

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 22nd June, 1949.

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

QUESTIONS.

TRAM AND BUS SERVICES.

(a) *As to Discontinuance of Nedlands Tram.*

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister for Transport:

Under what Act and which provision, or provisions, thereof did he act in stopping the running of the No. 7 tram service to Nedlands jetty?

The MINISTER replied:

Section 3, subsection (e) of the Government Tramways Act, 1912.

(b) *As to Tenders for Nedlands Bus Service.*

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) Were tenders called for the bus service operating along the Nedlands tram route?

(2) If so, what are the reasons for the differential treatment compared with the proposed Dalkeith-Maylands bus service?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The establishment of the Nedlands Jetty bus service touched upon the interests of several existing operators and the only satisfactory method of determining the position was by the calling of tenders.

(2) In the case of the Dalkeith-Maylands service the Transport Board had before it an application which did not conflict with other interests; the need for the service was clear, and it seemed that no practical purpose was to be served by calling tenders. The Board therefore followed its usual practice and dealt with the application.

HEALTH.

(a) *As to Infant Mortality, Northam District.*

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Minister for Health:

Is he yet in a position to indicate the terms of reference to be applied in connection with the proposed inquiry in the Northam district in relation to infant mortality?

The MINISTER replied:

The inquiry is being made for the purpose—

(a) of checking the accuracy of the provisional figures relating to infant mortality in the Northam district submitted to the Northam Council, which were prepared from the information available, and

(b) of investigating and determining, as far as possible, the pre-natal and natal influences contributing to the infant deaths in the district, and to find, if possible, remediable causes.

(b) *As to Figures Supplied by Commissioner.*

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE (without notice) asked the Minister for Health:

Are the figures given to the Northam Municipality in connection with infant mortality, as mentioned in answer to my question this afternoon, the figures given to the municipality by the Commissioner of Public Health, Dr. Cook?

The MINISTER replied:

The figures referred to in that answer were the figures given by Dr. Cook to the Northam Municipality.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES.

(a) *As to Offer of Kalgoorlie Generators.*

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Minister for Works:

Will he lay upon the Table of the House all papers dealing with the availability of two 12,500 k.w. generators at Kalgoorlie?

The MINISTER replied:

Yes. Tomorrow.

(b) *As to Appointment of Experienced Engineer.*

Hon. E. NULSEN asked the Minister for Works:

Will he give an assurance to this House that the Government will advertise for a competent engineer, experienced in power station design and operation, or alternatively, a firm of consulting engineers, in

view of the unfortunate position in which the Government finds itself in having had to take over Mr. Edmondson who has never had such experience?

The MINISTER replied:

No. The Government and the State Electricity Commission have complete confidence in Mr. Edmondson's ability to control the East Perth power station and to direct the design and construction of the South Fremantle power station.

COAL.

As to Tabling Papers, Black Diamond Leases.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Minister representing the Minister for Mines:

Will he lay upon the Table of the House all papers dealing with the Black Diamond Coal Leases which are dated subsequent to the 30th August, 1948?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING replied:

Yes.

LICENSING ACT.

As to Prosecutions.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister representing the Minister for Police:

How many—

(a) licensees and managers;

(b) barmaids and barmen;

(c) persons under the age of 21 years, have been charged under Sections 147 and 149 of the Licensing Act during each of the past three years?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING replied:

(a) Licensees and Managers—Year ended 30/6/47, 8; year ended 30/6/48, 1; 1/7/48 to 22/6/49, 3.

(b) Barmaids and Barmen—Year ended 30/6/47, 3; year ended 30/6/48, 11; 1/7/48 to 22/6/49, 13.

(c) Persons under the age of 21 years—Year ended 30/6/47, 2; year ended 30/6/48, 7; 1/7/48 to 22/6/49, 1.

NEW CAUSEWAY.

As to Completion and Estimated Cost.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Works:

(1) When is it anticipated that the construction of the new Causeway will be completed?

(2) What is the present estimate of the total cost?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) (a) Completion of new bridge structures with joining roadway and Victoria Park approach available for traffic by December, 1951.

(b) Final reclamation at Perth end, including removal of old structures and construction of approaches at the Perth end, by December, 1952.

(2) Latest estimate, based on conditions in February, 1949, including resumption, transfer of services, etc., is £570,000.

HOUSING.

(a) *As to Shortage of Bricks.*

Mr. NEEDHAM asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) Is he aware of the deplorable condition of the brick industry?

(2) Is he aware that the shortage of bricks is seriously retarding home building?

(3) Can he inform the House when additional brickyards will be in operation, providing a better quality of brick under improved working conditions?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) I am aware that there is a stringency in brick supplies to meet the expanding needs of building, this stringency being appreciably due to power interruptions in the early part of the year.

(2) I would not say there has been any serious retardation in the home building rate. Production has risen from an annual rate of approximately six million bricks in 1944, to an annual rate of 54 million bricks at the present time.

(3) During the war one brickyard only was in production at half output and the number of brickyards now operating are 12 in the metropolitan area and 11 in country areas, in addition to which there are four plants in the metropolitan area providing concrete blocks. Two major brickyards are expected to install plants but the date of coming into production cannot be stated owing to difficulties in obtaining equipment. It is expected that a number of existing yards, both metropolitan and country, will

be expanding production both in quality and quantity, these yards being in process of installing power earth moving equipment, crushing rolls, hydraulic lift tractors, additional kilns and drying sheds.

(b) *As to Supplying Bricks to Deserving Case.*

Mr. FOX (without notice) asked the Minister for Housing:

In answer to a question this afternoon the Minister stated there was not a great reduction in the number of bricks produced this year as compared with the previous year. Is he aware that a man who has an invalid daughter and her three young children living with him has found it impossible to procure 750 bricks with which to build a chimney in a flat he has provided for her at his home and that he has been informed that it will be six months before he can be supplied? Can the Minister do anything to help this deserving case?

The MINISTER replied:

I said there had been a diminution of brick supplies this year owing to interruptions to the power supply in the early part of the year, but that diminution is now being made up. If the hon. member supplies me with the name and address of the person whose case he has mentioned, I will be glad to investigate.

(c) *As to Use of Bricks and Cement for Fencing.*

Mr. GRAHAM (without notice) asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) Is he aware that in his electorate, in Havelock-street, immediately in front of Parliament House, a brick and cement fence is being erected and there is a pile of bricks standing on the footpath to be used in that work?

(2) Does he consider that this work and other jobs of a similar nature are assisting in the solving of the housing problem and of cases such as that mentioned by the member for South Fremantle?

The MINISTER replied: I was not aware of any such use being made of materials in that area.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Every suburb is the same.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I venture to disagree.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I will take the Minister round and show him.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I still venture to disagree, but I will make inquiries regarding the matter to which my attention has been drawn. I will see whether the work has been authorised, and to what extent it may be justified.

Mr. Graham: Do you think works of that nature are assisting in solving the housing problem, particularly bearing in mind the case cited by the member for South Fremantle?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: No unessential use of materials will help solve the housing problem, but I would remind the hon. member that under the control legislation there is a certain exemption as to small works being carried out on residential premises. That exemption has always been there.

(d) As to Homes Completed, Men Employed and Timber used.

Mr. REYNOLDS asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) What was the average period, in days, to complete houses built by the Housing Commission for the years ended March, 1947, 1948 and 1949?

(2) What was the average cost for houses of—

(a) five rooms,

(b) four rooms;

(c) expansible houses, during these years?

(3) How many men were employed by the Housing Commission in the building of these homes during these years?

(4) How many houses were completed during these years?

(5) What percentages of karri and jarrah were used in the timbering of these houses?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Information not immediately available. Many factors combine to vary the completion period in different contracts.

An overall survey will be made and information furnished later.

(2) Approximate average costs—brick construction:

	Four rooms.	Five rooms.
	£	£
March, 1947 ..	1,041	1,175
March, 1948 ..	1,285	1,448
March, 1949 ..	1,310	1,568

Expansible homes not constructed in 1947 and 1948. Costs of those now being built not yet available.

(3) Labour engaged on Commonwealth-State projects (on site):

As at March, 1947, 762.

As at March, 1948, 1,020.

As at March, 1949, 1,099.

(4) March, 1946, to March, 1947, 474.

March, 1947, to March, 1948, 789.

March, 1948, to March, 1949, 969.

(5) Practically the whole of timber used in Commonwealth projects is jarrah.

Approval recently issued to use a limited amount of karri under special circumstances—to be specially treated against white ants.

(e) As to Resale of Permit Homes.

Mr. FOX asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) How many houses, built by private persons under permits from the Housing Commission, have been sold almost immediately after completion?

(2) What does he intend to do to see that houses so built are not used for speculative purposes?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No information is available as to the number of homes (built under private permit) sold immediately after completion.

(2) There is no evidence that such houses have been sold for speculative purposes. Control after completion and occupation is impracticable because owners may have a genuine reason, for resale.

BUILDING SUPPLIES.

As to Bricks and Cement for Government Works.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What number of bricks per week is being diverted strictly to Government use for all public works undertakings?

(2) What quantities, in tons of cement per week, are being diverted to Government use?

(3) What actual quantity in tons per week of cement is at present being used by the Government in public works?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Approximately 81,000, including housing undertaken by the Architectural Division of the Public Works Department.

(2) Approximately 550 tons, including local and imported cement.

(3) Approximately 500 tons. In this case and in respect of No. 2, a large quantity goes to water supply projects.

CEMENT.

As to Economy in Use by Local Authorities.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE asked the Minister for Housing:

The Premier having advised me that local authorities were circularised to exercise economy in the use of cement, will he Table a copy of a typical letter sent to local authorities, and copies of the letters received in reply?

The MINISTER replied:

A copy of the circular issued by the State Housing Commission is tabled.

I shall be glad to make the replies available to the hon. member.

REDISTRIBUTION OF SEATS ACT.

As to Government's Attitude to Decentralisation.

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Premier:

(1) Is decentralisation a policy of the present Government?

(2) If the answer is "yes," then does he contend that the Redistribution of Seats Act is in conformity with this policy in view of the fact that it deprives country and remote areas of political representation in favour of the city?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Under the provisions of the Act, agreed to by Parliament, approximately 8,600 metropolitan electors are required to obtain a Member of the Legislative Assembly but only approximately 4,450 electors in the agricultural, mining and pastoral areas.

In spite of the fact that 60 per cent. of the State's electors are in the metropolitan area, there are only 20 metropolitan seats out of 50, or 40 per cent. of the total.

WATER SUPPLIES.

(a) As to Charge to Paddington Pensioners.

Mr. McCULLOCH asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Does he agree that old age pensioners residing at Paddington should pay £1 8s. 10d. per 1,000 gallons for domestic water?

(2) If the answer to the above is in the negative, will he ensure that such pensioners are provided with free water or, alternatively, that the same charge be made as that now prevailing at Broad Arrow, which is only two miles distant?

(3) Will he have the excess charge made by the W.A.G.R. refunded to the pensioners concerned?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) The same conditions will apply as at Broad Arrow.

(3) Directions for this to be done have recently been issued.

(b) As to Great Southern Scheme and Manufacture of Pipes.

Mr. MAY asked the Minister for Water Supply:

(1) What is the nature of the pipes to be used for the reticulation services leading from the main pipe line in connection with the Great Southern Water Scheme?

(2) At what pressure (lbs. per square inch) will the water be reticulated from the main pipe line?

(3) If such pressure is suitable for cement and reinforced pipes, will he take steps to ensure that these pipes are manufactured in Western Australia?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) This will depend on the chemical nature of the soil passed through, the pressures and the types of pipe available.

(2) Pressure will vary but will average approximately 100 lb. per square inch.

(3) Locally manufactured pipes will be given preference wherever suitable, providing the cost is reasonably competitive.

(c) *As to Information for Pipe Manufacturers.*

Mr. MAY (without notice), asked the Minister for Water Supply:

In reply to an earlier question of mine the Minister said "This will depend upon the chemical nature of the soil passed through, the pressures and the types of pipe available." Has he taken any action to ascertain the nature of the ground that the main pipeline will pass through, in order that we may give local manufacturers some idea of the possibility of manufacturing the pipes in this State?

The MINISTER replied:

I will investigate further the point made by the hon. member, but as yet I have not the knowledge at my disposal. However, I give him an assurance that on every occasion possible, goods used in water supply programmes will be of local manufacture, provided that the price is a reasonable one.

TIMBER.

(a) *As to Destination of Northcliffe Mill Production.*

Hon. J. T. TONKIN asked the Minister for Forests:

Is it anticipated that the timber mill now being erected at Northcliffe by the Kauri Timber Co. will provide timber for Western Australian requirements?

The MINISTER replied:

Although this mill, which will produce mostly karri, will supply export markets particularly in Australia, the production from this mill will add to the total production of the State and enable greater quantities to be available for Western Australian requirements from other mills, which will be relieved from export to Australian States.

(b) *As to State Sawmills' Karri for Export.*

Hon. J. T. TONKIN asked the Minister for Forests:

(1) Is it a fact that the State Sawmills are cutting karri timber which is being supplied to Millars' Timber and Trading Co., and that this company is exporting it?

(2) Why do not the State Sawmills export the karri?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) and (2) The State Sawmills do their own exporting of jarrah and receive the price payable. Under arrangements made during the war, and continued since, in Great Britain, where an import licence for hardwood timbers is still required, Millars' Timber and Trading Company act as managers for the exporting group of W.A. sawmills to facilitate sales in the United Kingdom. Since Millars' Timber and Trading Company's Jardee mill ceased production owing to a fire, and the karri output of that mill became no longer available for export to South Africa, the State Sawmills has assisted the company by allowing them to have a small quantity of karri to enable them to provide some export for their South African market.

(3). Answered by No. (2).

CO-OPERATIVE BULK HANDLING LIMITED.

As to Completion of Agreement and Interest Payments.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) Has an agreement between the Government and Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd., concerning the taking over by the latter of bulk handling facilities at Fremantle and Bunbury, yet been signed?

(2) Has the company paid any money to the Treasury to meet interest charges? If so, how much?

(3) Will he table the agreement?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) With respect to Fremantle—Yes. With respect to Bunbury the agreement is in process of preparation.

(2) No. On 17th June, 1949, an account was sent out for £10,159 4s. 9d. for the period from the 29th May, 1947, to the 29th May, 1949, interest and sinking fund contribution in relation to Fremantle. With regard to Bunbury—No.

(3) Yes.

MEAT.

As to Advisory Committee's Recommendations.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) Has the Meat Advisory Committee justified its establishment?

(2) Has it made any recommendations upon which the Government has acted?

(3) What recommendation has actually been put into operation?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes.

(3) Several recommendations have been considered and one that involves legislation cannot yet be divulged.

EDUCATION.

As to Southern Cross School Tenders.

Mr. KELLY asked the Minister for Education:

(1) What expenditure has the Treasury approved for work to be carried out on the Southern Cross Government school and school grounds?

(2) In what year was this amount approved?

(3) What detailed work is listed for attention?

(4) How often have tenders been called, and with what results?

(5) When were tenders last called?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) £2,824.

(2) 1947 (11th December).

(3) Extensive internal and external repairs and renovations, and in addition—

(a) provision of one type E shelter;

(b) provision of three girls' latrines;

(c) provision of three boys' latrines and urinal;

(d) demolition of old latrines;

(e) provision of two 100 watt electric points in each classroom and one each in the entrance and washroom;

(f) provision of septic tank installation.

(4) (a) Tenders for repairs and renovations have been called on six occasions, a tender finally being accepted on the 2nd May;

(b) tenders for sewerage have been called on eight occasions but none has been received.

(5) The 17th June, 1949 (sewerage).

GOLD.

As to Open Market Selling and Effect.

Mr. STYANTS asked the Premier:

(1) Is it correct that he has approached the Prime Minister and requested that the gold mine owners be allowed to sell their gold on the open markets of the world?

(2) If this is so, has he closely considered the implications, over a long-term policy, of this method of disposal and its ultimate effect on the gold mining industry in Australia?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) and (2) On several occasions I have approached the Prime Minister regarding the serious difficulties facing the gold mining industry and have urged that consideration be given to some method of increasing the payment to gold producers for their product.

I have pointed out to the Prime Minister that there are several ways by which this might be done and have asked him to give consideration to such means as a subsidy per ounce, an approach to the Monetary Fund for a direct rise in the price, allowing producers access to the open market, or the South African method of selling gold for fabricating purposes.

My latest communication to the Prime Minister on this subject was dated the 31st May and I am awaiting his reply.

NATIVE ADMINISTRATION.

As to Officers and Sale of Stock.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY asked the Minister for Native Affairs:

In view of his Press statement of today,

(1) Is he prepared to lay on the Table of the House all papers relating to the dismissal of the manager of Munja Native Station?

(2) All papers relating to the dismissal or resignation of the Superintendent of the Port Hedland Native Hospital?

(3) All papers relating to the resignation of Inspector Martin of Geraldton?

(4) All papers relating to the sale of stock at U'dialla Native Settlement?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) (2) (3) (4) I shall be glad to make these papers available at my office for perusal by the hon. member at a time to suit his convenience.

PRICES CONTROL.

(a) *As to Removal of Subsidies.*

Mr. T. IAT (without notice) asked the Attorney General:

Will he advise the House whether any of the following items have been subsidised by the Commonwealth Government, the subsidy for which has now been removed:—

- (a) Beef; lamb; mutton; poultry.
- (b) Ham; bacon; cooked meats (including ham and corned beef).
- (c) Bread; biscuits.
- (d) Baby foods.
- (e) Jams; pickles; sauces.
- (f) Nuts; raisins; currants.
- (g) Soaps (toilet and household).
- (h) Coffee; cocoa.
- (i) Salads; green vegetables.
- (j) Cheese and butter?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

I do not think any of the items mentioned have been subsidised, with the possible exception of a small subsidy with regard to soap.

(b) *As to Tabling List of Subsidised Goods.*

Hon. F. J. S. WISE (without notice) asked the Attorney General:

Since he has expressed himself as satisfied with his control of price fixing, will he prepare a statement for tabling in the House at the next sitting, showing the price in Western Australia of all subsidised goods at the date of the State taking over price control and as at the 1st June, 1949?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

I intend to supply some of the information when introducing a continuance Bill. I do not know whether the Leader of the Opposition would like to let the question stand over until then. If not, I must ask for notice of the question.

MOTION—STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION.

As to Rescinding Resolution.

THE PREMIER (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray-Wellington) [5.0]: I move that the resolution passed by this House on Tuesday, the 16th November, 1948, as follows:—

"That during the remainder of the session the Standing Orders be suspended so far as to enable Bills to be introduced without notice and to be passed through all their remaining stages on the same day, all Messages from the Legislative Council to be taken into consideration on the same day they are received,

and to enable resolutions from the Committees of Supply and of Ways and Means to be reported and adopted on the same day on which they shall have passed those Committees"—be rescinded.

HON. F. J. S. WISE (Gascoyne) [5.1]:

This motion is to rescind one moved in this Chamber many months ago, although in the same session. It was moved at that time because it was thought that the session was about to end and that it was necessary, even before private members' business had been suspended, to assist the Government to expedite urgent business. That has been the attitude in this Chamber for many years. Usually, after consultation with the Leader of the Opposition, the Government, when the end of the session approaches, moves the motion to suspend Standing Orders, and this particular motion to rescind that suspension is necessary because we are not as near the end of the session as the Government thought it was at that time.

The moving of that motion was very necessary to help the Government at the time and of course it would be unthinkable and may be impossible in spite of a majority, for the Government to continue without the motion being rescinded because of the fact that we have had no Address-in-reply. The Address-in-reply has always been considered by members of Parliament, and other people, as a right of the House and private members not merely to air grievances, but to state a case for their constituents in connection with the many matters worrying those constituents.

The Government, after a lapse of seven months, in the same session, and without an Address-in-reply, moves to rescind this motion, but in doing so the Government is fully appreciative of the fact that it has, by its own action, denied members an opportunity to speak to that Address-in-reply and state a case against the Government on any matters thought desirable by members on either side. That has been the usual practice and it is in the interests of electors as well as in the interests of the community. It is not that time is wasted by speaking to an Address-in-reply because members have an opportunity to keep check on all matters of importance. Now they are denied this right except by taking other steps such as the asking of questions and the moving of motions. However, if the asking of questions and the

moving of motions are to take the place of the Address-in-reply in order to ventilate members' grievances, we will need two or three hundred motions at this stage; motions of legitimate criticism of the Government.

This move—this tactical move—by the Government to avoid the Address-in-reply will not gain it any time or ground whatsoever. It is a tactical blunder which the Premier now recognises. Let us analyse what has happened in past years in regard to the rights of members speaking to an Address-in-reply. In 1935 the Address-in-reply took only ten days. In 1939 it took only 11 days—and those are average years—and in 1946 it took seven days. Seven sitting days of the House in spite of members of the present Government being seated, at that stage, on this side of the House! There were 26 speakers and 18 of them were Opposition members. Eighteen speeches were made on the Address-in-reply in 1946 and in 1939 there were 19 Opposition speakers out of 32. In 1935 there were 15 Opposition speakers out of a total of 33, so that it would seem to be the consensus of opinion by all members then seated on this side of the House that that was not only a desirable practice, but also an absolute necessity until they sat on the other side of the House.

When this tactical move was made—and I would not care to presume on whose advice the Premier acted, but one could guess and only guess—it was done to avoid criticism of the Government until either the Budget appears or a Supply Bill is introduced. There is no alternative for private members but to attempt to see that this Parliament is conducted properly and decently, debating subjects proper and fitting at the time and appropriate to their districts and pertaining to the welfare of the State. However, we are not permitted to take that course and I can imagine what we would have heard from the member for Mt. Marshall and the member for Beverley as well as the member for Katanning—the present Minister for Education—had the ventilation of criticism which they saved up during a period of six, seven or eight months been denied them. It is quite necessary and timely that the Government should be reminded, in this Chamber, that not at any stage do I recall a member of its parties making the

comment that an Address-in-reply was unnecessary, although I have heard it from members on this side of the House.

The Government cannot be considering it from the waste of time angle because figures that can be shown in "Hansard" over the years prove that the Address-in-reply—that is, the right of members so far as Parliamentary tradition in this State goes—has taken a few days only, no more than 11 or 12 sitting days at the very most. It would have concluded long before the Premier is ready with his Budget. What is it all about? It is to protect the members for Mt. Marshall and Middle Swan.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: And the Government.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Yes, and the Government, incidentally. But those members, quite properly, have made a decision as to their political future and the Government, to protect its own skin, has decided to make the proceedings not only six or eight weeks earlier than usual, but so to prepare its business that members on either side of the House, not necessarily those of the Opposition, have no opportunity of stating the case for their constituents. One could use very unpleasant words, but I prefer to say that the Premier and his Government, by this move, will not gain any time whatever. I am certain that ultimately even members on their side of the House, silent so far, will ultimately have to become vocal to state the case for themselves and their constituents. We will see, as the days go by, how necessary it will be for them to speak unless they have some other opportunity of saving their skins. I remember a gentleman who was a private member, but who is now in the Speaker's Chair, who was ever jealous of the rights of private members, and always sought to ensure that even the parish pump was worked, if necessary. He always contended that legitimate grievances of private members should be ventilated in a proper and fitting manner. That is so on this occasion. I hope that the Government feels as it looks, thoroughly ashamed of itself for conducting the business of this Chamber in this way.

HON. J. B. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [5.13]: I protest against the action of the Government which necessitates the moving

of a motion such as this. If it had carried on the usual procedure as has been done by Governments in past years, the necessity for such a step would never have arisen. As you will recall, Mr. Speaker, it is a peculiar fact that over the years such a situation has occurred on only two occasions; that is, during the period of the Mitchell-Latham Coalition Government and again now by the McLarty-Watts Government. It seems to me that it is a trick to try to filch from members the opportunity to address the House on the Address-in-reply. I have heard from some people outside that the Address-in-reply is a waste of time. I do not think it is. You, Mr. Speaker, as a private member on the floor of the House, always contended that private members should have an opportunity to air their grievances, and one of those opportunities occurs during the Address-in-reply. You know that a private member cannot do this, that or the other, and he cannot bring down a Bill for this matter or some other, but one of the ways he has of airing his grievances is through the debate on the Address-in-reply and also on the Budget.

This is an action taken by the Government because it is frightened that if two members of the Party, who are seeking Federal honours, resign before the State elections, it is likely to lose those seats and therefore its majority. The reason I can see for the Government bringing down a motion in this way is to muzzle members of the Opposition, and prevent them from expressing their views on the awful state of affairs that exists in regard to several matters. For instance, members of the Opposition will not be able to show the awful mess the Government has made of price fixing. You, Sir, will remember that the Government said, "Vote 'No' and leave it to us; we will see that prices are controlled."

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is getting away from the motion.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I have to give reasons. One of the reasons is that the Government is desirous of preventing members on this side of the House from showing the awful state of affairs that is developing through this Government's handling of price fixing. You will know that if one enters a shop today, one has to pay 3d. for a carrot.

Mr. Marshall: I paid 7d. for the last one I bought.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The hon. member was unlucky; he was overcharged. The Government said to itself, "If we can manoeuvre in this way, members of the Opposition will not be able to protest against the awful mess we have made of price fixing and hospital accommodation." In Fremantle today, women are told that if they want babies they can go to the King Edward Memorial Hospital and have them, and that there is no necessity for a maternity hospital in Fremantle.

Mr. SPEAKER: Will the hon. member please resume his seat. The motion is merely to restore Standing Orders, and I ask the hon. member to keep to that.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I agree with that, Sir, but you will also agree that when a member is speaking to a motion he must be allowed to give reasons. One of the reasons why the Minister for Health was desirous of Parliament being called together in this way was because he has told people in Fremantle that there is no necessity for a maternity hospital there, and he knows that Opposition members will not be able to ventilate their grievances on that matter. There is also the question of the giving away of the tram routes to private enterprise, and the Minister for Transport did not want the Opposition to be able to enter a protest. There are a number of other things that caused the Government to open the session in this manner.

One course I suggest to overcome the difficulty is for members to bring down separate motions, one against the awful mess the Government has made of price fixing, and another to bring down legislation to deal with the housing problem. The Government said it would give houses to two-unit families, and I have a letter from one of my constituents who has a three-unit family and he has been told that when another child arrives his application will be considered. Another motion could be brought forward in protest against the awful mess the Government has made as to the provision of hospital accommodation; another dealing with the awful mess it has made by giving away tram routes, and another with the taking over of the electricity supplies in the metropolitan area. If members on this side of the

House adopt those tactics, the Government will be sorry that it ever cut out the Address-in-reply, and we shall take about ten times as long as the Address-in-reply would have taken.

MR. GRAHAM (East Perth) [5.17]: We are only considering this motion because of what I call a piece of political trickery on the part of the Government in seeking to deny members, especially Opposition members, what has long been regarded as their undoubted right to discuss matters, all and sundry, pertaining to practically any mentionable subject. My perusal of the history of the State Parliament shows that this is the 60th year of Responsible Government in Western Australia and that on only two previous occasions have members been confronted with a situation such as this. One was in 1931, when there was an emergency and certain steps had to be taken regarding the Premiers' Plan. The other occasion was in 1943, when that greatest of all emergencies was facing Australia, that is, the approach of the Japanese to Australian shores. So, in both those instances, there were good and substantial reasons, or at least some semblance of reason, for members being denied their proper rights. But on this occasion there is no particular threat to the well being of the State socially, economically or internationally.

There has been no good reason adduced why members should be denied yet another limited privilege which they enjoy. Never before in the history of Western Australia has any Government tried to close the mouths of Opposition members immediately prior to an election. There would be and, of course, should be, the strongest protest on any occasion, but the position is as plain as a pikestaff that the Government, by resorting to this miserable trick, is denying all members, including its own supporters, but particularly Opposition members, the right to criticise it. God knows, there are sufficient things about which this Government should be called to order and asked to give account. I realise that members on this side of the House are at a great disadvantage because of the friendly attitude of the daily Press towards the Government. That reflects not only against members but also against those they represent, namely, the people of Western Australia.

Instead of this sort of thing being recorded as an outright scandal, it is glossed over on the mere flimsy pretext that there will be some saving of time. If the matter of time saving were a factor, particularly in view of the records presented by the Leader of the Opposition, Parliament could have been summoned a couple of weeks earlier. Had that been done, then while members were applying themselves to the Address-in-reply, Ministers could still have been giving consideration to their legislative programme. I appreciate that on a motion such as that now before the House, which restricts the opportunities of members respecting their deliberations, one is not entitled to wander too far from the terms of the proposition under discussion. So far as I am personally concerned, I feel that I have the support of at least 99 per cent. of my constituents when I express my strongest disapproval of the Government's mean and contemptible trick.

Point of Order.

Mr. Bovell: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker! According to the statement on the notice paper I have, you called this session of Parliament together. I think the remarks of the member for East Perth are uncalled for.

Mr. Marshall: You do not believe that!

Mr. Reynolds: Don't be so childish!

Mr. Speaker: The member for East Perth may proceed.

Debate Resumed.

Mr. GRAHAM: Like the member for Fremantle, I feel, notwithstanding the two-fold object of the Government—firstly, without question, there is the paramount desire to stifle the criticism of the Opposition and, secondly, there is the desire to overcome the position created by two of its supporters who are contemplating contesting the next Federal elections—that it will not gain anything whatsoever in the saving of time. If we have been robbed, as we have, and shamefully robbed at that, of our rights, we on the Opposition side of the House at any rate intend to take advantage of every opportunity to point out those matters we think worthy of mention, and where no such opportunity is provided by means of legislation, other methods will

be found so that the voice of the people, through their representatives, may be heard in this Chamber.

Once again I protest as strongly as it is possible for me to do against the action of the Government. Were I to express myself in terms applicable to the state of my feelings respecting this matter, I am certain I would be called to order. The Government has done a most shocking thing to the representatives of the people, and I sincerely hope that the public organs of propaganda will let the people know that we on the Opposition side of the House are disgusted with the Government, and that they will point out the situation to the people in a manner that will be a proper reflection of our feelings regarding the matter.

MR. STYANTS (Kalgoorlie) [5.25]: I desire briefly to express my resentment regarding the tactics the Government has adopted on this occasion. It is not often that I am resentful in this House. I feel that it is an affront to members, particularly to those sitting on the Opposition side of the House, that they should be deprived of an opportunity to speak on the Address-in-reply. I know it has been said by certain members—

Point of Order.

Mr. Leslie: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker! I am sure other members will, with me, appreciate very greatly your indulgence in this matter.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: What is your point of order?

Mr. Leslie: I find in the motion no reference to the matter of the Address-in-reply. So far as I can see, the acceptance or rejection of the motion by the House, cannot mean that members are deprived—

Mr. Marshall: Are you giving a decision on the point of order or merely submitting one?

Mr. Leslie: I am seeking a ruling.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: I would like to ask you, Mr. Speaker, whether the member for Mt. Marshall is in order in making a speech when asking for your ruling?

Mr. Speaker: I will await the point of order.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: He is giving a decision himself.

Mr. Leslie: I wish to ask whether the acceptance or rejection of the motion has any effect upon the question of whether or not an Address-in-reply debate will be proceeded with in this Chamber.

Mr. Speaker: As I see it, the point raised is as to whether the restoration of the Standing Orders implies that the session will proceed instead of a new session being commenced. In other words, the question is as to whether the proceedings now are to be merely a cleaning up of the work of the existing session, or whether there will be a further session at a later stage. I am not in a position to say anything about that. From what I have been able to gather, and having listened to the criticism respecting the restoration of the Standing Orders, all I can say is that I will give members every opportunity to express their criticism, but they must not overdo it.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Hear, hear!

Hon. A. H. Panton: They cannot overdo it.

Debate Resumed.

Mr. STYANTS: This is a question of the application of the Standing Orders, which apply to the Address-in-reply as well. It seems strange to me that the Premier should dispense with the Standing Orders in one direction and then a couple of days later move that they shall again be operative. I claim that the Address-in-reply debate is governed by Standing Orders in exactly the same way as is the motion before the Chair. I know that it has been said by various members that we could quite easily dispense with that debate, but I have never been one to subscribe to that point of view.

During the 14 sessions I have been present in the House, I have always taken advantage of the opportunity to express criticism of the Government or to explain the requirements of the district I have the honour to represent or, in a wider sense, to discuss matters of State or national importance. From the standpoint of actual effectiveness of contributions to the Address-in-reply debate, while not very much importance may be attached to them, nevertheless they provide members with one of those rare opportunities afforded them to discuss matters that possibly could not come up for consideration on the Estimates later in the session. Those members, who say that no great harm would be done if this Standing

Order and also the Address-in-reply were dispensed with, would be in much the same category as those people who, with reluctance, are compelled to enrol and then vote at elections. While they claim that it is a great nuisance to have to do so, if the privilege were withdrawn they would assuredly complain and be very resentful of it. So, if it were decided to withdraw the Address-in-reply debate, I am certain that 99 per cent. of the members would be keenly resentful of it as a common rule, and I feel resentful of it now in the exceptional circumstances that have occurred during the current session.

The reason for what has happened is well known to us. I may be unjustly suspicious but, in my opinion, the reason is that the Government feared that probably frustration tactics would be adopted by the Opposition in an endeavour to prolong the session till a stage when it would be very difficult for its two supporters, who are aspirants for Federal political honours, to carry out their now quite laudable intentions. I think the Premier and his Ministers must agree that, in a general sense, they have received a fair amount of co-operation from members on this side of the House. The Opposition has a certain duty to perform and certain objectives to attain. One of its principal duties is to criticise the actions of the Government, and the Government must admit that the Opposition has indulged in only fair and legitimate criticism.

I direct the Premier's attention to the fact that, towards the close of last year, he expressed a desire that the sitting of the House should be concluded on a certain date. I say without fear of successful contradiction that the conduct of business towards the close of last year was the greatest jumble that has occurred during the 14 years I have been in Parliament. Members will recall that, to meet the Premier's wishes to finish on a certain date, members of the Opposition co-operated to the extent of refraining from discussing even for a minute such important Votes on the Estimates as Mines, Railways and Agriculture. We co-operated to the limit to help the Premier.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: And we still want to co-operate.

Mr. STYANTS: It shows little appreciation of our co-operation that the Premier and his Ministers should decide to frustrate

any proposed attempt by us to prolong the session in order that the two aspirants for Federal honours might resign their State membership to nominate for Federal seats. I do not think the Government need have had any fear on those grounds, because no benefit would have accrued to us, and it has not been the practice of the Opposition unduly to oppose anything in the order of business or prevent the Premier from attaining any objective he had in mind. I recommend the Premier and his Ministers to consider the words of the great author and philosopher Voltaire who, when discussing the question of the right of his opponents to free speech, said, "I may not believe a word that you are going to say, but I will fight to the utmost for your right to say it."

HON. J. T. TONKIN (North-East Fremantle) [5.35]: The motion which the Premier is asking the House to rescind was moved much earlier this session. Later on in the session, I assume that the Premier will desire to move a similar motion in order to expedite the despatch of business, and I am wondering whether it will be competent for him to do so. Under the Standing Orders, if a member moves a motion and it is defeated, it is not permissible for him to move it again in the same session; and yet that is what the Premier will be seeking to do.

This motion was carried at the end of last year because the Government needed it to get the business through, but owing to the steps since taken by the Government, we are now being asked to rescind that motion. If we agree to its rescission, I should like to know whether it will be competent for the Premier to move a similar motion later on this session for the purpose of expediting the despatch of business.

Had the Government not decided to trample upon the rights of private members in its own interests and so dispense with the Address-in-reply debate in this way, it would not have been necessary for the Premier to move this motion of rescission. The resolution would have lapsed in the ordinary course and we could have proceeded, as we had every right to expect, with the final session of the Parliament.

It would not have been so bad had the Premier dispensed with the Address-in-reply

during the second session, provided he felt disposed so to do. That would have been bad enough, but it would not have been nearly so bad as his action on this occasion. The Government must realise that members of the Opposition have a duty to the country and that duty is to hold up to the light of criticism the actions of the Government. How else are the people to know what is happening? They cannot depend upon what the newspaper will tell them because that is on the side of the Government and the newspaper is silent on its misdeeds while it praises to the utmost those things of which from time to time the Government feels proud.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: "The West Australian" is the Government.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: So there is a specially good reason why we should have no muzzling of the Opposition in the final session of the Parliament. If we had a Press that told the people what was occurring in the House without suppressing reference to actions that would do the Government no credit, as has been the case, there would not be so much to criticise, but because the newspaper, as is well known, shields the Government and praises it where possible, members of the Opposition should not be denied the right and opportunity to let the people know the truth about the actions of the Government.

There are many matters that ought to be brought to the light of day illustrative of how badly the Government has fallen down. The Government claims to assist the establishment of industry, but actually holds up the establishment of industry, as I shall prove at the earliest opportunity. Hence it has taken this step to protect its own skin because of the difficulties that will arise later—difficulties emanating from the actions of members supporting the Government, not as a result of action by members on the Opposition side. Because of action proposed to be taken at a later stage by members supporting the Government, the Premier and his Ministers desire to hasten into the safety of recess, if they can. In order to do that, it deprives private members, without any compunction at all, of that which has been their right since Responsible Government, a right to which the Opposition is entitled, an opportunity deliberately afforded it, to express its point of view. In

view of the action taken by the Premier, I should like to know from him whether the Auditor General's report will be tabled before the Budget is presented.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Of course it will not.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That is something which his colleague, the Deputy Premier, repeatedly urged when he was on this side of the House. He insisted that there could be no proper consideration of the Budget unless the Auditor General's report was tabled. Are we likely to have it, and are we likely to get the Budget early enough to enable us to discuss it properly? We certainly were not afforded that opportunity in the earlier part of this session, when the Estimates for department after department were rushed through in a matter of seconds.

Mr. Marshall: We foolishly subscribed to it.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: There was no opportunity for us to deal with the Estimates for the various departments. Is that to be the position again, so that the Government can rush into the safety of recess, or are we to be given a fuller opportunity on this occasion, especially now that we have been deprived of our opportunity on the Address-in-reply? In view of the Premier's statement published in "The West Australian" that he was solicitous for the rights of private members, I should like to know whether they will be enabled to deal with their business during this session.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Of course they will not. The Government will muzzle them, if it can.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Are the requirements of this State and the duties of private members to be a secondary consideration with the Government, its first consideration being its own safety and the convenience of its own members?

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The whole two of them!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Government has brought this position upon itself. I can well imagine, as the Leader of the Opposition pointed out, what a howl there would have been had the position been reversed.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: We have them all silenced over there!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Had we attempted to do what the Government did in the final part of the first period of this session, that

is, deprive Opposition members of their opportunity to criticise the Government, there would have been a howl. Of course, the Government can do anything so long as it suits itself, but private members have a responsibility to their constituents. Are they to be trodden down merely because it suits the Government to take this course of action? I think that before the Government is very much older it will have very good reason to regret what it has done.

MR. HEGNEY (Pilbara) [5.44]: Before the motion is submitted, I, in common with other members, desire to express briefly my views on the attitude of the Government. I am absolutely astounded at its decision to prevent private members, not only on the Opposition side but on the Government side also, from expressing their views and the views of their constituents on matters of vital importance to them, as well as on matters affecting the people of the State as a whole. I have a vivid recollection of the many fine orations that you, Mr. Speaker, made in this Chamber when I became a member.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Hear, hear!

MR. HEGNEY: Most of those orations had for their object the impressing on members of the importance of preserving their rights, as well as the rights of the community. The Government's attitude is a direct attempt to take away from private members the right to submit their views and opinions on behalf of the people whom they represent. I assure the Government that members on this side of the House, and I speak for myself now, considered that as the members of the Government were inexperienced when they assumed office, they should be given every opportunity to become conversant with the many ramifications of their portfolios. As a consequence—and as I think "Hansard" will prove—most, if not all, the members on this side of the House were mild in their criticism of the members of the Government; but on this occasion the Government, at the direction of those who instruct it from outside, has decided to sandbag the Opposition, as well as the rank and file members of the Liberal and Country League and of the Country and Democratic League and thus refuse them the opportunity of bringing matters of importance before the House.

It has been said by members on this side of the House, as well as by some members on the Government side, that the Address-in-reply is not of great importance. I hold the view that whether the present Government continues in office or whether the Labour Party is in office after next election, the onus is on Ministers to take cognisance of what private members submit in a rational way for their consideration. The point I make is that private members have certain rights; and, without going into ancient history, it is not so long ago since private members practically had no rights whatever. I would say in protesting against the Government's attempt to restrict the rights of rank and file members, that I feel disposed to avail myself to the fullest extent possible of my opportunities under the Standing Orders to bring every conceivable matter possible before Parliament this session, in the way I would have done had there been an Address-in-reply debate.

I assure the Premier that he will not gain much time by the action of his Government in cutting out the Address-in-reply. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that that was one of the many tactical blunders which the Government has made. I know the Government acted in full collaboration with "The West Australian." As a matter of fact, I believe the Government takes its instructions from that newspaper, because quite recently I read a leading article wherein the paper commended the State Government for its decision not to introduce many Bills during the remainder of the present session. It was quite in order that the Government had introduced many Bills in the previous session and there was no obligation on the part of the Government to introduce a multiplicity of Bills on this occasion.

Mr. Marshall: No matter how urgent they might be!

MR. HEGNEY: I would say that there was some motive behind the leading article in "The West Australian." I have no doubt—and I do not think any member of the Liberal and Country League or the Country and Democratic League who spoke honestly would contradict my statement—that the reason for this elimination of the Address-in-reply and the introduction of an early session was for the express purpose, in the

first place, of enabling the Government to close down this Parliament in time to allow the member for Middle Swan and the member for Mt. Marshall to nominate for Federal seats; and if Parliament is closed and the results of the two subsequent by-elections are adverse to the Government, it will still be able to carry on. I believe that is one of the reasons why the Government desires to close Parliament early, and as a private member and a member of this community, I contend that if the Government is going to carry on, and that is what is in its mind, it is politically immoral.

If the Government proposes to carry on in the event of the by-elections being adverse to it after this session has closed, its action will be politically immoral. The only honourable thing to do would be to go to the country or resign. The rank and file members of the Country and Democratic League may not agree with me, nor may the members of the newly-created Liberal and Country League, but I believe there is another reason for the action of the Government. I can assure those members that one of the reasons why the Address-in-reply has been cut out—they may not be able to look behind the scenes or know what is going on, but we know that they have been unconsciously sand-bagged—is that there is an important conference to take place on the 6th and 7th July and another, I understand, on the 8th July. It is significant that those two conferences have been convened on such closely associated dates.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is getting away from the motion.

Mr. HEGNEY: I am glad you reminded me of that. It is funny you should have reminded me because I was going to round off on that point as it has a direct association—

Mr. SPEAKER: I was trying to short-circuit the hon. member.

Mr. HEGNEY: —with what you said when you replied to the member for Mt. Marshall, and it has relation to the restriction of private members on both sides of the House. You can see how I link the points up in this way: that in connection with those two conferences to which I have referred it is hoped that the Government will be able to overcome its difficulties without any Address-in-reply, because that would have been out of the road altogether

by that date. I know that the private members of the Liberal and Country League will not agree with the statement—but I have reasonable grounds for making it—that there are certain motives behind the entire elimination of the Address-in-reply. If the Address-in-reply had been arranged for, I do not think the Government could have accused the members on this side of the House of entering into unfair or extravagant criticism. If members will look up "Hansards" of the last two sessions every one who is reasonably minded will realise that the criticism offered has been very fair.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Constructive.

Mr. HEGNEY: It has been constructive and reasoned criticism, and the same would have obtained on this occasion. I would like the Premier to indicate—if he is in a position and courageous enough to do so—why the session has been called early and why the Address-in-reply has been eliminated. I would be very pleased to hear from him on that matter. As a result of the Government's action, members on this side of the House have to resort to other means of bringing to the attention of the Government matters affecting their electorates. I regret that the Government's decision is one which tends to restrict and limit the rights of members in this Parliament.

I shall collaborate with the Government when I think collaboration is necessary in regard to the Bills it introduces and will help to expedite the passage of those Bills; but I can assure the Premier and the Attorney General, the legal adviser of the Government, that I shall take every step possible under Standing Orders to see that matters that would have been brought before the Government by way of the Address-in-reply are submitted by other means; and in the long run I do not think the Government will gain any time by its unwise action in restricting the rights of private members by cutting out the Address-in-reply.

HON. A. R. G. HAWKE (Northam) [5.56]: I support the motion, which should be some comfort to the Premier.

The Minister for Works: That is an excellent start anyhow.

The Minister for Housing: It is real collaboration.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I am sure that the Premier and all his Ministers will agree that the Opposition has co-operated very fully with them during the two years they have been in office. That co-operation has operated, not only inside this Parliament, when Parliament has been in session, but also outside, as I am sure the Premier would readily admit. Because the Opposition has co-operated so reasonably with the Government during the whole of its existence and thereby assisted it to carry on the affairs of State, it is difficult to understand why the return given by the Government to the Opposition for that co-operation is so insulting as it has been in connection with the methods used by the Government regarding the sittings of Parliament that are now taking place.

I think the least the Premier and his colleagues could have done in return for the co-operation given to the Government by the Opposition was to take the necessary steps to bring to an end last year's session of Parliament and to make this year's sittings a new session altogether. That was the least the Government might have been expected to do for the Opposition and for private members generally in return for the large measure of co-operation which the Government has always had from the Leader of the Opposition and members on the Opposition benches. Certainly there is no warrant or justification of any kind for the Government's action in deciding to make this year's sittings a continuation of the session held last year.

It must be evident to the Premier, if not to all of his Ministers, that the Government has gained nothing and will gain nothing in point of time because of its action in seeking to deprive private members of Parliament of the right to participate in the normal Address-in-reply debate. There could possibly in some circumstances be a justification for dispensing with the Address-in-reply debate, but there could be no circumstances in the final year of a Parliament to justify the wiping out of the right of private members to participate in such a debate. I think the Premier has entirely overlooked the fact that the right of members to participate in an Address-in-reply debate is an absolute one given to them by the Standing Orders of this House. The Premier has to explain to members why

the Government has completely taken away the right of private members here to participate in such a debate, if they so desire.

I would not have made such a strong protest about this matter if the Premier had been frank with the public in the explanation he made publicly as to the reasons why the Government decided to make the sittings of Parliament this year a continuation of those which took place last year.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: They sounded very like excuses, not reasons.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: In "The West Australian" of Thursday, the 19th May last, the Premier is reported as stating—

The Budget would be introduced early and members would then have an opportunity of discussing every aspect of State affairs.

Of course, members have that right in every session. There is nothing new in it. It does not give members any additional rights beyond what they have had in other sessions. The Premier then went on in his statement to try to justify or explain the altered procedure as follows:—

The altered procedure to be followed this year was made desirable by circumstances, he said.

It was "made desirable," mind you Mr. Speaker, and not "necessary" or "justified" or "right" in any shape or form, but "made desirable by circumstances." The Premier went on to say—

The Federal elections would take place during the period in which the State Parliament usually assembled and members would desire a long adjournment to participate in the campaign.

The points made by the Premier in that part of the statement are not necessarily correct. What right has the Premier to say, for instance, that the Federal election would take place during the period in which the State Parliament usually assembled? No one knows whether the Federal election will take place in October, November or December of this year, or January of next year. What right had the Premier to speak for all members and say that they would desire a long adjournment to participate in the Federal election campaign?

Hon. A. H. Panton: We might not be interested.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: This House meets only on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Members of the State Parliament, if a Federal election campaign were

taking place, and the State Houses still remained in session, could take part in that campaign on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays.

Mr. Marshall: Why did it become so important this time?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: If all members desired this House to adjourn so that they might take part in a Federal election campaign, we need not adjourn for more than two weeks at the most, because that would be a sufficient period of time for such State members as would take part in the campaign to do so.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: But what would happen after resumption? That is the worry.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: We know from experience, especially of the more recent Federal elections, that State members do not take a very big part in Federal election campaigns—that is speaking of State members as a whole. As I said earlier, I am sure the Premier did not give to the public the true explanation of why his Government decided upon the proposal to call the State Parliament together earlier this year and to deprive private members of Parliament of their undoubted right to participate in an Address-in-Reply debate. Following the publication of the Premier's explanation in "The West Australian" of the 19th May, I felt it my duty on behalf of the Opposition, as the Leader of the Opposition was away, to question very seriously the explanation he had given. I submitted a statement to "The West Australian," which was published without any portion of it being suppressed. It is quite unusual for the editor of "The West Australian" to publish any of my contributions without maliciously suppressing some portion of them—

The Premier: He gave your Leader a pretty good go this morning.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE:—more particularly when those contributions have to do with actual or potential mergers between the anti-Labour parties in this State.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: He likes your comments, on which to build his leaders.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The submission I made to "The West Australian" was so good that I propose to read it.

The Minister for Housing: Is this the part that was published, or the part cut out?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The Minister for Housing is not displaying his customary lucidity, as I said a moment ago that the editor of "The West Australian" published this statement without suppressing any portion of it. The matter published reads as follows:—

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition—Mr. Hawke—said yesterday, he was naturally interested in the Premier's announcement regarding the Government's decision to call Parliament together on the 15th of June.

The Premier claimed the decision to continue last year's session, instead of having a new one, was to enable Parliament to adjourn earlier than usual so that its members could participate in the Federal election campaign. As no date for that election had yet been fixed, the question of adjourning the State Parliament was at present neither vital nor urgent.

It was much more likely the Premier and his colleagues had chosen the proposed course to prevent members from criticising the Government upon a number of matters vital to the public.

Some of those matters, including the appalling lack of control over prices, require urgent attention at the hands of Parliament, yet discussion upon them would be prevented until some considerable time after Parliament met, if the Government had its way.

The Minister for Housing: No editor could have cut anything out of that.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It continues—

If the Federal election came on fairly early there would be little or no opportunity for such discussions, as the State Government would then have to close Parliament down, and seek safety in recess to save itself from defeat in the Legislative Assembly. It was not the fault of the public, or of the Opposition, that two of the Government's supporters had decided to contest Federal seats, and would have to resign their State seats at least two months before nominating for the Federal Parliament, and the business of the country and of Parliament should not be pushed around to suit those two members.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: The Government has allowed itself to be pushed around to suit them.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Further—

There was no genuine reason to justify the Government in denying to members of Parliament their ordinary and reasonable rights of discussion and criticism—more particularly as the forthcoming meeting of Parliament would be its last before the State election.

I have a sufficiently good opinion of the commonsense and of the practical mind of

the Premier to believe that, when the proposal to follow the line of action that the Government has since followed in connection with these sittings of Parliament was brought up in Cabinet, he opposed the idea.

Mr. Marshall: I will bet he did.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: He would have enough commonsense to know that if the Government decided on that course and imposed it upon members of this House, ostensibly for the purpose of saving time, it would have the opposite effect.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Who do you think thought of it—the Attorney General again?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It is most unfortunate that the Premier will be the member of the Government to stand up and defend an action of the Government with which he probably disagreed in Cabinet. I have no doubt that this way of calling Parliament together on the present occasion was suggested by the shrewd legal minds in the Government.

Mr. Marshall: Very shrewd!

Mr. Reynolds: There is no doubt about that.

Mr. Marshall: The tactics adopted indicate that.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: In 99 cases out of 100 the shrewd legal mind is a non-practical mind; a mind that does not understand the ordinary man or his reactions to certain lines of conduct. I am positive that the practical and commonsense minds of the Minister for Works, the Premier and the Minister for Transport would realise the probable reactions of members on the Opposition side of the House to this line of action.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: What about the lady member?

The Minister for Housing: You should go in for thought reading.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I feel I am making some accurate deductions because, after all, if one knows men reasonably well one knows how their minds work and the lines of action they would advocate.

Mr. Marshall: You do not know the outside strings that were pulled for this.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: There is no doubt that the two shrewd legal minds in the Cabinet would advocate strongly that this sort of political trickery should be practised upon the Opposition members of Parliament during the present year, because I

am certain that the move of the Government in this direction is neither more nor less than shabby political trickery. Why should members of the Opposition and private members generally be robbed of their undoubted right to participate in an Address-in-reply debate if they so wish, simply because the member for Mt. Marshall and the member for Middle Swan have taken it into their heads to try to get into the Commonwealth Parliament? Why should the rights of most of the 50 members of this House be destroyed this year, in relation to the Address-in-reply debate, to suit the convenience of those two members?

Mr. Marshall: Two that we would be pleased to get rid of.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It is certainly a case of the tail wagging the dog.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Before tea I quoted from the issue of "The West Australian" which published the Premier's statement made for the benefit of the public and giving the reasons—

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Or excuses!

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: —or the so-called reasons why the Government had decided to adopt the practice it has in connection with Parliament this year and against which members of the Opposition have protested during this discussion. The same report indicated that the Premier had that day attended a meeting of the joint Parties which make the Government possible and this is what "The West Australian" reported on the meeting:—

Mr. McLarty appeared to be very pleased after the meeting because proceedings had been very harmonious for the two and a half hours that it lasted. At one stage it seemed that some bitterness might be introduced when a member or two made reference to organisational efforts for a Liberal and Country League and Country and Democratic League merger, but discussion on this question quickly ended and all members continued to use the words of one, "to be good pals."

The Premier: Hear, hear!

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The report continues—

Mr. J. I. Mann, who recently resigned from the C.D.L., became an Independent and subsequently joined the L.C.L., was present at the meeting.

The Minister for Housing: Are you quoting from Standing Orders? We are discussing the suspension of Standing Orders.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It is not difficult for those who were not present at this meeting to imagine the member for Beverley sitting between the member for Irwin-Moore and the Minister for Transport, and one could almost see them sitting arm in arm, as it were, and being "jolly good pals."

Hon. A. H. Panton: And so say all of us!

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: During the tea hour the Premier and myself had a very friendly discussion—

Mr. Marshall: And decided to be "jolly good pals."

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: —in a most appropriate place and under very favourable circumstances. One of the terms used by the Premier was "our democratic way of life." I think our democratic way of life is involved in the stand which Opposition members have taken in this discussion, protesting against their democratic way of life and their democratic rights in this State being taken from them by the Government because of the introduction of a political trick in making the sittings of Parliament this year a continuation of the session which commenced in July of last year.

If the Government was really anxious to wipe out the Address-in-reply debate this year there was a clear, straightforward course for it to follow if it intended to treat the Opposition in this House in a decent manner, and if it was to show some practical demonstration of its oft-repeated expressions of belief in the phrase "our democratic way of life." The clear and straight-forward way would have been for the Government to have brought legally to an end the sittings of last year and to have commenced a new session this year and then brought down a motion when the House met, if Standing Orders had permitted it, to dispense with the Address-in-reply debate. If that could have been done, and had been done, all members of this Assembly could have decided by discussion, and by vote, whether they were prepared to surrender the right which is normally

theirs to have an Address-in-reply debate and of participating in it to the extent which any one of them might desire.

The Government did not follow that course. It adopted the shrewd legal political trick of making the sittings of Parliament this year a continuation of those held last year and thereby making the sittings of this year part of the same session as the sittings of last year. There was nothing very democratic about that and there was nothing decent about it. It was a political trick which the Government has no reason to be other than very much ashamed about.

Prior to tea I said that it was not fair that the position of two members in this House who have decided to contest the next Federal election should be allowed to deprive more than 40 other members of the House of the right that is usually theirs. I do not consider the Government was in any way justified in robbing other members of their rights because two members have decided to leave this Assembly altogether and try to get into another Parliament. The main reason why the Government followed the course it did was to try to finish the sittings this year as quickly as possible so that Parliament might be closed down before these two members had to resign, and thus allow the Government to be safe in recess and away altogether from any influence or decision which Parliament would exercise upon it if Parliament were still sitting.

Is it a fair proposition from the point of view of the public generally, and of the welfare of the country, that there should be a rush to get through the sittings this year as quickly as possible and close Parliament down altogether as early as possible in order that the Government might avoid being amenable to the will of Parliament? In essence, therefore, the main reason why the Government has put over this political trick and why it has robbed members of the Opposition, and private members generally, of their ordinary undoubted right, is that it is anxious to preserve its own skin and to run the full course of office which would normally be available to it. This Government is on the way out, there is not the slightest doubt in the world about that.

The Premier: There may be some difference of opinion there.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: No doubt there would be a difference of opinion. The Premier, deep in his heart of hearts, entertains some slight feeling of hope that a miracle might occur to influence the majority of the people to allow his Government to continue in office, but widespread general public opinion prevails today that this Government is doomed and is undoubtedly on the way out.

The Premier: You have been moving about in a very restricted circle.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I have covered a very wide circle, but whether one moves in a restricted or a wide circle does not matter much. It is not the length of distance one covers that matters. Some foolish person once said that travel broadens the mind and some very wise person later amended that in a way that I cannot describe at the moment. Travel does not necessarily broaden the mind. Everything depends upon the type of mind possessed by the person who travels. Some persons could travel around the world ten times and be no better informed than when they started.

The Premier: There was nothing personal in that remark.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Other persons could travel from Perth to Pinjarra and have their minds tremendously broadened—

The Premier: Yes, they have.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: —by that short 58-mile trip through exceedingly beautiful country.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The Government, by adopting this political trick, is, in effect, speaking figuratively, sitting upon members of the Opposition, and I do not know of any man, not even the Attorney General, who appreciates being sat upon. If one sits upon the savage man, he protests about it. He kicks, he struggles, he bites, and does anything else which he is able to do to escape from that undesirable and unfortunate position. The Government was very ill-advised by super-shrewd, unpractical legal minds when it agreed to adopt this practice of making sittings of Parliament this year a continuation of the sittings of last year. I am sure the more practical minds of the common men in the Government were fearful that by thus sitting upon members of the Opposition, and

other private members as well, the Government would stir up those members to an extent which would take up much more of the time of Parliament in legitimate protests and attempts at the discussion of vital subjects; much more time, five times more time, than would have been taken up if the Government had adopted the sensible and straightforward course of making this a new session of Parliament for 1949 and allowing members to choose whether they would accept their undoubted right of participating in the Address-in-reply debate if they so wished.

[Resolved: That motions be continued.]

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison) [7.45]: I do not propose to delay the House, but in anticipation of what the Premier may say in reply, I desire to make one or two observations. I think I have the very proud distinction of having sat in this House for a longer period than any other member. During that period only on two previous occasions have I experienced two sessions of Parliament developing into one session by virtue of an adjournment. So the Premier could, in reply, say that a precedent has occurred on more than one occasion. However, on those two occasions a crisis existed during the periods of those respective Parliaments. One was during the financial emergency atmosphere of the Commonwealth and the other was when the Legislative Council refused to pass the Supply Bill. On both those occasions when those Parliaments adjourned, it was with the concurrence of the Opposition who were informed of the situation by the Governments of those periods, and we knew full well that when we met again it would be a continuance of a session which had been temporarily adjourned. Therefore, it is of little use the Premier, when replying, using those occasions as a precedent for the action of the present Government.

This question would not be before us if it were not for the fact that a motion is usually moved towards the end of a session to finalise the business of Parliament and in which the Opposition always concurs because of the circumstances that usually prevail at that time. In consequence, the Premier must have known when he moved the motion what his Government had proposed to do. If he did know, then he deceived this House when he put forward his motion because he gave us no information as to the

attitude which his Government proposed to take when it was moved. If the Premier was unaware of what his Government was going to do, then it is quite obvious that tactics have been adopted which are foreign to the usual procedure followed by the respective Governments down through the ages, so far as I know. His Government has acted in entire contradiction to the attitude of all Governments when moving to suspend Standing Orders to expedite the passage of legislation and motions at the conclusion of a session. So one has to look for the reason for the change in procedure.

I am more than surprised that the Premier would concur in any decision given by his Cabinet to adopt the procedure which it has followed on this occasion. I could never believe that a Premier of this State could do it. I could never believe it, unless it were brought home to me forcibly by facts such as those confronting us at present. I have always recognised the Premier of this State—I have had no hesitation whatever in expressing my opinion to outsiders—as a most conscientious man, one whose intentions were always honourable. I am afraid his attitude with regard to what is happening now must cause me to revise my opinion.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Unfortunately, he has got into bad company.

Mr. MARSHALL: I always regarded the Premier as strong enough to hold aloof from the temptations of these ill-doers. We hear a lot about the democratic way of life, and I have heard some of the present Ministers severely ridiculing the attitude of another Government in power in Australia for going to the length of gagging members, and preventing them from expressing views on behalf of the people they represent in that particular Parliament. What has this Government done? The very thing of which they have complained so bitterly! I know of no other section of this community, apart from the communists, that would adopt a like attitude. That which the Government has adopted is typically a communist attitude.

Hon. A. H. Panton: That is right.

Mr. MARSHALL: They want to gain a certain objective, and to attain a certain goal they will stop at nothing.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Any means to an end.

Mr. MARSHALL: That is so.

Mr. Hoar: Why worry about the Liberal Party?

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Or the camouflage league.

Mr. MARSHALL: Their object is to destroy the Labour Party, and then the rest is easy. Evidently they are in communication with the communists and know that it will be easy once they can get rid of the Labour Party.

Mr. Styants: "Liquidate" is the word.

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes, and the rest is easy. There is no justification for the action that the present Government has taken. There was nothing to prevent the session from being commenced a month earlier. The session could have commenced in May or even in April.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Why not the 1st April?

Mr. MARSHALL: There was nothing to prevent that course from being adopted.

The Minister for Housing: Of course there was. The dining-room was not finished then!

Mr. MARSHALL: The Government could have called Parliament together in April and followed the ordinary procedure. Evidently there was a motive. Why was the opening of Parliament delayed?

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: What do you think was the motive?

Mr. MARSHALL: Political expediency; the necessity to save their political skins; the fear of facing up to the situation confronting them! Most of the offensive behaviour by the Government towards the Opposition has not been effected legislatively. Most of its demeanours, which will be rightly sheeted home to Ministers in the near future, have been administrative.

Mr. May: You mean Ministers do not need Parliament?

Mr. MARSHALL: They would dearly like to be without one at the moment. The position is that they are getting their directions from the capitalistic Press and are following the lines of political expediency.

The Premier: I thought we were influenced by the communists.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: It is much the same in effect.

Mr. MARSHALL: I do not know that the communists are so very much opposed to the capitalistic Press, although they have a Press of their own. The capitalistic Press here gave a lead to the Government as to what it should do. Ministers were told that they need not too hurriedly open the session and, when they did so, there was no necessity to introduce much legislation, however necessary some might be.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Surely you do not read the leading articles!

Mr. MARSHALL: The Government has adopted tactics of political expediency. It has done what it has in order to get away from the criticism that is due. It has filched the rights of members of the Opposition to speak on behalf of the people they represent. Ministers will close the session as soon as possible, and then they will be able to retain their portfolios until April, even though it may be against the desire of the people.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The House has not yet carried the motion.

Mr. MARSHALL: The motion should never have been placed before this House. It would not have been placed before us were it not the desire of the Government to evade criticism. What I cannot understand is the silence of those who supported the Government on the score of democracy, when they spoke from public platforms. The Liberal flag was flown at every meeting.

Mr. Graham: The yellow flag!

Mr. MARSHALL: Not one of those members has entered a protest against what is going on. They have not protested against being gagged.

Mr. Hill: Who is being gagged?

Mr. MARSHALL: The hon. member has not protested against his Government denying him the right to speak on the Address-in-reply.

Mr. Hill: I have the right to speak and I want to.

Mr. MARSHALL: Even if he were to speak, we know what he would say. There is only one subject he would deal with—the Albany harbour. We know what he would deal with if he were to speak, and we know what he would say at the finish.

The Premier: At any rate, he has had results.

Mr. MARSHALL: There is a reason for it all. Members on the Government side are gagged without any difficulty. I am sure of this, that if they were to rise in their places and address you, Mr. Speaker, what they would like to say would be to the disadvantage of their own Government.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: That is so. The Government is straining their loyalty almost to breaking point.

Mr. MARSHALL: That is the position.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The member for Mt. Marshall would love to get up and make a speech.

Mr. MARSHALL: This is the first time in my political career that I have seen a body of men desirous of playing a part as a minority Government.

Mr. Reynolds: You are still learning.

Mr. MARSHALL: Ministers are only anxious to get through the session early so that Parliament will again be in recess. In those circumstances, whether the Government has a majority or not, Ministers can still remain in office, irrespective of the people's desires.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: That is the scheme all right.

Mr. MARSHALL: I protest as one who believes in retaining the rights of private members. We should not be deprived of the opportunity to voice the desires of the people we represent. I care not what the Government may be, any attempt along those lines, the effect of which will be to restrict the opportunities of private members, will be contrary to democratic principles. I know what is behind this move. It is that the Government is afraid to face up to the Opposition. The desire is to cover up and no doubt the actions of the Government will be glossed over by the capitalistic, so-called free Press. I well remember the history of bygone days when every section of the Press was opposed to a certain political party. When the struggle was at its height, when there were no people who seemed anxious to help and when that party's reputation was besmirched—there seemed no support apart from the party's own organisation—they struggled on and went to the people. They won the election and annihilated all opposition. I forecast that fate for the present Government in the near future.

THE PREMIER (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray-Wellington—in reply) [8.0]: As soon as circumstances allowed me, I moved the motion standing in my name. The object was to restore to members as quickly as possible the privileges which they have always enjoyed in this House. The Standing Orders were suspended towards the end of last year, which was the usual thing to do. This motion is not being opposed, but the opportunity has been taken, in the main, to object to the omission of an Address-in-reply debate on the resumption of the session. As has been pointed out, there is a precedent for what has been done on this occasion.

Mr. Graham: Yes, during a national emergency.

The PREMIER: Since I have occupied a seat in this House, I have noticed that precedents have been frequently quoted and that we have acted according to precedent. However, I would say of this debate, which extended over most of the afternoon and has continued for half-an-hour tonight, that it amounts to nothing more than a storm in a teacup.

Opposition Members: Oh, oh!

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Why have not some of your members spoken?

The PREMIER: I did not ask one member not to speak.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Someone did.

Mr. Hegney: Frank Downing did.

The PREMIER: I am not going to apologise for the absence of an Address-in-reply debate. I do not for one moment share the view expressed by some members that their chances of giving vent to their feelings have been curtailed. Members have not been deprived of their rights; in fact, I consider that they have exercised their rights pretty freely since this session commenced.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: And we intend to.

The PREMIER: I have no quarrel with the Leader of the Opposition on that score.

Mr. Graham: And you will get it in large lumps, too.

The PREMIER: And the hon. member will get some of it back.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: What about our democratic way of life?

The PREMIER: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition, in his most helpful manner, has read to the House the reasons I gave for calling Parliament together earlier. I still adhere to those reasons. We shall soon be faced with the most important Federal elections that have ever been held. I take it for granted that members of this House will desire to take part in those elections, and doubtless they will do so.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The House could have adjourned for two weeks.

The PREMIER: I do not think members would have been satisfied with that. There is another reason, which has already been quoted by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, that members will go to the country on this occasion after a re-arrangement of electoral boundaries, and I think there is some necessity for them to get to know the new boundaries.

Mr. Graham: We have had the last six months in which to do that.

The PREMIER: The hon. member stated that 99 per cent. of his electors objected to the cutting out of the Address-in-reply. I am perfectly certain that 99 per cent. of his electors are not bothering their heads about it.

The Minister for Lands: He was talking through his neck!

The PREMIER: For cutting out the Address-in-reply, not one person has objected to me personally, but a number of people have come to me and commended us, claiming that this represents a saving of time in parliamentary practice.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Do you believe that?

Mr. Hegney: Why did you cut it out?

The PREMIER: The hon. member has been complaining of his loss of privileges, but he will have every opportunity to exercise his rights. The Budget will be introduced later, on which he will be able to spread himself, and no doubt he will do so. Mind you, Mr. Speaker, I am not encouraging him to do so.

Hon. A. H. Panton: He does not need any encouragement.

The PREMIER: The Leader of the Opposition has also mentioned the opportunity that will be presented when the Appropriation Bill is brought down. The Loan Estimates will be introduced in due course, and there again members will have

full opportunity to voice all the wants and requirements of their districts. Various motions have been put on the notice paper, and the Leader of the Opposition knows that those motions would have been there irrespective of whether there had been an Address-in-reply debate. This is the last session of Parliament before the elections, and we know what the tactics of the Opposition are.

Mr. Marshall: You were banking on an Address-in-reply debate at the end of the previous Parliament.

The PREMIER: Let me remind members that, unlike the practice in some other Parliaments, no time limit is imposed upon members here. I am not certain that that is desirable, but it is a fact. Further, the gag has not been applied.

Mr. Graham: Do you propose to use it?

The PREMIER: I have no intention of telling the hon. member what I propose to do. What I am doing is reminding members of what appertains in this House. Members have been given the fullest right to express their views.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: That has always appertained here.

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. Hegney: Then there is nothing new about it.

The PREMIER: I cannot see any justification for the complaint about members not having an opportunity to give expression to their feelings. They are free to do so in every possible direction. Let us take the Address-in-reply, or my experience of it.

The PREMIER: Let us look at it.

Mr. May: Where is it?

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: You have already taken it.

The PREMIER: I have found, as the Leader of the Opposition no doubt has found, that often it has been difficult to get members to speak on the Address-in-reply. We have come here in the afternoon and sat again after tea, and a few minutes later have gone home because no member was prepared to speak.

Mr. Reynolds: Not on this side of the House.

The PREMIER: On both sides of the House. The member for Forrest has not been here as long as I have. What I have stated applies to members on both sides of the House; it has been exceedingly difficult to get members to proceed with the Address-in-reply debate. I have known Premiers to send the Whips around with the intimation that the Address-in-reply was going to peter out that night.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Why not try to abolish it in a straight-out and proper way?

The PREMIER: That might not be a bad suggestion and I may have a further talk with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition about it. From my experience of the Address-in-reply, members get up, one after another—

Mr. Marshall: They cannot get up before one another, can they?

The PREMIER: The hon. member is too clever! Some members speak at great length on the Address-in-reply, but what actual good has come of it? Do we ever get any replies to the questions raised? I have known Address-in-reply after Address-in-reply when a Minister has never even replied to the debate. Personally, I do not recall ever having received one line from a Minister after having brought forward matters that I considered to be important, not a line expressing his views or saying what might be done.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Why, they dug up all your country for drainage work!

The PREMIER: Not as a result of what was said on the Address-in-reply.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: That is only another reason why you should have tackled the problem in a straightout way, by allowing the House to make the decision.

The PREMIER: I am trying to point out—and I think I have succeeded—that members have not lost anything by not having the Address-in-reply. It is not the intention of the Government even to try to stifle discussion.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: You had better not.

Mr. Reynolds: There is a threat in that.

The PREMIER: The member for North-East Fremantle gave me something to think about while he was speaking.

Mr. Marshall: He usually does when he is on his feet.

The PREMIER: He suggested that this motion, if passed, would prevent a motion similar to that which is being rescinded from being brought up at the end of this session, or that the House could not agree to its being moved again. During the tea suspension I made some inquiries.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: In a most proper place and under very favourable conditions.

The PREMIER: Yes. I consulted "May," 14th edition, and if the hon. member will turn to page 389 he will find that his fears are groundless.

Mr. Marshall: "May" applies only when our own Standing Orders are silent. Read Standing Order 180.

The PREMIER: I have. The Leader of the Opposition also has read it and, as the hon. member is joking, I do not intend to read it again. I do not know that I need say any more. It is the intention of the House, I can see, to agree to the motion, and I can only conclude by saying that I am convinced no injustice has been done to members.

Question put and passed; the motion agreed to.

BILL—TUBERCULOSIS (COMMON-WEALTH AND STATE ARRANGEMENT).

Third Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. A. V. R. Abbott—North Perth) [8.12] in moving the third reading said: The member for Leederville asked me to obtain information as to the increase in State expenditure this year and as to the additional receipts which we would obtain from the Commonwealth. The figures supplied to me have not yet been accurately arrived at, but I understand the amount is £25,000. I also inquired whether many chest cases had been admitted to the intermediate ward of the Royal Perth Hospital, which is the only ward in a public hospital where a charge is made in connection with cases of tuberculosis. I understand there may have been two or three such cases. I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—LAND SALES CONTROL ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Introduced by Mr. Reynolds and read a first time.

MOTION—STATE ASSETS.

As to Utilisation of Credit Balance.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison) [8.15]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House the Government should submit annually, along with the Budget, a balance sheet showing fully the value of all assets as well as the liabilities of the State, in order that Parliament might better understand the solvency, or otherwise, of the State with the view of using the credit balance (if any) as security for the State Rural and Industries Bank, which should make available financial accommodation to the State Government at cost for all Governmental purposes. This would avoid in future all borrowing through medium of the Loan Council from institutions or individuals as a debt against the State, which policy has always been responsible for the increase of the Interest Bill, which in turn has meant increased taxation to cover such debt.

The matter of a fiscal policy for Australia, and for this State, has become almost a hardy annual with me. I have no doubt that I shall, to a degree, labour the matter and this may prove irksome to some of the older members who have heard me on the same subject before, when I tried to the best of my ability to bring about some change in the fiscal policy of both the Commonwealth and the States. I think members would arrive at the same conclusion as I have if they would give a little consideration to daily occurrences which would bring forcibly home to them that most of our economic and social evils result from an obsolete monetary system.

In passing, may I say that it seems to be a practice of the capitalistic Press and of professors to endeavour at all times, when this matter is under review by them, to make it appear as complicated, difficult and intricate as it is humanly possible for them to make it. Really, the matter is more or less simple, so simple that its simplicity is almost unbelievable unless one gives some consideration to it. On the last occasion when I spoke on a similar subject I was on my feet for close on one and a half hours, but not a solitary line of what I said appeared in the capitalistic Press. Obviously, what

I was advocating was contrary to the policy of the Press. Of course, Mr. Speaker, as you know, the Press is free. We all know that.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Free for what?

Mr. MARSHALL: Free only to ensure that nothing gets publicity through its medium other than that which conforms to the policy initiated and endorsed by vested interests. Any person who attacks the interests which the Press represents and which are beneficial and profitable to it will not get publicity in its columns. I raise the point merely to show that there must be something sound and logical in my argument, because otherwise the Press would have had no hesitation in letting the public know the facts. I remember that on one occasion, when I was in conflict with Sir Hal Colebatch, we resorted to the capitalistic Press to voice our views on the banking system of Australia.

The Press permitted Sir Hal Colebatch to reply to my challenge to debate the matter on a public platform and make comments upon what he termed "debasing the currency," but when I replied I was informed that my reply was a little late, and therefore out of step with the policy of the paper. In my reply I stressed the amount of the national debt and the interest burden that was upon it and the effects upon the community at large, together with the power which that gave to those to whom we were indebted, institutions and governments alike. I appealed to the editor of this capitalistic Press from that point of view to publish my reply so that the people might begin to understand the situation, but I did not even have the courtesy of a reply to that request. I would not persevere with this advocacy if it were not for the fact that I know all reforms have taken years to accomplish and this one will take longer to achieve than any reform.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: The member for Beverley succeeded pretty quickly with his reform.

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes. He may be a miracle performer. I cannot boast of being possessed of such capacity. I am reminded by my attitude upon this subject of King Bruce of Scotland who watched the snider persevere and continued to persevere until he succeeded.

Hon. A. H. Panton: So that was who made the cobwebs, was it?

Mr. MARSHALL: That is the fellow. And then the publicity officer of the Liberal Party got hold of it. But I think that what will happen at the next election is that they will put a tarpaulin over him for all the advancement and progress the Liberal Party has made with the same administrative factors.

The Premier: Are you not getting away from the motion?

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes, I am.

The Premier: I am trying to follow you.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am pleased the Premier has noticed it, and he can blame his colleagues for interjecting. There are many conscientious and intellectual people, and all of them are not outside the Parliament Houses of Australia, who really believe that a Government controls the flow of money which we find percolating in and out of banking institutions, into business houses, and into and out of the pockets of the people. I should say that most people believe the Government controls that flow of money; and in order to show what can be done by this Rural Bank, I think it is obligatory upon me to make some reference to banking practices to prove conclusively that that is not the case.

It is true that the Commonwealth Government, under the Constitution, has full power and authority over currency issues and should have—and I think it might be interpreted as being in the Constitution—control of credit issues; but there can be no doubt that it has complete control over the currency which is legal tender money. I propose to show that that particular portion of the money in circulation throughout any given period within the four points of Australia and this State in particular is only a very infinitesimal portion of the volume of money that is constantly in circulation.

As a matter of fact, authorities upon this subject all agree—anyhow, none has ever denied it—that legal tender money is little more than what could be termed the petty cash account of the nation. The great volume of money that goes into the pockets of the people and percolates back to the banks is bank-created credit. Credit instituted by the banks forms 99 per cent. of the volume of money that is constantly in

circulation. These banks are well aware of the fact, because it has been proved over a period of many years that so long as they hold a given amount of legal tender money in their tills they are safe in issuing credit to the extent of ten to one. Banking practices over many years have shown that to be a very safe margin. That is to say that for every pound they hold in the banks in legal tender money they can issue £1000 worth of credit and be quite safe.

Mr. Hegney: They do it, too.

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes, they are doing it all the time. That credit issued forms 99 per cent. of the money in circulation throughout this country, and what applies in Australia and in this State applies universally because banking is an international institution. It will be found that what applies in any one country applies in another. So it is not to be considered that this obtains in Australia and not in any other country because today the Central Reserve Bank, born of America, controls the price levels of every country and can fluctuate them in accordance with its desires. It can impoverish almost any country if it so wishes.

I do not want to drift on to that argument at all. I want to show the Treasurer and the members of this Parliament that we have a splendid opportunity at our door and if we fail to take it we shall deserve the greatest wrath the people of this State can bestow upon us. To permit private institutions to make credit issues at will is very dangerous indeed because upon the banking institutions depends the quantity of money that will be constantly moving; and if they have the sole right and jurisdiction to issue credits they can bring about booms and depressions alternately, at will. I do not think the banking institutions have that in mind, but we do know that the Australian banking institutions are merely the Australian end of the international banking factor, and most of the activities ultimately emanate from the hub of the world's financial institutions and that is, in Wall Street, America.

I might say in passing, so that the Treasurer can get a grip of this situation, that when they issue credits these banks do nothing more than give a lien on future production. If an individual goes to a financial institution as Governments do, and it

decides to underwrite a loan or give financial accommodation to the individual, it becomes interested in the manner of the disposal of that advance. Having made inquiries and become assured that the business concerned will be sufficient to warrant the interest payment on the debt and the ultimate return of the capital, the borrower is likely to succeed.

The point I want to make is that when the financial institution issues that credit, it becomes a lien upon future production, and all production belongs to the community. The whole community by its effort and exertion produces from year to year the real wealth. These banks issue credit as a lien against that production because, if the production is not there, there is no possibility of the banks getting the capital back and interest on it. These credit issues must become a lien against production because it is only by monetising the real wealth produced over a given period that we get the basis upon which each individual is to receive his share of the money, and that in turn is put into circulation by taxes and goods, thus keeping industry stable. If it is the effort of the people that makes the credit practicable then, as it belongs to the community, only the community itself should have the sole jurisdiction as to who shall and who shall not issue credit.

Where all Governments have fallen down, has been in not using the Commonwealth Bank. Instead of this Government using the State bank for all the credit issues it requires, it goes to the Loan Council and begs for money. What it begs for are credit issues. These institutions are permitted to underwrite loans by putting figures in a ledger. By so doing they subscribe the loan. Then they create a debt against the Government. That act should be performed with the nation's bank which should control the nation's credit issues and make them available to Governments debt-free. The Rural Bank could do that for Western Australia if this State Government were courageous enough to attempt it.

The Premier: You would have to go to the Loan Council to get money for the Rural Bank.

Mr. MARSHALL: No. The bank belongs to the people of this country, and it can do all that a private bank does, and a little more. I tell the Treasurer that there

are only two solvent banks in Australia that I know of. One is the Commonwealth Bank. That is unchallengeable because that bank has the power over the note issue and the legal tender issues. A point that I want the Treasurer to clear up for me is whether our State bank has a like authority. The Commonwealth Bank is the only solvent bank in Australia. It is the only one that can stand up to a run, no matter how great, upon its reserves. If all the people went tomorrow, all at the one time, to any bank but the Commonwealth Bank to withdraw the money they had deposited in it, it would close its doors and call on the Commonwealth Bank to save the situation.

The Premier: To do what you want us to do with regard to the Rural Bank would necessitate our going outside the financial agreement.

Mr. MARSHALL: No. The financial agreement provides that we shall not borrow; that we shall not go on the market, as it is called, which makes one burst into laughter.

The Premier: Without the permission of the Loan Council.

The Attorney General: You are not allowed to borrow from the Commonwealth Bank.

Mr. MARSHALL: Here is the intellectual coming in! If the Attorney General will be peaceful for a little while, he will not delay me in concluding my address, and I will show him conclusively what the Rural Bank can do.

Hon. A. H. Panton: You are making the Minister for Lands sit up and take notice.

Mr. MARSHALL: The power the banks have in controlling credit issues means that such banks can say what industries shall survive and what industries shall stagnate; what Governments shall prevail and what Governments shall not prevail, because there was once a wise man who said, "Government is finance and finance is government." No truer words on the subject were ever spoken. That, anyhow, is the experience of those members who have been Ministers of the Crown, or who have been a long time in this Chamber. Apart from that point, let us look back and observe all our State-owned utilities, public buildings and other national works. With very few exceptions they have all been starved for years because we had no money.

Take our school buildings, and the public buildings we have in the outer parts of the State! They are all dilapidated, but in the years gone by we had no money to keep them up to the modern idea, and we have not had sufficient money to build all the hospitals and schools we required. The cry before the war was that there was no money. Take our reticulation systems on the Goldfields! Could we find a more disgraceful exhibition of the shortage of capital? I venture to say, in passing, that the Cue reticulation system has so many wooden plugs in it that there is more wood than iron in the pipes running from the conservation tanks to the town. But we have had no money. The point I wish to make here is that every industry, like every Government, is at the mercy of these people to whom we are in debt. They can tell Governments, as they have done, exactly what their policy will be. If the Government denies obedience, what happens? Exactly what occurred in 1930!

Surely there is not one member of this Chamber who is so dull intellectually and so short of memory that he cannot remember what happened in 1930. In 1929 the Commonwealth of Australia, including this State, had more real wealth lying up in its storehouses than in any other period of its history. That year we had a record wheat production of 53,000,000 bushels in this State, but factories were closed down because there was no sale for the goods they manufactured, dairymen poured milk down the drains because no one could buy it—all this while we were rolling in real wealth. Our wealth was overflowing, but they called it over-production. They did not call it under-consumption when the unfortunate people had not sufficient money to buy urgently required goods. The international Shylock has no country. Yankee, Jap, Jew or Gentile, it is all the same to the international Jew. In 1930 we were told we were living beyond our means and that our standard of living was too high.

We were told we should bring about Budget equilibrium. All this was instituted by Sir Otto Niemeyer and Mr. Guggenheim, who took the name of Professor Gregory in order to make it sound English. They came to Australia and formulated the Premiers' Plan. How cunningly they got away with it! Instead of its being put to the people as Sir Otto Niemeyer's plan, it was put forward as the plan of the Govern-

ment, yet the Government had nothing to do with it. The plan was put forward by Professor Copeland, who has been rewarded by Governments ever since for his nefarious practices. He is the agent of the private banks. He writes articles for them advocating the retention of the orthodox banking which has brought so many curses upon Australia and other parts of the world.

Although this country was never wealthier than at that time, the Premiers' Plan was formulated by the international Jews. They forced our Governments, both Commonwealth and State, into obedience and reduced the purchasing power of the people by about 22 per cent. Surely even a professor of economics would know that the less money the people have the less they are able to buy of produced goods, and that to that extent industry must stagnate. That was the picture, with the result that 400,000 Australians were registered as being unemployed, their wives and children depending on State doles. This in a country that had never in its history been possessed of more real wealth than it had at that time! We still have alleged statesmen and politicians subscribing to the perpetuation of that system.

Mr. Graham: That is the Liberal policy.

Mr. MARSHALL: It seems to be the policy no matter what the political colour of the Government in power. Now the glorious deeds and heroic performances of the American soldiers a few years ago are forgotten. In that country there are 3½ million unemployed and it is expected that by the end of July there will be 5,000,000 out of work and 8,000,000 by the end of 1930, simply because the banks have called in overdrafts and have refused to issue loans, thus shrinking the purchasing power of the people to the extent that industry is stagnating. That is what happened in Australia in 1930.

The Premier: With what benefit to the banks?

Mr. MARSHALL: During that period their interest was paid and they raked in millions. Look at the power it gave them! Who should rule this State—the Treasurer and his Government, or outside institutions? Who should tell the Treasurer what money is to be in circulation in the State? Does the Premier propose to govern the State

or would he suggest that banking institutions have the right to dictate what our standards shall be? Surely the Government should be able to give effect to the wishes of the people. I am convinced that the banking institutions would make credit issues debt-free today, if we wanted that, because of the power they are able to hold over the industrial, economic and political life of the country when we are indebted to them.

When we owe them money we have no freedom of action. When the boom took place in New Zealand some years ago the Premier of that Dominion went to England to convert a loan of about £9,000,000. Sir Montague Norman told him, "Your standards in New Zealand are too high. Go back and reduce them, and then we will attend to your request for further financial accommodation." If the Treasurer's ideas are to prevail we can never become a really free and independent people. He seems always to be subject to the dictation of those to whom we are indebted.

The Attorney General: That is the Commonwealth Bank, and Mr. Chifley.

Mr. Reynolds: Why doesn't the Attorney General study these problems?

The Attorney General: I do.

Mr. MARSHALL: Do not make yourself a bigger fool sitting down than you are when standing up! One of the terms and conditions dictated in 1930 was that we had to bring about Budget equilibrium. No industrialised nation can survive for long unless it receives consistently infusions of new capital. Governments must obtain loans and spend the money. New factories must start off with capital expenditure. It is now a well-known fact that industry never pays out as much in wages, salaries and dividends, as will purchase for consumption all the goods it produces. We must therefore constantly bring in fresh money. That was the difficulty faced in 1930 and at the dictation of the financial interests Governments set about attaining Budget equilibrium. No better Western Australian than the Premier who introduced the Financial Emergency Bill ever lived, but he was obliged to try to bring about Budget equilibrium.

As soon as loan moneys were reduced and the banks refused to issue credits, the industry of the State collapsed

and unemployment became rampant. Our deficit was the highest on record. The taxation field had gone. The Premier could not tax many and, because he did not have any taxation field, he could not get any loan moneys to expend. We have to keep infusing new money in order that industry may survive, and that was our experience in 1930. We had no chance of getting Budget equilibrium until we could get a fresh infusion of money by way of borrowings, which added further to our debt. These facts are undeniable, and they are there for any member to look at if he so desires.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: What does the member for Sussex think of that?

Mr. Reynolds: He doesn't think at all; that is his failing.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: It would be interesting to hear him on that point.

Mr. MARSHALL: In case there is any doubt about the theory which I am advancing, I propose to quote from a book written by a monetary reformer named Butler, and it is entitled "The Enemy Within the Empire."

Mr. Reynolds: A nasty, insidious one, too.

Mr. MARSHALL: I would like every member of this Chamber to read it, not because of the convictions held and insinuated in the pamphlet by the writer, but because of the extracts which are taken from epistles which are authoritative records and which can be checked. I have quoted this before, and I trust I will not weary members with either this quotation or others I intend to make. The books from which I have taken them are available in our own library and those that are not available there can be found in the Public Library. So that members will see where we are and because it seems to be the right of private institutions to have neither God nor country nor soul and to take control of the credit issue of a nation and thereby its whole functions, we will see what the late Reginald McKenna had to say about the matter.

Mr. Reynolds: He was an authority, too.

Mr. MARSHALL: This man was Chancellor of the Exchequer of England for years and he was chairman of the board of directors of the Midland Bank of London. He put up a most heroic fight against

Montagu Norman after the first World War in order to hold London as the hub of the world's finance. However, Montagu Norman and America were too strong, because England was indebted to America at that time. They won the day, and the Jews finished up in Wall-street, New York. This is what Reginald McKenna had to say in addressing a meeting of shareholders—

I am afraid the ordinary citizen will not like to be told that the banks can, and do, create money. The amount of money in existence varies only with the action of the banks in increasing and decreasing deposits and bank purchases. Every loan, overdraft or bank purchase creates a deposit, and every repayment of a loan, overdraft or bank sale destroys a deposit. And they who control the credit of a nation direct the policy of Governments, and hold in the hollow of their hands the destiny of the people.

Surely, without any theory of mine, members will at least give some credit to the late Reginald McKenna as being an authority upon banking and its practices.

Mr. Reynolds: Where is Andy Clementson now?

Mr. MARSHALL: Some people, and I am sorry to say far too many and some alleged statesmen, and again I am sorry to say far too many, and politicians likewise, will never believe that a bank does other than take hold of its depositors' money and lend out that money when it makes a loan. That is the theory that people really believe to be the truth, and I have had arguments with bankers about it, as well as ledger-keepers, who for many years did nothing but put figures in a ledger against individual clients' names.

Mr. Hegney: They would not know anything about the principle of banking.

Mr. MARSHALL: Thousands of people, all too few, would believe that banks create money every time they make a loan or provide financial accommodation. Of course, it would be obvious to anyone who would stop and think. When the last war broke out, there was fifty-five millions legal tender of money in Australia. That was the maximum. The first loan that the late John Curtin floated in Australia was for £100,000,000. Who performed the miracle? Who found one hundred millions of money for the late John Curtin, as Prime Minister of Australia, and yet still left fifty-five million in circulation in this country?

Hon. A. H. Panton: Don't look at me; I didn't do it.

Mr. MARSHALL: The hon. member could not

Hon. A. H. Panton: I would not even try.

Mr. MARSHALL: I want members to bear with me because I do not want to quote a great number of books, as I have quoted these authorities before.

Mr. Reynolds: Do it again and again.

Mr. MARSHALL: I want members to understand that the books are available and the extracts can be checked. I propose to quote from "Hansard," but the originals can be found in our own library or in the Public library. Let us see what some other authorities have to say on the self-same question of banks. In "Hansard" of 1939, vol. 1, p. 114—I seem to be constantly referring to these authorities—

Mr. Reynolds: Ultimately, you will conquer.

Mr. MARSHALL: I want to quote Mr. H. D. McLeod, from his book, "The Theory and Practice of Banking." This is an extract from that book—

The essential and distinctive feature of a bank and a banker is to create and issue credit payable on demand, and this credit is intended to be put into circulation and serve all the purposes of money. A bank, therefore, is not an office for the borrowing and lending of money; but it is a manufactory of credit. In the language of banking, a deposit and an issue are the same thing.

These gentlemen whose remarks I quote are not socialists or communists; they are English economists, and wrote many books upon this very subject, and most of them were orthodox. But they let the cat out of the bag when they made these statements. It is only then that we can get a true picture of what banks do and do not do. Then we have Davenport, who was another economist. In his book, "Economies of Enterprise," he has this to say—

Banks do not lend their deposits but, by expansion of credits, create deposits.

We all know that is true, because every time a bank makes an overdraft, cheques are issued against the figures in the ledger. Those cheques are drafted into the hands of contractors, and they make deposits in the banks with which they trade. It is quite easy to follow it and it is done all the time. The same applies to the Treasurer when he

borrow. The figures are put in the ledger for him and he issues cheques to such people as civil servants, tradesmen or anyone else. They take the cheques along to their banks and create a deposit. So every issue creates a deposit and every repayment destroys one. Keynes is a well known authority on this subject and he said, "There can be no doubt that all deposits are created by the banks." That is natural, too. Even if I deposit legal tender, it originally would come from the bank by way of loan or overdraft to somebody. Mr. R. G. Hawtrey, assistant secretary to the British Treasury, in his "Trade Depression and the Way Out," says, "When a bank lends, it creates money out of nothing." That is true. The banks put figures in the ledger.

The Attorney General: How old are those authorities?

Mr. MARSHALL: Those authorities are all there, and I do not suppose the Attorney General will be egotistical enough to try to pit his knowledge against theirs.

The Attorney General: No, I do not, but I have read some more modern authorities.

Mr. MARSHALL: What does the Attorney General suggest? Does he suggest that there has been a change somewhere in the banking system since the time of these authorities? What a tragedy we see in a gentleman such as the Attorney General trying to be a potential Minister? Is it any wonder we are struggling along the road from one crisis to another?

The Attorney General: Do you not think that the Commonwealth Bank has advances on hand?

Mr. MARSHALL: The hon. gentleman knows as much about banking as a pig knows about paradise.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MARSHALL: What a private bank can do the State Rural Bank can do, and more. Behind the Rural Bank are the whole of the assets and resources of this State. Those are its guarantee. One can drift away from the original premises upon which the bank was created, because I will quote—

The Premier: What do you mean by all assets? Do you mean private and public?

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes, of course; all is an asset to this State

Mr. Leslie: What would the railways be worth as an asset?

Mr. MARSHALL: I believe the member for Mount Marshall is an aspirant for Federal honours and he would be well advised to display a little more intelligence when he enters the Commonwealth Parliament than he displays here, because the railways of Western Australia show a huge profit and if owned by private industry would distribute a profit of £1,050,000. But we have to pay that amount in interest because of a stupid, obsolete monetary system which I am now trying to correct. So let the hon. member display a little more intelligence when he departs from here and do not cast any reflection upon us.

Mr. Leslie: You have been reading my speeches in "Hansard"; I used those words years ago. You have not answered my question.

Mr. MARSHALL: I look upon this subject as far too important to be laughed at because of the misery and degradation that this confounded banking system has imposed upon this glorious land of ours. It does not become members of Parliament to make a joke out of it. It is time they gave serious consideration to this question instead of entering this Chamber decrying the Treasurer and Minister for Railways because they cannot give them this, that or the other for their districts when they have no money to meet their requests. They are always juggling with the shadow and allowing the substance to drop. I will quote again from a book which, of course, is not very acceptable to members opposite and I do not think some of our members either have very much love for the writer of it. However, I am not going to quote him but I will take from his book two extracts of a speech made by a gentleman named Sir Dennison Miller when appointed Governor of the Commonwealth Bank of Australia when it first came into being.

Mr. Reynolds: One of the greatest sons of Australia ever produced.

Mr. MARSHALL: The remarks of Sir Dennison Miller regarding the Commonwealth Bank apply also to the State Rural Bank. The extract reads as follows:—

On January 20, 1913, the general banking business was commenced in all State capitals, and in his opening speech delivered at the head office, Stanway House, King Street, Sydney, Mr. Miller defined the policy of the bank in a speech that should become historic—indicating the true function and stability of a national bank in these words:

"The bank is being started without capital, as none is required at the present time, but it is backed by the entire wealth and credit of the whole of the Commonwealth of Australia."

The State Rural Bank is in the self-same position. It was started without any capital, which it does not need because it has the backing of the whole of the wealth and assets of Western Australia. Again, in another speech made in London, Sir Dennison Miller had this to say—on page 131 of this book by Lang entitled, "Why I fight."—

In another statement in London, Sir Denison Miller declared: "The Bank is in an unique position in having the whole of the Commonwealth of Australia at its back. It has no capital, nor has it required any, as the people themselves and their country are its security."

Mr. Bovell: It had a number of savings bank deposits amounting to millions of pounds which were the savings of the people.

Mr. MARSHALL: That is an ex-banker talking and I generally scorn bankers because I have talked to them only too frequently about this matter. They did not even show the same intelligence as a parrot because if you say something often enough, to a parrot it will repeat what you have said, but these people will never understand this subject. Our position is, of course, that we have to go to the Loan Council and, after all, no State Government is in a position to obtain sufficient capital for all its financial requirements. It depends entirely upon the Loan Council for its finances and I well remember the Treasurers of Western Australia going over to it from time to time—and I believe this Treasurer has gone over on several occasions as well—with a loan programme of works which have been most urgent and necessary. What has happened? Each time that the Premiers go with their schedule of works and amounts involved which would be necessary to give effect to them, the Loan Council decides that they shall be cut down. Although we require millions of money to bring our buildings up to a reasonable standard; although we want hospitals and schools everywhere—

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: The Premier has all the money he requires.

Mr. MARSHALL: If the Premier would only lend the money he has it would be a great asset to us. All these requirements

are urgently needed but notwithstanding the deplorable standard of most of our State assets we are still being refused the amounts required for new works by the Loan Council.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Not nowadays. The Premier has more money than he can spend.

Mr. MARSHALL: I wish I had; I would not be delaying the House tonight.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: No materials!

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: No labour!

Mr. MARSHALL: That constitutes a new feature in our economic life—no materials; no labour. We can overlook the facts regarding financial accommodation for the time being. I know that what started in America in 1929 reached us in 1930, and I know that the repercussions of what is happening in America today will be felt here within two or three years.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: A depression?

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes. I trust that we will then have members paying me the compliment and extending the courtesy of admitting that I had a little more foresight than they possess today.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: You can trace the shortage of labour and materials back to the banking policy during the depression in the thirties.

Mr. MARSHALL: Most of our present-day troubles have developed on account of the shortage of money. I propose to place another quotation before members. We have been going back to the Loan Council for accommodation over the years and the article from which I shall quote deals with the position. It appeared in a small paper published in Sydney. It struck me as being particularly exact in its references to what actually happened. I suggest to the Treasurer that he enlist the services of the authority whose words I propose to quote, in dealing with a point I raised when speaking on this subject some time ago. I go so far as to suggest that, in my judgment, the bank could make available to the Treasurer all the financial accommodation he wants, interest free. If he does not do that, he will lose the opportunity, and the State will suffer in consequence.

Here we have a huge interest debt on a State comprising just under 1,000,000 square miles, and on that indebtedness we pay £4,000,000 a year in interest. If he should

adopt the suggestion I advance, he could wipe off that debt and he could use the money thus saved for developmental purposes, for bringing up to date public transport and public buildings, and for providing the schools and hospitals so urgently needed in various parts of the State. As it is, he has to go to the international Jew with the interest on the State's indebtedness, and he has to go cap in hand to the meeting of Premiers who constitute the Loan Council, from whom he has to borrow more money. That means he will have to add another £500,000 to the interest bill next year. That sort of thing has been going on down the years and is likely to continue in the future unless there is some radical change. The individual whose words I shall quote is a constitutional lawyer and I would like the Treasurer to get his opinion with regard to Section 115 of the Commonwealth Constitution.

I do not think it was ever intended that the Commonwealth should have jurisdiction over the States with regard to banking, but at first glance Section 115 would appear to give the Commonwealth that particular power. If that were the position, it would be contrary to the spirit of the act of federation. It is a point that should be cleared up. I think the object of that provision was to ensure that no State did anything that would have the effect of not keeping in existence a uniform monetary system throughout Australia.

Mr. Bovell: Then you agree with the High Court decision on the banking case?

Mr. MARSHALL: I am not talking about the nationalisation of banking:

Mr. Reynolds: At any rate, he would not understand it.

Mr. MARSHALL: The quotation I shall make from the remarks of the man I refer to, represents the views of one I regard as ranking among the highest constitutional writers of the day. In the course of a lecture before the Junior Chamber of Commerce in Sydney he had this to say—

Mr. Hegney: Who was the man?

Mr. MARSHALL: Dr. Louat. In the course of his remarks he said:

The Federal Treasury had fastened a stranglehold on the States by a legal fraud on Federation . . . The fraud began in 1928, when the Commonwealth abolished the system that gave the States a guaranteed share of Federal money based on population.

Next move was the Financial Agreement, which stripped the States of their right to borrow. Power to control borrowing passed to the Loan Council, a creature of the Commonwealth, dominated by the Federal Treasurer.

"The final step was the so-called uniform tax in 1942," Dr. Louat added. "This stripped the States of effective power to raise their own revenues, and left them dependent on discretionary hand-outs from Canberra. The Commonwealth has carried out each of these moves with shrewd legal advice, so that today the States have no right at all to complain to the High Court. Yet the Commonwealth has undermined the whole position. The Commonwealth is not obliged to give these annual hand-outs to the States, and can fix them at its own figure. Money is power, and this means all power is getting into the hands of Canberra in spite of everything the Constitution says to the contrary. The States no longer control their own policies."

Dr. Louat said that although more hospitals, better schools and new roads were a State responsibility, every year the State Premiers had to line up in Canberra, "like a queue of beggars," to get money for these needs.

That is true. That is the sort of authority with whom the Premier should confer with regard to the effect of Section 115 of the Constitution, to ascertain whether it is not possible for the State Rural Bank to create its own monetary unit in conformity with that provision.

There is one other point I wish to deal with. Immediately any individual, writer or speaker, suggests debt-free money, a squeal goes up from the professors and alleged statesmen who yell—"Inflation!" It is the first thing that crosses their mind. It is a remarkable attitude, having regard to all the circumstances and factors that govern banking today. Every time they squeal "inflation," they use the argument that the person who advocates banking reform and the issuing of debt-free credit wants to print millions of notes. They say he wants to get the printing machines going. By that attitude they set up their own Aunt Sally and then proceed to knock it down. No-one advocates the printing of millions of notes. What I have advocated is that instead of credits being borrowed from private institutions, whatever the Government requires should be made available from the Commonwealth Bank or the State Rural Bank, without any charge attached to it.

I have never advocated the printing of millions of notes and no other advocate of banking reform that I know of has done so.

If the Treasurer of this State should require financial accommodation to the extent of £4,000,000, he goes on the market, gets the money and spends it in the course of a year. The effect of that is to increase the purchasing power of the people to the extent of that amount, and he pays interest on it, the rate of which is now about 4 per cent. Although we merely increase the purchasing power to the amount of £4,000,000, so long as interest is tacked on to it, it is not inflation, but if the same amount is issued by the Commonwealth Bank debt free, then they squeal "inflation." How can that be inflation any more than the same amount bearing interest payments? The idea is to frighten the people.

Inflation means a terrific increase in the price of goods and the cost of living and we cannot have that, but so long as we are liable for a colossal interest burden, there is no squeal about inflation. That attitude is a most remarkable one. What I have advocated all along is that there should be managed currency as we have had for 30 odd years and that it should be equated with the production of real wealth where and when required. This should be no more than sufficient to purchase it and no less, and thereby we would have the equation. That is the soundest system that any Government could adopt.

Let me now quote from another authority, which should appeal to the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe, who has a great regard for this writer. It is an extract from a speech made by Professor Gustav Cassel, who was prominent some years ago for his lectures and writings on money and banking. In Field's work on "The Truth About the Slump" Cassel said—

Theoretically this (the linking of the currency to gold, which has not been in existence for over 30 years) was not necessary. The world had a system of paper standards, and if each of these paper standards had been simply stabilised at a certain purchasing power against commodities, the world would have had a satisfactory monetary system. Stabilisation did not in itself require that the separate currencies should be bound up with gold.

No sensible person would advocate inflation. As a matter of fact, taxation is a form of inflation because it has to be charged in the price of goods. However, these professional hypocrites in the pay of the banking institutions misrepresent the

true position in order that the people may ultimately become nothing more than the abject slaves of debt and taxation. We are rapidly heading towards that state of affairs. I feel that the present financial policy cannot continue much longer; it is becoming top-heavy and must soon crash.

Mr. Reynolds: It is top-heavy.

Mr. MARSHALL: I say to the Premier that what private institutions are doing, the State Rural Bank can do. That bank could make credit issues available to him debt free if he wanted them. In the final analysis, let me quote from the report of the Commonwealth Royal Commission of inquiry into the monetary and banking systems, a commission appointed by a former Prime Minister, Mr. Lyons. This quotation supports my contention that the banks could issue credit debt free. After outlining the powers of the Commonwealth Bank over the note issue, the report stated—

Because of this power, the Commonwealth Bank is able to increase the cash of the trading banks in the ways we have pointed out above. Because of this power, too, the Commonwealth Bank can increase the cash reserves of the trading banks; for example, it can buy securities or other property, it can lend to the Governments or to others in a variety of ways, and it can even make money available to Governments or to others free of any charge.

Why are we hesitating? Why do we go cap in hand borrowing from private institutions or individuals? We have our Rural Bank; let us take the first step towards reform by using that bank for the amount of additional money, termed loan funds, that the Treasurer may require. Then we might reduce our liabilities to the foreign bond holders, though admittedly some of them are within Australia. But can we continue to pay an increased interest bill? Every year our interest obligations increase, notwithstanding that the Commonwealth has pegged and reduced interest rates. The interest burden is becoming heavier and heavier, the debt greater and greater and the power over the people, over industry and over the Parliaments of Australia, is gradually being increased by virtue of these debts. So I put it to the House that we cannot continue the present policy much longer. If we do, we shall find in the near future another example of the power of the banks to bring on the people poverty, degradation and misery, even prostitution, which we experienced in the 1930-34 period.

We as politicians boast that we are the custodians of the people's interests. Wait until the farmers have to accept 10d. per bushel for their wheat and then we shall hear the member for Sussex and others squealing. But that will come. Europe is speedily becoming self-contained in this respect and the price of wheat has dropped considerably in the United States of America. Consequently, we shall hear much presently because of the stupid financial policy we have followed for so many years. There is no occasion for us to feel anxiety about international finance. Australia is a wealthy country; it can produce unlimited wealth, and if this wealth were monetised, the people would be able to enjoy not only a high standard of living, but also freedom and liberty.

On motion by the Premier, debate adjourned.

MOTION—STATE ARBITRATION COURT.

As to Dual Position of President.

HON. A. H. PANTON (Leederville)
[9.31]: I move—

That this House deplores the recent action of the Government in appointing Mr. L. W. Jackson to the dual position of President of the Arbitration Court and Judge of the Supreme Court. This action seriously reduces the opportunities for efficiency in the working of the Arbitration Court and is a retrograde step.

I offer no apology for bringing forward this motion, as my association for practically half a century with the Arbitration Court convinces me that the Government has taken a retrograde step in appointing Mr. Justice Jackson to the dual position of President of the Arbitration Court and a Judge of the Supreme Court. I desire to make it quite plain that I am not attacking the appointment from a personal point of view. I do not know Mr. Jackson; I have not met him, but from what I can gather he will make an able President. I am attacking the appointment, if my motion can be called an attack, purely on the question of principle. Even Governments should be guided by experience.

In connection with industrial arbitration, the experience of Western Australia is that during the years 1902 to 1924 or 1925, when the President of the Arbitration Court was attached to the judiciary and was under

the jurisdiction of the Chief Justice, we had no fewer than five Presidents. If I may be allowed to name them, they were Mr. Justice Moorehead, who was defeated for the Cue electorate in 1902 by the late Mr. J. B. Holman, Mr. Justice Burnside, Mr. Justice Northmore, Mr. Justice Draper and Mr. Justice Rooth, but not in that order, because after Mr. Justice Moorehead presided—he did not live very long—first one judge was appointed and then another. At that time we did not know which judge would sit as President. Mr. Justice Burnside presided as President for a longer term than any of the other judges. During the 25 years from 1924 to 1949, that is, up to the appointment of Mr. Justice Jackson, we had only two Presidents, namely, Mr. Walter Dwyer—now Sir Walter Dwyer—and Mr. Dunphy, who recently resigned.

I hope I shall have your tolerance for a little while, Mr. Speaker, because in order to deal effectively with my motion, I desire briefly to give the history of the industrial arbitration system from its inception. It was in 1902 that our first Industrial Arbitration Act was passed. It was introduced by the late Sir Walter James, who, then, I think, was an Honorary Minister. From 1902 to 1911, not much work was done in the Arbitration Court; this was because the organisations then registered with the court were principally what we know as craft unions and they had very little to do with the court. The 1902 Act was a mass of technicalities which made it almost impossible for unions to get into the court. I shall not discuss those technicalities now, but they were exceedingly difficult to overcome. In 1911, economic pressure caused large numbers of workers, such as shop assistants, clerks, horsedriviers and what are known as composite workers, to organise.

It was in 1911 that we found the limitation placed by the judges I have mentioned on the definition of the word "industry" in the Act not only prevented some of those workers from becoming registered, but also denied those who did succeed in becoming registered, an award, because the judges held they were not working in an industry. I have no complaint to make about that decision, because it was the law according to the judges. The shop assistants were thrown out of court twice, once by Mr. Justice Rooth and once by Mr. Justice Burnside. Then there was a change of Government.

The Scaddan Government assumed office in 1911; and in 1912 the late Mr. Thomas Walker introduced another amending Bill which provided for those composite unions to appear before the court. Mr. Walker went so far as to name some of the unions.

The Shop Assistants' Union was the first union to appear before the court under the 1912 Act. Even then the Employers' Federation was not satisfied. The Shop Assistants' Union obtained very early registration owing to the exceptionally fine advocacy of the present member for Nedlands, who put up a wonderful case before the Full Court. I have heard him speak on numerous occasions, but that was the best speech I ever heard him make and, naturally, I was interested in its result. The men who framed the 1912 Act of course had not the experience that we gained in later years, and although that Act wiped out most of the technicalities to which I have referred, it still prevented some unions from getting into the court. The framers of that Act overlooked the fact that it was necessary to appoint a President of the Arbitration Court who was outside the judiciary. Consequently, we continued, under the 1912 Act, the system of Presidents presiding in the court as directed by the Chief Justice.

War broke out in 1914, so there was but little opportunity to test the Act, because most of our workers were away, as the member for Murchison will agree, making the world safe for democracy. It was not until the end of 1918 or the beginning of 1919 that we began to feel the real effect of the Act. Here I would say that the workers of Western Australia have always advocated industrial arbitration; they have stood foursquare for the court right throughout the piece. At the end of 1918 we therefore found ourselves in the same position that has now arisen. Up went prices; the sky was the limit! Those of us who remember anything of the years 1919 to 1924 or 1925 will appreciate what the workers were then passing through. The Industrial Arbitration Act did not then provide for a basic wage, adjustment in accordance with the cost of living. Each union had to prove its own case. The consequence was that salaries and wages remained static, while the cost of living rose. That is my reason for saying that the Government took a retrograde step, in my opinion, in making this dual appointment.

During the period I have referred to, it was almost impossible for unions to get into the court. Union after union was applying and filing cases in the court, but no President was available. They were all too busy in the Divorce Court, the Supreme Court, or some other Court. The consequence was that there was a considerable lag all the time. Let me give one instance which was typical of what was occurring in Western Australia. Early in 1920, the miners on the Goldfields filed a schedule in the court. They were getting fairly low wages—somewhere about 10s. 6d. a day. The case was not heard until the latter end of November of the same year, some eight or nine months afterwards. Mr. Justice Burnside heard that case, and the award started on the 1st January, 1921, an award which is now known as the 1921 award. The workers received increases ranging from 3s. 9d. to 6s. 3d. per day, plus a fortnight's holiday on full pay. But had those workers been able to get into court early in 1920, they would have had eight or nine months of increased pay and would have worked eight or nine months of the term necessary to qualify them for their fortnight's holiday, instead of having to start on the 1st January, 1921.

So it went on. We had a disputes committee; in fact, we had two committees—a State disputes committee and a metropolitan disputes committee, and I happened to be chairman of both. The pressure became so great, owing to strikes and rumours of strikes and conferences, that we had to split the disputes committees up and have two or three conferences a day with the Employers' Federation; in fact, I believe we organised the Employers' Federation in the five years of which I am speaking. I speak from experience when I say that there has never been any period of five years during which there has been more strenuous work undertaken by trade union officials and representatives of employers than was the case from 1919 to 1924.

The consequence was that when a change of Government took place in 1924, not only some of the members of the Treasury Bench, but a large number supporting the Treasury Bench under the Collier Government, who had had that experience from 1919 to 1924, made up their minds that if they could get an amendment of the Industrial Arbitration Act it would be a different kind of measure. We intended to have a

President of our own. The Act was amended in, I think, 1925, and the legislation introduced at that time did not make it necessary for the President to be a legal man. That was forced upon us by the Legislative Council. I suppose that Mr. Miles and a few more like him were very much afraid that we would appoint some trade union secretary as President. So we were forced after a conference with the Legislative Council, which lasted for 9½ hours, to agree to the present system under which the President must have the qualifications of a Supreme Court judge. You, Mr. Speaker, being one of the legal fraternity, will know what those qualifications are.

So we were saddled with the necessity of having to appoint a lawyer. I have no complaint about that at the moment, though I often wondered why it was suggested that the brains of an Arbitration Court President would be found only in the legal fraternity. After all, the Industrial Arbitration Act is not a legal document at all. The principal requirement in a president of the Arbitration Court is that he shall be a fair-minded man, who has some experience of the world and who possesses sound judgment. Surely there are men outside the legal fraternity whose make-up could be found to contain those elements.

Mr. Graham: We should hope so.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I am pretty sure of it. We were forced into that position in 1925. We had to look around for a President, and Sir Walter (then Mr.) Dwyer, a member of the firm of Dwyer, Duraek & Dunphy—which firm, I think, was principal adviser to most of the trade unions, Sir Walter having had a good deal of industrial experience—was appointed President. I do not think anyone has much to cavil at concerning the work he performed as President of the Arbitration Court. I think we can be fairly proud of the record in Western Australia from the time of the alteration of the basic wage adjustment up to Sir Walter's retirement and the appointment of Mr. Dunphy, from the same firm, as his successor.

I claim that the reason for that good record is that we had a President of the court who was not under the jurisdiction of anybody except the Minister for Labour and the Department of Labour, by which

the Industrial Arbitration Act is administered. Those two Presidents had the opportunity to study the economic position of the State and to realise the alterations in trade union organisation and the organisation of industry for various reasons. Not only that, but they were there on the spot whenever they were wanted, in contrast with the position in previous years, when, if a dispute was pending, it was no good running around looking for a Judge of the Supreme Court to call a compulsory conference, or something of that sort, because he was not available to do it, as a result of which the only thing to do was to have a stop-work meeting and a conference with the employers, and, if it was impossible to come to agreement through negotiation, an inevitable strike took place.

There were quite a number of strikes, but when we had a President of our own in the court, that was altered. I say "our own" with some degree of justification because he belonged to the Arbitration Court and not to any court. Both Mr. President Dwyer and Mr. President Dunphy made themselves available in accordance with the Act even when there were only rumours of an industrial dispute. They made it their business to get into the dispute and find out what it was about, and call a compulsory conference, subsequently referring the matter to the court, or taking whatever action they thought best, as a result of which thousands of pounds were saved to Western Australia by the avoidance of disputes.

I was particularly pleased that happened. I can understand the viewpoint of men who read the history of the industrial movement and come to certain conclusions: some come to conclusions without even taking the trouble to read before doing so! But I had half a century of hard battling. I first appeared in the Arbitration Court in this State in 1904, when I was brought 800 miles to give evidence in connection with the Peak Hill dispute. Therefore, without appearing egotistical, I think I can claim to have had some experience and to be able to judge what is most desirable in connection with the appointment of a President of the court.

From 1924-25 up to the retirement of President Dunphy, I think things went along fairly swimmingly. There were, of

course, those who kicked over the traces. That will always happen. It does not matter much what system we have—good, bad or indifferent—somebody will kick over the traces. In this House, the member for Beverley has shown how even a quiet, unsophisticated member like him can kick over the traces. When people like that do it, what can we expect from an industrial organisation suffering from some alleged or real disability?

So we come to my complaint. It would take me a long time to deal properly with the history of arbitration in this State. I have given just a brief outline. I noticed in the paper that the Arbitration Court had been transferred to the Crown Law Department, and I asked the Minister for Labour, earlier in the session, whether that meant that the President would come under the jurisdiction of the Chief Justice. He said, very emphatically, "No." He said that the Arbitration Court was put under the Crown Law Department for some reason or other. I settled down as a result.

The Minister for Lands: That was last year.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Yes. I nearly said, "Last session." I woke up one morning and picked up the newspaper where I found a statement by the Premier that Mr. Jackson had been appointed not only President of the Arbitration Court, but a Supreme Court Judge. Of course the statement read very nicely to anyone who did not have much experience of the Arbitration Court. It was to the effect that Mr. Jackson could be expected, in the first 10 years at any rate, to sit on the Supreme Court bench only on appeals. At the present time there are only three Judges in Western Australia, and in the event of an appeal from one of the Judges he is to sit on the Appeal Court bench. I do not agree with that.

The excuse or statement made by the Premier was that owing to the fact that there was a shortage of judges, Mr. Justice Jackson would be given the full title of judge—and full concessions too, I suppose, which the other Presidents have had of course—and be allowed to sit on the Supreme Court bench when there was an appeal. I emphatically protested against that. The Deputy Premier made a short and snappy reply, saying we need have no

fears. I have every fear. After the experience we have had, I am not prepared to sit down without making an emphatic protest against what has taken place. I understand that Mr. Justice Jackson has told some of the State executive officers that they need have no fears; that the only time he would leave the Arbitration Court would be to sit on the Supreme Court bench. But if he is a judge—and I understand he is—he is under the jurisdiction of the Chief Justice and not the Minister for Labour. That is the crux of the whole question.

On more than one occasion, as Minister for Labour, I was asked to allow this to happen, but I sat pat. I discussed it with the then Premier—my Leader—and pointed out the disability as I have endeavoured to do tonight. I said, "As far as I am concerned I am not going to agree to the President of the Arbitration Court being under the jurisdiction of the Chief Justice." That was not because I had any fault to find with the Chief Justice—I had, and still have, a great admiration for him—but if he wanted the President of the Arbitration Court to go into one of the other courts I could imagine his—even Sir John Dwyer, good fellow and all as he is—believing it would be very *infra dig.* to ask an ordinary everyday layman, in the person of the Minister for Labour, for a loan of one of his judges.

The Minister for Lands: The court does not come under me now.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: That is what would have happened if I had agreed. Irrespective of what might have been told to the Government, and what it might believe, the time will arrive—it will not be very long either—when Mr. Justice Jackson will be required in one of the other courts, and just when he is so required it will be necessary to have the President in the Arbitration Court. Then what is going to happen? Has the Attorney General to go to the Chief Justice then—I suppose he has charge of the judges, or they have charge of him, and I do not say that derogatorily because the judges are a pretty big order—and say, "We are in an industrial jam. We want the President?" The Chief Justice might say, "We are in the midst of a very important appeal. You cannot have him."

The Attorney General: That cannot occur.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Why not?

The Attorney General: Because the President will not be under the jurisdiction of the Chief Justice.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Under whose jurisdiction is he?

The Attorney General: His own.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: He has a better job than I thought. Theoretically he might be on his own, but actually he will be under the Chief Justice, and when the Chief Justice wants him he will get him. There is no doubt about that. So we will have the position of a clash between the two men, or the two organisations. If there is a shortage of judges then the Premier had better find the money for another judge because the cost, if one is needed—and I think one is—would be infinitesimal compared with any loss that would occur as a result of a big industrial upheaval owing to the fact that the unions were unable to get into the court. So I earnestly and sincerely make this appeal to the Government, and I do so, not in any pettifogging criticism of its action, but because I truly believe this to be a retrograde step.

It is not in the best interests of the workers of this State, or of any Government, or of the industries in the State. The Government may be tied up in connection with this appointment. I have no doubt it was made under certain conditions which prevent the Government from saying to Mr. Justice Jackson that it is sorry, it made a mistake and it wants him to go back to the Arbitration Court. I am informed—I am open to correction, of course—that the Government had a great deal of difficulty in getting a suitable legal man to take the position, and that Mr. Justice Jackson would take it only under the conditions that he has received. If that is so, I do not blame the judge but the Government for giving way to him.

If Mr. Justice Jackson is in the position of having been appointed under certain conditions—and no doubt he is—I say emphatically to the Government that the sooner it transfers him to the Supreme Court as a judge and appoints a full-time President, such as we have had for the last 25 years, the better it will be for this

country. If the Government is not prepared to do that or is unable to find a suitable legal man—that is quite possible because I would say any suitable legal man would be making more money than he would get as President of the Arbitration Court—it could amend the Industrial Arbitration Act. The Government has already agreed that it is not necessary to have a lawyer, or a member of the legal fraternity in the Arbitration Court, because it has already appointed Mr. Schnaars as an industrial commissioner.

I know Mr. Schnaars very well, and I do not think he will claim that he has had any legal training, but he, as a layman, has been appointed to a very important position. It might be said that there is an appeal against his decisions, but there will be very few. Mr. Schnaars, let me point out, was the nominee or elected person of the industrial workers of this country to the Arbitration Court Bench. The Government thought enough of him—showing its good judgment—to take him from the Arbitration Court Bench and make him an industrial commissioner. The Government has already agreed to the principle that it is not necessary to appoint a legal man to the Bench. If the Government is unable to get a suitable legal man there is still plenty of time and this side of the House will help to amend the Industrial Arbitration Act in order to make the choice as wide as possible. I believe I could go to the Police Court in Roe-street and pick out two or three able men, without the legal qualifications of a judge and any one of whom would make an able President.

The Legislative Council having agreed to last year's amending legislation for the possible appointment of this commissioner, it has been agreed in principle that it was not necessary to have a legally qualified man for the position. If the Government is unable at present to get anyone suitable for the job it should amend the Act. I make this final appeal and have brought my motion forward this evening more in sorrow than in anger. We have had 25 years of reasonable industrial peace, owing to the fact that there has been a President of the Arbitration Court available to the unions or the Employers' Federation at any time, but that has now gone.

The Attorney General: No.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: It is no use the Attorney-General shaking his head. He has had no experience of arbitration. In fact, there are very few men on the Government side of the House—with the exception of the member for Nedlands—and not many on this side of the House, who have industrial experience going back to more than 30 years ago. I think I am the only exception. The member for Nedlands was in the thick of it away back in 1910, 1911 and 1912. When I have spoken to some union secretaries at the Trades Hall they have been astounded at things I was able to tell them and could tell this House. I sincerely hope the Government will take notice of my appeal.

On motion by the Attorney General, debate adjourned.

MOTION—POTATOES DISPOSAL.

To Inquire by Select Committee.

HON. J. T. TONKIN (North-East Fremantle) [10.5]: I move—

That a Select Committee be appointed to enquire into, and report and make recommendations regarding the disposal of potatoes grown commercially in Western Australia.

During the war period potatoes were grown throughout Australia under Commonwealth control and we had, in this State, a deputy controller. Growers were given contracts for certain acreages of potatoes and were guaranteed a price for their production. The price was satisfactory and the Government was able to pay it and keep the cost to the consumers at a reasonable level because a subsidy was provided. It has been the experience of most countries that, when a guaranteed price is made available, if it is a reasonable one, production increases. Even though acreages were controlled by the Commonwealth there was a steady increase, not only in the area of land brought under production for potatoes, but also in the yield from the land. Some idea of what happened can be gained from the figures I will give. For the years 1929-1938, the 10 seasons immediately prior to the war, the average area under potatoes in Western Australia was 4,899 acres, the average annual return being 22,635 tons.

The encouragement given by the guaranteed price resulted, in 1944-45, which was the peak year, in their being 11,375 acres under crop in this State with a return of 51,190 tons; more than double the acreage

and more than double the yield, solely as the result of the stimulus given by the guaranteed price and fixed contract. Some idea of the surplus provided can be gathered from the fact that our normal requirements in this State are about 28,000 tons of potatoes annually. In 1946, while Commonwealth control still operated, but when it had become clear that that control would not continue for a great deal longer, the Government of which I was a member acceded to a request of the growers and introduced a Marketing of Potatoes Bill, which duly became an Act. That measure did not propose to give a guaranteed price, but that there should be a control of acreage if necessary and that marketing should be regulated.

In order to develop my argument, I propose to give members an idea of the ruling prices at the various relevant times, because the price is important as governing the production of potatoes in this State and is therefore the factor most likely to cause a shortage or a surplus, according to how it is regulated. On the 9th October, 1948, when Commonwealth control had ceased and it became necessary that a price adjustment should take place because the subsidy was no longer available, the wholesale price of potatoes in Western Australia was increased from £10 5s. 0d. per ton to £15 2s. 6d. ex store, and from £10 10s. per ton to £15 7s. 6d. f.o.r. or delivered into retail store. The retail prices which were based upon those wholesale figures were increased from 1½d. per lb. to 2½d. per lb; and for 2-lb. lots to 4½d.; for 3-lb. lots to 6d.; 7-lb. lots to 1s. 2½d.; and 14-lb. lots to 2s. 5d.

The present prices—those operating at the moment—are wholesale to merchants in Perth and Fremantle, £17 per ton f.o.r., and the retail price for 1, 2, or 3-lb. lots, 2½d. per lb; for 3½ lb., 8½d.; for 7 lb., 1s. 5d.; and for 14lb., 2s. 9½d. Before the war, when no controls were operating at all, prices for potatoes had a very wide range with big fluctuations. At times they sold at £10 a ton, at other times they were £16 a ton and they even went to £20 a ton for choice lines. The idea of the Marketing of Potatoes Act, 1946, was to do away with wide fluctuations in price and to endeavour so to control production and regulate marketing as to afford the grower a reasonable price and at the same time make the commodity available to the consumer at a price

which was satisfactory to him. I want to see what we have been able to achieve in this direction and I propose to quote from the Act to indicate the general powers of the board which was to be set up under it. I quote from Section 18—

The Board may appoint a secretary and such inspectors, clerks and other officers and employees as it requires to assist it—

(a) in the administration of this Act;

(b) in the collection, handling, examination, grading, treatment, storage, distribution and sale of potatoes and other services incidental or auxiliary to any of the foregoing matters, and the provisions of the Public Service Act, 1904-1935, and of the Government Employees (Promotions Appeal Board) Act, 1945, shall not apply to such appointees, or any of them.

That, in my opinion, gave the board completely wide powers to do everything in connection with the regulation of production and the marketing of potatoes. It went further—

With the consent of the Minister administering any department of the Public Service of the State, the Board may, on any terms agreed between itself and the Minister, make use of the services of any person employed in that department.

The salaries, wages and other expenses payable to persons employed or otherwise engaged by the Board shall be charged upon and be payable out of the moneys from time to time in the hands of the Board for the purposes of this Act.

It was a complete power to do everything with regard to the regulation of production and the orderly marketing of the product. Section 19 states—

The Board may for the purposes of carrying out the duties and functions imposed on it by the other provisions of this Act—

(a) buy or sell any property;

(b) enter into any contracts;

(c) borrow money and mortgage or charge any of its property as security for the repayment of any money borrowed;

(d) delegate any of its functions and revoke any such delegation;

(e) establish or maintain premises for receiving, handling, grading, treatment, storage or sale of potatoes;

(f) contract or arrange for the processing of any potatoes;

(g) purchase, hire, construct, erect and maintain any premises, machinery, plant and equipment required for any processing which the Board has the power to carry out;

- (h) may with respect to the marketing or production of any potatoes enter into any arrangements with any body, association or corporation in the Commonwealth which has among its principal objects the management, control or regulation of the marketing or production of potatoes, and may through any member or delegate of the Board participate in the membership or management of any such body, association or corporation;
- (i) undertake transport and carrying services;
- (j) exercise the functions usually exercised by shipping agents;
- (k) at its discretion, grant or refuse licences to growers, and regulate the registration of growers and potato growing areas;
- (l) regulate the granting, issue, duration, refusal, suspension and cancellation of licences and registration under this Act;
- (m) prescribe the conditions upon which licences may be granted, including the power to limit and define the area or areas within which potatoes may be sown or produced for sale, and may from time to time add to, vary or revoke such conditions or any of them;
- (n) prohibit the production of potatoes for sale except in accordance with the conditions of any licence issued by the Board;
- (o) require any grower who may cease to grow or produce potatoes for sale, or who may intend to produce less potatoes than contemplated by the conditions of his licence, to give to the Board written notice and particulars of the circumstances within a reasonable time;
- (p) do all other acts, matters and things which it is required by this Act to do, or which may be necessary or convenient to be done by the Board for giving effect to this Act.

I do not think it can truthfully be said that this board lacked any power to go all out in the interests of this industry to ensure that the growers would receive a fair return for their labour and that the product would be marketed at a price which would not be unfair to the consumers. Unfortunately things have not worked out as it was hoped.

Shortly after this Act came into operation, there sprang into being an organisation known as Potato Distributors (W.A.) Ltd. I understand that about 26 firms or persons subscribed an amount of £1 each to provide the capital for this company. They were able to interpose themselves between

the board and the producer, and they receive a return of 8s. 6d. on every ton of potatoes produced in Western Australia. As we are producing somewhere in the vicinity of about 40,000 tons a year, 8s. 6d. per ton is a very decent return for this body. I would like to know why this body is so necessary and why the Potato Board could not do what this body is supposed to be doing. The board does not lack any power to do it. All I know at present is what I can gather from the newspaper. A statement by Mr. J. B. Mitchell, who is a member of the Potato Board and whose wife is one of the shareholders in Potato Distributors (W.A.), reads—

This company was paid 8s. 6d. per ton to marshal potatoes in the country, supply information regarding growers' crops, distribute to wholesalers and guarantee payment to the Board.

And for those services that company gets 8s. 6d. per ton. Already I think they have had more than £10,000 from this source. The purpose of the inquiry I am seeking is to find out exactly how this company sprang into being and why it is able to attain this advantageous position at the expense of the grower and the consumer, because the grower is very dissatisfied at the price he is receiving. On the 6th May of this year the Premier was at Harvey attending some potato field day and he urged the growers—he appealed to them, according to the newspaper—to plant their full acreages to ensure for the State a maximum supply, and the growers told the Premier that if the price were not increased to them, then, instead of planting their full acreages, they would be reducing them. Within a matter of hours of the Premier being there the growers formed a deputation to go to the Price Fixing Commissioner to seek an increase in price of at least £1 per ton.

Earlier on the 12th January, the same growers were looking for an increase of £3 per ton, the price to them at that time being £12 per ton, and the retail prices at that stage being 2½d. for 1lb., 5d. for 2lb., 7d. for 3lb., 8d. for 3½lb., 1s. 4d. for 7lb., and 2s. 8d. for 14lb. I want to make a slight correction there. The retail prices I quoted are in error. They were increased on the 21st February, a matter of about five weeks afterwards, and the prices I quoted were the increased prices as at

that date, and not the retail prices prevailing on the 12th January. Members will remember that in about March or April of this year the waterside workers at Fremantle decided that they would not continue to load any more potatoes for the Near East on the ground that they themselves could not purchase them, and they could not see why they should have to load potatoes to send oversea. Therefore, they refused to load potatoes for some time.

Now, the same Mr. Mitchell, to whom I have already referred, said in the Press that the action of the lumpers had resulted in the growers losing about £1,000. What he did not tell the people was that the traders in Fremantle were anxious to have these potatoes and sell them to the Fremantle people. I am informed that the Potato Board acquired these potatoes, cleaned them, graded them, crated them and then handed them over to the merchants to sell oversea. The grade of potatoes referred to is supposed to be what is called "1A." Mr. Mitchell endeavoured to show through the Press that the merchants in this country were not anxious to deal in these potatoes, that the quality was not up to standard and that they were too small, but the men who were handling the crates of potatoes for export day after day knew full well their quality, so it was futile to make the statement that they were of an unsatisfactory quality.

The reason why these merchants were anxious to sell them oversea was because they were getting 4d. and 5d. per lb. for them. There was no price fixing where these were going, and so it paid them better to keep them from the local market and send them away. It did not matter whether we had to go without so long as the merchants got the maximum price from this source. We were told that it was necessary to send these potatoes away in order to conserve our oversea market. That is always the tale. It is the same tale with timber. We must go without ourselves and send our products oversea in order to maintain our oversea market. If our own people starve to death they will not be interested in an oversea market. Our first duty is to our own people because if the oversea price falls and it does not pay to export commodities, what do we do? We introduce some sort of local consumption plan which imposes levies on our own people in order to keep the producers in production. That is invariably the plan.

Whenever we reach a stage where world parity falls so low that there is no inducement for producers to export, the people in our country have to come to the assistance of the producers and carry the load by paying a price which is in excess of world parity. That is regarded as a fair and reasonable thing today, and I do not object to it. We must keep our producers in production, but it should not be on the basis of one-way traffic. If we look to our own people to pay extra at a time when world prices fall then they are entitled to the first consideration when the local price is less than the oversea price.

We have to remember that the whole time the subsidy was being paid by the Commonwealth it was from money borrowed from the Australian taxpayers. I saw that it went to the producers to keep up their production. There was no chance of any of the potatoes oversea then. But when they reach the stage where the oversea trade approaches normal, then the merchants regard it as the right thing to keep the local market bare and send the produce away. What has the Government done about this? So far as I can understand, it has not lifted a hand. Is the Honorary Minister for Agriculture satisfied that Potato Distributors (W.A.) Ltd. is entitled to get a rake-off of 8s. 6d. per ton? Is he satisfied with that because, according to my reading of the Act, he had to approve of it? Sec. 21, Subsection (7), of the Marketing of Potatoes Act, 1946, states—

Every registered agent shall be entitled to receive as remuneration for his services and for any facilities made available by him in dealing with potatoes, and as remuneration for any expenses properly incurred by him such amount as the board, with the approval of the Minister, shall determine.

Thus the board could not agree to pay this amount to the registered agents unless the Minister approved of the payments. Does the Minister approve of the payment of 8s. 6d. per ton to Potato Distributors (W.A.) Ltd.? I would like to ascertain exactly what that firm did for this money, and that is why I am seeking an inquiry. I would like to know whether the quality of the potatoes sent away was below that which we would expect our own people to consume. If they were of poor quality, they should have been fed to pigs and not sent oversea for human consumption. What a nice way to retain our market! We send away potatoes not fit for human consumption! That shows the

hollowness of the claim that it was necessary to export these potatoes to maintain our market overseas. What a wonderful way to ensure a good name for our potatoes! Of course, it is not true. The potatoes were of excellent quality and could have been made available to the local market. There was no need at all for the producers to have sustained a loss of £1,000.

The people at Fremantle were prepared to pay the cost of crating the potatoes, had they been made available. As a matter of fact, some of them were made available eventually, but the Government did not take any action in the matter. It just let things slide. So far as I can see, the Government did not propose to have any inquiry about these matters. I think the House is entitled to know how this board has functioned. We provided legislation and ample powers, and the board has not come up to expectations. It has not by any means satisfied the producers nor has it satisfied the consumers. The only people who appear to be satisfied are the merchants and those associated with Potato Distributors (W.A.) Ltd., for whom it has been a wonderful business. If we have this inquiry, we shall be able to find out just where the board is falling down. I am afraid it is too much under the domination of merchant interests. I would like to know, for example, who suggested the plan upon which the board is working. Some of the features of that plan suggest to me that the merchants were kind enough to advise the board. That will not do at all.

The object of the board was to eliminate, as far as possible, excessive and unnecessary charges that were interposed between the producer and the consumer, and that has not been done at all. The producers have been dissatisfied all along the line, and have been threatening to go out of production because the return to them was insufficient. At the same time, the price of potatoes to the consumer has been going up and up. This is a most important matter because potatoes figure so largely in the diet of the people. They constitute an item that is taken into consideration when the basic wage is fixed. There are many items that are not, but this is one that is. Thus it is a factor, seeing that the Arbitration Court takes notice of the price of potatoes, in increasing or reducing wages, and as such can have a very wide effect upon the economy of the State.

If the price is unnecessarily high to the consumer without the producer getting a corresponding advantage, surely that is a matter for inquiry. It seems to me there is too wide a gap between what the producer is receiving and the amount the consumer is being charged. I would like to know what the public pay and where the money is going. I would like to ascertain whether we can reduce the cost of the commodity to the consumer and ensure that the producer gets a fair return. Not only does the welfare of the industry depend upon this being done, but the well-being of our own economy is dependent upon it as well. I have been told that the Honorary Minister for Agriculture does not agree with the amount that Potato Distributors (W.A.) Ltd. has been receiving. If that is so, what has he done about it? According to the Act, he must have approved of the payment of the amount. Did he just sign on the dotted line without ascertaining the amounts that were being approved, or did the board make the charges without reference to the Honorary Minister?

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: It may have been a Government decision.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: These are matters that require to be cleared up. Therefore, I have much pleasure in submitting the motion, because I think it will render a service to the country.

On motion by the Minister for Lands, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.39 p.m.