

- (2) 20,000 at £19 12s. 6d. per load.
200,000 at £20 per load.
- (3) and (4)—
- 11,000 only untreated—£19 per load
 - 70,000 only untreated—£20 per load
 - 10,000 only untreated—£20 per load
 - 100,000 only end treated—£20 2s. 2d. per load
 - 13,000 only end treated—£20 7s. 6d. per load
 - 156,000 only end treated—*£21 0s. 10d. per load
-
- 360,000

*Subject to basic wage rise or fall
(1s. for each 1s.).

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: TWELFTH DAY

Motion

Debate resumed from the 30th August on the following motion by Mr. Craig:

That the following Address be presented to His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor and Administrator in reply to the Speech he has been pleased to deliver to Parliament:—

May it please Your Excellency: We, the members of the Legislative Assembly of the State of Western Australia in Parliament assembled, beg to express loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank Your Excellency for the Speech you have been pleased to address to Parliament.

MR. DAVIES (Victoria Park) [2.32 p.m.]: Whilst I am honoured to have been returned to this Parliament by the people of Victoria Park, I must say that I very much regret the circumstances which made my election possible. I have been pleased to hear in this Chamber the eulogistic references to Hugh Andrew, and can only add that I whole-heartedly agree with them. He was a man of integrity; a man who believed in social justice; a man whose primary concern was the welfare and happiness of people. I know that during my long association with him he was always happiest when he had been able to be of some assistance to the working man. I can only hope to do as good a job for the electorate of Victoria Park as he did; and I have pledged myself accordingly to the electors.

I am most conscious that being a member of Parliament places upon me a very heavy responsibility, and I trust that I will be able to measure up in all directions to it. I suppose that members here will know how I have felt over the past two or three days. They all know how one becomes nervous and does not know quite what is ahead; but I would like to say how much I appreciate the warmth with which I have been welcomed by members on both

sides of the House. I think that without exception I have been welcomed and congratulated in a spirit which I did not know existed, but which I am happy to have discovered.

Members from both sides of the House have given me encouragement and advice. I do not know whether I will take all the advice, but I know that some of it must be good because members of opposing political factions have given me the same advice. I shall look forward to further co-operation and help such as I have received over the past two days. This co-operation and help has made me feel that I have been a member of this House for much longer than two days.

There are, of course, one or two matters which I would like to bring before the notice of the Government today. As is well known, I have been canvassing widely in my electorate over the past few weeks and, therefore, have perhaps come closer and more recently in contact with my electors than have many of the other members here. Naturally there were certain matters which were raised time and again by the people.

The matter which was raised most frequently was that of unemployment. I do not want to be a calamity-howler about unemployment, because I do not think that we or anyone else should make capital out of anyone's unhappiness; but I feel I must draw to the attention of the House the fact that over and over again I found people distressed and worried about employment prospects. While in many cases the main breadwinner of the family was still employed, there was often a child or a youth who had just left school and who was having difficulty in finding work. Also there were plenty of married women who had budgeted in the expectancy of continuing to work for some considerable time, but they had found the family income had been halved.

I think it is a distressing state of affairs that in a country so prosperous as ours there should be any unemployment at all. It is soul-destroying to the men concerned when they have the ability to work but are unable to find a position. This situation calls for every possible action to be taken to relieve it because it is causing so much distress and worry to so many people.

We know it has been said that things are going to be all right in two, four, or six months' time. It has even been said that everything is going to be all right tomorrow. However, as far back as February I sat as a member of the Trade Unions Industrial Council with representatives of the Employers' Federation. At that time we were concerned with immigration and the allied question of unemployment. At a second conference held, there was produced for our edification a great list of works that were going to be undertaken within the next two or

three months. The optimism of those at the conference was very great; and we were told that we had nothing to worry about, because at the end of two months there would not be enough men to fill the vacant positions.

That was last February. Since then, as we all know, the position has deteriorated. We wonder whether we are going to be told again that everything will be all right in two months; and whether, if we are, things will be all right. This is a matter which needs urgent attention in order that something might be done to rectify the position.

Another matter which was raised, and which is second only to unemployment, was that of water rates. The people throughout the electorate have not long had their half-yearly readings taken; and they were aghast and most irate to find that whilst they were paying more rates than they had been in 1959, their water allowance had been substantially reduced. Time and again people came into the committee rooms and threw down on to the counter cards, accounts or notices so that we had the whole story there before us. They were complaining bitterly about it.

One man, who did not drink or smoke, had put all his money into his garden, and it was a beautiful one. He had spent over £400 on it. As he was in rather a desolate area he had bought trees for the street, and had even donated one to the school across the road; and he kept them all watered. They provided the only shade around the place. This man has now decided that he will confine his garden to within his own fence; and that same attitude has been expressed by many people. All this has happened at a time when residents are being asked to beautify the streets in connection with the forthcoming Empire Games. But it is quite apparent that they are not going to worry very much; and I can assure the Government that it can look forward to increased hostility over the matter of water rating.

Another question which has concerned us somewhat is the provision of a hospital for south of the river. There is a plan, I believe, to provide a hospital at Queen's Park in 1964 or 1965. I suggest that the site that has already been reserved in the Collier Pine Plantation for a hospital would be far better than Queen's Park where, of course, there is no site reserved up to the present. I believe there were 50 acres reserved on the edge of the Collier Pine Plantation; namely, in Jarrah Road. Although part of that has since been alienated for another purpose, there would still remain plenty of room to provide a most suitable hospital.

That location, to my mind, would be an ideal place. If we look at the map we will see that all around that area there are a great number of houses being erected; and the site would be central for

districts such as Riverton, Rossmoyne, Beeloo, Wilson, Canning, Manning, Victoria Park, Carlisle, and Rivervale; in fact, for the whole of that area. There are, of course, a number of private hospitals within the electorate of Victoria Park. Whilst these serve a particular purpose, there is a need for a general hospital; and I hope the Government will give consideration to immediately planning and commencing the work out there; and possibly this would help to relieve some of the present unemployment.

Another matter which is of great concern, and which needs early attention, is traffic control. Into the Causeway come roads leading from many points in the south-west, and the Causeway forms a natural bottleneck. This problem has been relieved somewhat by the provision of the Narrows Bridge, but the Causeway still carries a terrific amount of traffic. Albany Highway is at all times particularly busy, and not only during peak periods. On the Albany Highway, Shepperton Road, Berwick Street, and right through that area, road hauliers—apart from general transport—constantly travel backwards and forwards; and it would appear that instead of this volume of traffic relying on the Causeway, some provision should be made for another outlet. This is very necessary.

It has been mooted, of course, that a road bridge should be built across the Swan in the vicinity of the Bunbury railway bridge—where the south-west railway line crosses the Swan at East Perth—and this would appear to be an ideal suggestion. Such a bridge would divert a lot of the northern traffic out to the eastern suburbs; and possibly a road could be built along the railway line to take some of the traffic which now makes the Albany Highway, in particular, and Shepperton Road, road hazards. We could press to have Shepperton Road widened, and this is a matter which requires early attention.

Many other matters were brought to my notice at the time of canvassing. However, these will be attended to in due course. A number of organisations and associations in the district are already attending to many of these matters, and I will be only too pleased to throw in whatever support I can behind their efforts.

[The Acting Speaker (Mr. Crommelin) took the Chair.]

There are one or two industrial questions that I would like to bring, briefly, to the attention of this House. One is the question of the basic wage. You will remember, Sir, that for many years our basic wage has been adjusted each quarter on the "C" series index. Earlier in the year there was a great amount of agitation, through the medium of the Press, for the new consumer price index to

be used. At the declaration of the basic wage on the 31st January, 1961, the President of the Arbitration Court, Mr. Justice Neville, said—

In view of certain suggestions that have been made recently I think I should point out that under the Act the Court is directed to consider the index figures supplied by the State Statistician. It has been suggested we should consider the consumer price index numbers. The State Statistician index numbers are based on the "C" series index mainly because the consumer price index would be totally unsuitable, and in fact impracticable for our purposes as only one index is compiled for this State, that is for the metropolitan area and there is no separate index for the goldfields and the remainder of the south-west land division. So it is important for us to consider the consumer price index.

That was in January, 1961. Some months later, however, the trade union movement was very surprised that the court decided to adjust the basic wage on the consumer index. This, of course, would be a story in itself; but I will not attempt, at this stage, to concern the House with the pros and cons of the requirements under the basic wage.

When the industrial advocate for the trade union movement attempted in the Arbitration Court to argue with the President as to his right in using the consumer index, he was told it was not a matter for the court to deal with; that it was a matter for the Government to deal with; and that the trade union movement should make representations to the Government.

This, the trade union movement did earlier in the year—back in May—after it had considered the matter fully. The Acting Premier at the time wrote in reply to our letter asking for a deputation and said that he did not think it was necessary to have a deputation and that the trade union movement should present its case in writing.

The matter was brought up at the meeting of the T.U.I.C., which is the supreme governing body of the trade union movement in this State, and the Acting Premier was advised that the trade union movement was gravely concerned over the basic wage and considered that before any written submissions were made there should be a round-table discussion on the matter. Reams could be written on that; and surely to goodness the trade union movement was not asking the Government to make any concessions! It merely wanted to present submissions so that the matter could receive further consideration. Although a letter was written on the 19th of June last, expressing the grave

concern of the trade union movement, no reply has been received from the Government.

I feel that the Government should receive a deputation without any further delay in order to discuss this most urgent and pressing matter, which affects every worker in the State.

As an ex-railway union official I would like to mention one or two matters concerning railway workers. First of all, the men are most concerned about the amendments that were made to the Government Railways Act last year. Although assurances were given at the time that the amendments were, in effect, only tidying up the Act, we pointed out that railway employees could be punished twice for the same offence—once by the Police Court and once by the department. However, we were told that everyone would be treated fairly and that the men would receive every consideration and we need have no fears.

However, that is how we felt about the matter after the amendments had been made; and since then we have found that on two occasions employees have been punished for offences in the Traffic Court, and have then been dismissed from the railways or have had some other action taken against them by the department. That is contrary to every concept of British justice; and a man should not have to suffer as much as these men did for what is not a major crime but could be a matter of circumstance. As the Act stands at present, even for a minor traffic offence a man can be dismissed from the Railways Department; then his case would have to be taken to the Punishment Appeal Board. That is a waste of departmental officers' time, advocates' time, witnesses' time, and the court's time; but, as the Act stands now, it has to be done to get a man back into his job.

In my view some more realistic approach is necessary in regard to the handling of many staff matters. I had a case recently of a couple of young lads who had illegally used a rowboat at Rockingham. They had gone to the Fremantle Police Station to report the matter to the police; and, in doing so, they put themselves in. The chap who owned the boat said he was going to ring the police; and after they had waited for half an hour, and no-one had arrived, they went voluntarily to the police station and told the police what they had done. They had simply rowed this boat 100 yards up and down two or three times and they were fined a nominal amount in the Children's Court. But the point is that they were sacked from the Railways Department because they had a police court conviction.

Surely to goodness there is no justice in that sort of thing! It was only a boyish prank; no harm was done, and no damage was done; no-one suffered any loss, delay, or inconvenience. But because of that

boyish prank these two lads found themselves without a job. That was the attitude adopted by the department; departmental officers took the view that that was the rule, and they lost their jobs because they had a conviction against them in the police court. Fortunately we took the matter up with the Punishment Appeal Board, and the board had no hesitation about reinstating them.

But that action need not have been necessary. We had to waste the magistrate's time, departmental officers' time—at £2,500 a year—union officers' time—at much less than £2,500 a year—and the advocates' time simply because there was no realistic approach to the handling of staff matters. So I implore the Minister to try to get the Railways Department to adopt a more sensible and humane approach to many of the matters that come before it.

All railwaymen have welcomed the news that there is a likelihood of standardising the gauge in the near future. As railwaymen we have always said that there is a great future in the railways and that they cannot be done without; and many railwaymen have taken great pride—and still do—in their work. But we very much regret the cheeseparating methods that have been adopted in regard to staff. As members know, many railway officers have to transfer from place to place, and over the years may have a great many transfers. They are put to a great deal of inconvenience because of this; and at one time when a transfer was arranged it took place within a very short period. However, now, because of the attitude that has been adopted with regard to staff, we find that a man, say, at Geraldton, who has been appointed to a job at Lake Grace, could have to wait for 18 months before the transfer actually takes place.

It is commonplace for a man to be four, five, or six months waiting for his transfer to take effect; and the average time is nine months before men actually take up their new positions. As the award provides that they are to be paid at the increased rate after three months, in effect they are getting more money while they are not carrying out the higher duties which are involved. But at the same time they have their household goods, furniture, and everything else half packed, waiting for the actual transfer to take effect. As I said, the average waiting time is about eight or nine months.

With the appointment of one or two extra staff this problem could be obviated; and those extra men would not go amiss because they would ensure that the waiting time for transfers would be cut down and men could take up their new positions expeditiously. If that were done the men would be made to feel that they were more a part of the railway service, and that they were not forgotten and left out in the country somewhere.

The appointment of only two or three extra men on relief would overcome many of the difficulties that exist at present. The department has said that if these extra men are appointed there will not be any work for them to do at some time of the year. But it is obvious that the delays in transfers are not slowing down, and there would be ample work for them to do either in effecting transfers or in clearing annual leave.

With the railways, housing is still a great problem and men have to forgo promotion because they cannot get suitable accommodation. This happens time and time again. While some years ago we were getting a few amenities in the railways, at present amenities seem to be non-existent; and men are often left working in most unsuitable places simply because a few pounds cannot be spent on improving their office accommodation.

Mr. Speaker, I do not want to speak for much longer; but I would like to express my appreciation for the tolerance I have been shown this afternoon. I know it is an exceptional circumstance, and it is something I cannot always expect in the future. However, I would like to say, once again, that I am appreciative of the welcome I have received and the way that you have received me this afternoon.

MR. J. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [2.53 p.m.]: I feel I should make a few references to the Speech which His Excellency was pleased to deliver to Parliament. I have read the Speech over and over again; I listened to His Excellency deliver it in another place; other members have quoted from it; and it appears in *Hansard*. But the same thing happened on this occasion as happened last year: that is, there is practically no reference in the Speech to matters of importance to the workers of this country. One would think that the workers of this country were of no concern to the Government when one looks at the legislation that is foreshadowed for this session.

I should like to mention some of the legislation which is to be introduced. The first mentioned in the Governor's Speech is an amendment to the legislation covering judges' salaries and pensions; the second concerns an amendment to the Pig Industry Compensation Act; then come the Fire Brigades Act, and the Bank Holidays Act.

As has been mentioned by several speakers, the Government has shown no indication of its intention to amend the Workers' Compensation Act, which is so important to the workers engaged in industry in this State. Apparently the Government has no desire to bring the Act up to the standard of the legislation in New South Wales. Therefore, I can come to no conclusion other than that the Government is not interested in the workers, particularly from the point of view of