. I do not desire to prolong the debate, so I will conclude by stating that I support the policy of the Government in regard to the—

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Sackings.

The Hon. J. M. THOMSON:—contract system, and I strongly oppose the amendment before the House as moved by the Leader of the Opposition.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes—13.

Hon. G. Bennetts	Hon. F. R. H. Lavery
Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. H. C. Strickland
Hon. J. J. Garrigan	Hon. R. Thompson
Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. W. F. Willesee
Hon. E. M. Heenan	Hon. F. J. S. Wise
Hon. R. F. Hutchison	Hon. J. D. Teahan
Hon. G. E. Jeffery	(Teller.)

Noes—16.

Hon. C. R. Abbey	Hon. G. C. MacKinnon
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. R. C. Mattiske
Hon. L. C. Diver	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. A. F. Griffith	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. J. G. Hislop	Hon. J. M. Thomson
Hon. A. R. Jones	Hon. H. K. Watson
Hon. L. A. Logan	Hon. F. D. Willmott
Hon. A. L. Loton	Hon. J. Murray
	(Teller.)

Majority against—3.

Amendment thus negatived.

On motion by the Hon. J. Murray, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (Suburban—Minister for Mines): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, the 21st July.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 9.38 p.m.