

to have full employment. If that full employment is to continue, there must be stability in the way of a general level of prices. I believe that the Commonwealth, in co-operation with the States, will be able to exercise that temporary control in such a way as to avoid the debacle that occurred after the last war. Within 2½ years of that war there were no fewer than 125,000 people out of employment in Australia. This is the problem as I see it:

Vast numbers of trained men and men who have acquired vocational skill in the Forces will be seeking work on their release. Those who have served in the Forces will, of course, desire to return to their pre-war occupations. Very large bodies of men and women will also have to be absorbed in industry in peacetime, so it will need the wisest statesmanship on the part of both the Commonwealth and the States to ensure that, at that critical period, employment will be found for all these people, it may be by putting in hand essential public works, so that the soldiers who will be returning will not be faced with a period of unemployment. I believe that with the States and the Commonwealth working together, and with the experience that has been gained during the past six years, there will be no need for unemployment in Australia. We can advance as a logical argument that full employment was found for everyone during the war and that consequently Australia should not be confronted with an unemployment problem when the war is over, as it was during the 10 years previous to the outbreak of this present conflict.

MR. READ (Victoria Park) [4.53]: Mr. Speaker, it is with some diffidence that I stand before you this afternoon, in an unusual environment, to make my first speech as a new member. The assistance and instruction which have been given to me by some of the members, however, have somewhat allayed my nervousness and I thank those members for their kindly aid. I deeply regret the circumstance which necessitated the recent Victoria Park by-election, the death of my great friend, Captain Howard Stirling Raphael. He sat alongside me for upwards of 20 years in the Perth City Council; and during that period his work for the ratepayers and for the district was of exceptional value. During that period he was re-

sponsible for many of the parks, gardens and children's playgrounds which we now have in our ward for all time. These will for ever stand as a monument to his labours for our district. As member for the district, he was at all times most zealous in the welfare of the families and the individuals. Particularly valuable was the grand work he performed during the dreadful years of the financial depression and unemployment. He was indefatigable in helping the poor of the district, who will ever cherish his memory in their hearts.

May I be permitted to congratulate our new Premier on his elevation to the high office he now holds. He is facing an arduous and difficult task, because the problems of the post-war period, rehabilitation and reconstruction, will certainly not be less difficult than the problems dealt with during the war period. He brings to his office ability and experience which will enable him to carry out his duties with honour to himself and benefit to the welfare of Western Australia. I wish him a long and prosperous tenure of office. On behalf of every section of the Victoria Park electors, I desire to thank the ex-Premier for the many kindnesses he has shown us in the improvement of our district. We have sent many deputations to him and these were always kindly received. The answer was generally no, but it was expressed in a very pleasing manner. We wish him a speedy return to health and hope he will live many years to continue his useful service to the part of the State which he represents. Recurring to the passing of the late Capt. Raphael, I wish to offer my sympathy to the members of his party on the loss of a vigorous, sincere, and loyal supporter.

The most important subject with which we have to deal, and which has already been touched upon in this Chamber, is housing. Thousands of houses are required. The conditions under which people are living at present are distressing, and we are not getting on with the job as rapidly as we should. The Perth City Council is making a survey of its territory in order to ascertain the number of sub-standard houses and the extent of the distress caused by them. I know fairly well what is lacking in that direction in my own electorate. During the election campaign I was in touch with the people there; and in many instances I found the conditions deplorable. Small houses

in Victoria Park were accommodating as many as three families; a man, woman and child were eating and sleeping in one room, in which the cooking was done also. I found that people were housed in shops, most of which were small. In the main thoroughfare and in other places, shops that are not being used for business have been occupied by people for housing purposes. These shops have their windows painted over. Sometimes there is just a shop and sometimes a shop with one small room attached. There are no fireplaces, no baths, and no coppers or troughs.

Mr. Cross: And at least one has no lavatory.

Mr. READ: Very likely! Many of them have no water laid on, except in the yard or in the yard next door. In some instances there are two or three shops occupied by families and having only one yard between them for the children to play in. The conditions are such that I fear what would happen if an epidemic of sickness should occur. Figures have been quoted to us concerning housing. There have been reams in the newspapers about the subject, and we have heard over the air of the shortage of houses. Master builders have written letters and had them answered. In spite of it all, very few houses are being erected. One member complained about the price of houses. I do not regard that as seriously as I regard the conditions under which some of the people are living in these premises. Last week in the Legislative Council, one hon. member said that the people on the land found the housing position just as acute as did the people in the towns. He said that people were expected to live in shacks and in those shacks to bring up their families.

Conditions in the country and in our towns regarding the amenities attached to the houses and the inadequacy of the accommodation are similar, but there is this difference: In the country, the people are able to move about and the children are able to play in an environment which those in the town do not enjoy. They are able to play in God's brown clean earth; but in Victoria Park the children are playing in a few square yards of dirty black sand impregnated with the sweepings and the household rubbish which have come from possibly 20 or 30 years of housekeeping, and which

contain millions of harmful bacteria. Those conditions should be changed. As an indication of the real need in regard to houses, let me give a few figures. The Workers' Homes Board has 2,300 applications from people requiring houses. It receives 800 applications per quarter, but the number which the Federal authorities permit it to grant is only 120 per quarter. That figure does not include people who would apply but have no priority. I refer to people who are about to marry and married people with no children. When they go to the Workers' Homes Board, they are advised not to apply. The trouble is that we have no building material in any quantity in Western Australia.

On four occasions I have approached the Workers' Homes Board on behalf of people needing homes, with a request for permission for them to build. They were people who had the labour and who were prepared to erect their own homes. Two of them had clubbed together with carpenters working at shipbuilding. They ceased work on Friday and consequently had Saturdays and Sundays on which to build the houses which would have been of weatherboard and asbestos. They could soon have completed the job, but the trouble was that there was no material. One individual whom I advised not to apply did so and last week he brought me this letter which he had received, and which emphasises the helplessness of the Workers' Homes Board to give any assistance to anybody until a reserve of building materials is built up. The letter states—

Re your application for permission to erect a new dwelling in Victoria Park. With reference to this application for a permit, as above, I regret to inform you that the application will have to be deferred. The present acute shortage of manpower and materials prevents the application being approved at the present time. You are advised to renew your application in six months' time, when it is hoped the position will be improved.

A State Advisory Committee on post-war housing was appointed by the State Government. Mr. D. L. Davidson was the chairman, and the members of the committee were well-known experts in building and the production of materials. They were drawn from Government departments and from outside sources for their knowledge of the subject. They had before them 37 heads of departments and other experts

from whom they took evidence. That evidence and the committee's report were presented to the Minister. The first of the committee's recommendations was that 4,000 houses per year were needed in the metropolitan area for a period of five years. The committee suggested that existing brickyards should be kept going by the release of manpower; that a large reserve of building materials should be stored up immediately; that 50,000,000 bricks should be produced to be ready for use at the cessation of hostilities; and that large stocks of seasoned Western Australian woods, cement, and asbestos sheeting should be set aside in a pool from which they could be drawn when we are ready to build.

There are nine brickyards in the metropolitan area capable of supplying our needs in this direction, including the State Brickworks and the Canning Cement Brick Works. At present, only three of them are working, and the time has come when the other brickyards should be opened up. They will require some improvements with regard to amenities, such as showers, retiring rooms, water, and eating facilities that do not exist at present. That is one of the first steps that should be taken by the department towards solving the housing problems. The matter has a further significance. Unless we build up a big reserve of material as quickly as possible, we shall be faced with unemployment. The Premier has told us that probably 2,000 artisans will be released from the Army for the building of houses. Amongst those there will no doubt be some who will be put into production; but they will not be sufficient, and we will have the spectacle of carpenters, bricklayers, plumbers, and their numerous assistants and unskilled attendants standing down half the time and waiting for supplies to come forward. The remedy for that is to transpose men immediately from some less important works and send them to our mills in the country, and to the brickyards and factories, so that they may produce huge reserves of building material against the time when they will be needed. The Commonwealth Government has announced that it will provide money for private producers of building materials until such time as they can be utilised, so that there will be no difficulty regarding finance.

The member for Perth has made reference to migration. That is something we must have. I do not want to be misunderstood. I am in favour of migration, as I was years ago, but I do not think the time has arrived when we are ready to receive migrants. Our housing conditions are such that for some time new arrivals would only increase our difficulties. Until we have thousands more new homes, no further population from outside can be accommodated. We are told that 70,000 persons per annum will probably be brought to this country. It is also stated that 17,000 children might be expected, but at the present time what could Western Australia do with them? We have all too few kindergartens. Our health centres are not sufficient, our schools are over-crowded and, before we could accommodate many more children, the schools would require to have additions, and we would have to build new schools. The position at present is such that we have very little accommodation, our teachers have to take 50 or 60 children in classes where there should only be 30 children. This is not at all fair to the children concerned. Our own children who are coming on will find accommodation very inadequate, without our importing further children before we are ready for them.

One of the difficulties that will confront people who come here before we are ready for them will be our limited hospital accommodation. At present, the hospitals are working to full capacity and, in fact, cases which should be treated in hospital are at present being refused admission, while many patients—for some time after treatment—are not able to receive the full measure of attention that they should receive at the hands of the medical people. That is all due to the shortage of hospital accommodation.

Reference has been made to the fact that local committees have been relieved of the payment of the infant health nurses' salaries. That is so. The Department of Public Health has taken over the control of infant health nurses. Their salaries are being paid through the Department of Public Health, but are contributed to by the local governing bodies, the Lotteries Commission and, principally, by the Government. We who have been on the committee of management for the infant health centres have ceased to have any function in

the management of the different centres. The nurses have been absorbed, not only as to payment of their salaries, but as to their employment, in the same manner as are the visiting health nurses. These sisters belong to the same unions, and should therefore be working under the same conditions. The manner in which these nurses were taken over by the department left something to be desired, so they wrote, asking what their position was. They wrote to Dr. Stang, and the reply was—

With reference to your letter of the 1st inst., addressed to Dr. Stang, I have to say that when Cabinet decided to find additional funds with a view to assisting the infant health movement and widening its scope, it was on the definite condition that no question of superannuation should arise.

How could that be agreed to by any body of employees? The conditions of employment are laid down by Act of Parliament or by Arbitration Court awards. The reply goes on to say that the department, in this new arrangement, is merely the agent for paying the salaries, and that the Government, as such, is not the employer of the infant health nurses. But the Government is the employer of the infant health nurses. The nurses look to the department for direction, and for every condition under which they work. I hope, therefore, that the Minister for Health, when the new Commissioner takes charge, will inquire into this matter and inform the House whether these nurses are entitled to the conditions of superannuation, sick pay, long service leave and holiday pay, especially as a Labour Government is in power.

In the matter of public health, action should be taken to safeguard our people from exploitation by patent medicine companies. Years ago there were a few hundred patent medicines on the market, but now there are thousands. Exorbitant prices are being charged to the public, while the virtues of the medicines are, in many instances, very doubtful. There should be an Act of Parliament governing the qualities and prices of these preparations. We see advertisements in the papers and we hear over the air many statements which are questionable, with regard to the virtues of these preparations. In the papers just now there is an advertisement depicting a man holding up a tablet, and in the same picture is portrayed a man tossing about, sleepless. The advertisement says

that if you take these tablets they will produce sleep. The compound is composed of phosphates and iron. Iron is a compound which is very necessary to our bodies, and we can all do with a little phosphates. If one took a course of this preparation for about three months, it would not do one any harm, and would possibly do one a little good, but I do not think it would produce sleep.

Then there is the price of these preparations! Iron is available in great quantities and is cheap enough—it will be cheaper still when Yampi Sound has been opened up—and we sell phosphates to the farmers by the ton. There is no control over the prices of these patent medicines. We read that we can get, out of a bottle, immunity against any disease, and the price of this nostrum is £1 1s. per bottle, it being recommended that one should take three or four bottles. A person might take this medicine and yet find, later on, that he had contracted the very disease against which it was supposed to have immunised him. He would then have lost his money. There is no control over the people who are making hundreds of thousands of pounds out of exploitation of this kind. It seems to be very unfair that there is no control over such people, because in our own town a pharmacist, who came under the eye of the Price Fixing Commissioner, was fined £10 for charging 3d. extra on a bottle of camphorated oil, a preparation the medical virtues of which are defined and laid down for our protection by the British pharmacopoeia in a book compiled by the British Medical Association. The evil of this, to my mind, is that if a poor sick person, who cannot afford to go to a doctor for treatment, takes this medicine without result, not only is his health affected but he has paid away money which he can ill spare and possibly through paying away that money he has to go without food or other necessities—if he is on the basic wage. Something should be done to put an end to this evil.

There is another matter—olive oil! We hear over the air, and we read in the Press, of the virtues of olive oil. We are told that olive oil is contained in many toilet and other articles, but I do not think there is any olive oil in them. If there is, it should be controlled by some authority, and should be given to the hospitals for the treatment of sick people, and particularly for

the treatment of children. We know that the supply of olive oil is so short that it should be controlled in the interests of public health. I think the proof that there is no olive oil in these preparations lies in the fact that at the present time it costs 40s. per gallon in Australia, and one could not expect many of these preparations to contain olive oil while it is at that price. I see by the papers that some of the broadcasting announcers have been suspended, not for mis-statements about patent medicines or the price of such preparations, but for telling us funny stories, so our morals are more protected than are our bodies or our pockets.

The health of the people at the present time is in the hands of the Commonwealth Government. The Pharmaceutical Benefits Act will come into operation, we are told, at the beginning of next year. It would have been in operation many months ago, but for the opposition of the British Medical Association. I hope the time will come when the British Medical Association, through its members, will co-operate with the Government in supplying free medical advice, free medicine and free hospitalisation. This is something we should have. A free health service is absolutely necessary. Just fancy a man afflicted with pain not being able to get rid of it unless he has money! This is not a socialistic measure; it is a common necessity of a civilised Christian people.

Now I come to the vexed question of the Causeway. We are all proud of our capital city, but we must continue with the improvements so necessary to advancement. Our great blemish is the Causeway, which is the river approach to the city. It is the means by which two-thirds of our rural population enter and leave the city. This bridge is the only one in a distance of 12 miles either to Fremantle or Midland Junction. There is no ferry to carry motorcars or other traffic across the river; there are no other means apart from this narrow causeway by which traffic may move from a city with a population of about 240,000. Members have visited the capitals of other States, and I ask them whether they can visualise such a causeway over a river leading to any other capital city in Australia. No; it is fit only to give approach to a country town.

The narrowness of the Causeway has led to the occurrence of many accidents. I made

inquiries at the Police Department in order to try to calculate the number of accidents that had occurred on the Causeway, but I found that the department does not analyse the figures in a manner to show the number. Only last week a young man was killed while crossing the Causeway. It was just another death. That man left a wife and one child. I do not know, but possibly the Child Welfare Department is paying for the upkeep of the children bereft of parents killed in accidents on the Causeway and probably paying enough to meet the interest and sinking fund on a new bridge. It might astound members to learn that the average daily number of vehicles that crossed the Causeway in 1938-39 was 15,874 while the number that crossed the Sydney Harbour Bridge in 1937-38 was 18,745—only 3,000 more. To carry the comparison further, let me inform members that the width of the Causeway is 38 feet and the width of the Sydney Harbour Bridge is 77 feet. I consider that one of our first post-war works after the No. 1 priorities have been attended to should be the building of a new causeway that would be safe and would be a matter of pride to the citizens of Perth.

The beautification of the foreshore on the south side of the river should be continued upstream as on the downstream portion. The territory of the City Council extends from Rivervale to the Causeway, and the dredging by the Government should be continued so that the subsequent filling, levelling and beautification work might be carried out by the Perth City Council.

The whole of Victoria Park must be sewered. This district has many sewered premises, but it has 1,000 unsewered houses which the deep drains pass and which are capable of being connected up at once. The owners of these houses should be induced to link up with the system as soon as labour and material are available. We in Victoria Park are in an unfortunate position. Orders have been issued for the removal of the sanitary depot, but the position regarding that depot is very little if any worse than it has been for the last 10 years, except for the building of a public school nearby. There are no more houses near the depot than there were before. Certainly the depot must be removed, but it seems a waste of money, labour and material, which could be utilised for some other purpose, to move it now. The carrying out of the work will

cost the Perth City Council ratepayers over £10,000, which is equal to almost a 2d. rate, apart altogether from the uselessness of this expenditure when the Government in turn sewers the whole of the district.

Thanks are due to the Minister for Works for his interest in having kept going, temporarily, at any rate, the Welshpool factory, certain sections of which were to have been closed and the staff discharged. The men working there reside in the Canning and Victoria Park electorates, and we are hoping that some arrangements will be made whereby those works may be permanently kept in operation. They could be utilised for manufacturing hardware, such as bolts, spare parts and replacements for agricultural machinery, portions of houses that will have to be built, and parts for the railways that will have to be reconstructed. I have been informed by engineers that the machinery already installed could be easily, inexpensively and quickly converted for the purpose of employing those men on work to supply civilian requirements. There are numerous Commonwealth agencies in the State and the Government must exert itself to compel the Commonwealth officials to co-ordinate their work with the policy of Parliament in the interests of Western Australia.

MR. McLARTY (Murray-Wellington) [5.41]: I, too, should like to express my gratitude to the ex-Premier for the many courtesies I received from him during the time he held that office. He was always willing to give one a fair hearing and I consider he was just in the decisions he made. I hope that he will be fully restored to health and that, as a result of laying down the burdens of office, his health will improve rapidly. I congratulate the member for Gascoyne on his accession to the office of Premier. I have watched his rise in politics with considerable interest, and I have no doubt that he will live up to the expectations of his party. I should also like to congratulate the Deputy Premier. He entered this House some time after I did. I have not had the opportunity of seeing him in Opposition, but I believe that if we could arrange for him to have a term in Opposition, he would be all the better for it. I compliment the member for Murchison on his elevation to Ministerial rank. I have good reason to remem-

ber him when he was sitting on the Opposition side of the House. He certainly was a critic and a very active critic.

The Minister for Lands: There is no need for him to be in Opposition today.

Mr. McLARTY: He was more active when he was in Opposition.

The Minister for Lands: We all are.

Mr. McLARTY: But I cannot say whether he was more effective. As he was such a candid critic, I take it he will not object to criticism from us, and I hope he will be able to stand up to it. He has two departments to administer—railways and transport—against which criticism has assuredly be levelled. Undoubtedly there is room for improvement in the matter of transport. However, I believe that the new Minister will make a very close study of railway problems. It is in his nature to make a close study of problems in which he is interested, and there is need for close investigation of the workings of our railway and transport systems generally. I have no doubt he will devote considerable energy and study to the problems confronting him and I wish him luck.

The member for Victoria Park has made a very practical speech this evening. He has dealt with subjects in which he is well versed, and I feel sure that his future speeches will be listened to with respect by all sections of the House. I was most interested on Saturday to see the allotment of the portfolios in the new Ministry. I regret some of the changes, while some, I think, will be for the good of the country. I was sorry to see that the Premier had to lay down the offices of Lands and Agriculture, but I realise that it would not be fair to burden him with those two important offices, together with the Premiership, the Treasurership and the important work of Housing. I was also sorry to see the Minister for Lands give up the portfolio of Health. I have always regarded him as one who has made a close study of health matters, and he has accumulated a considerable amount of knowledge. However, he has now gone to the Lands Department and he will not find that an easy job. But I am sure we will give him what help we can and I hope he will take any advice that we tender.

The Minister for Education also takes in the portfolio of Agriculture. I think those two portfolios will go together, because