

the details settled. If this is typical of what the Government is doing in carrying out other works departmentally, it is time that we exercised closer supervision.

I hope the Minister will use his influence in Cabinet to ensure that the 232 tons of goods required at Albany and formerly transported by the "Kybra" are still supplied from Perth. Unless the Government is prepared to make concessions, then undoubtedly that trade will go to Adelaide and probably be lost to this State for many years.

I hope the Council for Agriculture will not only make a survey of existing industries but will seek opportunities for the raising of other produce and explore every avenue with a view to reducing local charges wherever possible. Such a step would materially help industry generally.

More stringent regulations are needed under the Traffic Act to govern push cyclists. There has been quite a number of accidents recently in which young children have been killed and injured. My opinion is that in 70 per cent. of the cases the trouble has been due to the negligence of the young people and to the inadequacy of the regulations. Often at main crossings one may see four or five cyclists riding abreast. It is time that stricter conditions were imposed.

I endorse Mr. Bolton's remarks about the use of gas producers. Though the extra charge is made under a strict interpretation of the Act, it is none the less unfair against a man who is endeavouring to meet the position created by the restriction on petrol. After incurring the expense of installing a gas producer, he is charged an extra 10s. or £1 for the additional weight. Yet the owner of a vehicle might instal a couple of extra petrol tanks and thus carry the same additional weight and not be charged for it.

Hon. G. B. Wood: That is only if he puts the gas producer on a trailer.

Hon. A. THOMSON: And it applies to a gas producer installed on a motor car as well. I support the motion. I realise the difficulty of the task confronting the Government, notwithstanding that I have found it necessary to criticise the administration. Much has been said in favour of a national Government, but the Labour Party believes in having a keen Opposition. Were I to offer a little friendly criticism—and, after all, we are entitled to criticise, and to express our opinions—I would say that I hope

some method will be devised whereby we shall be able to improve the outlook for the producing section of the community. I support the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

On motion by the Honorary Minister, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.47 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 14th August, 1940.

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

QUESTION—FREMANTLE MUNICIPAL TRAMWAYS AND ELECTRIC LIGHTING BOARD.

MR. TONKIN asked the Minister for Railways: 1, What is the date of expiry of the agreement made on the 28th January, 1916, between the Government, the Commissioner of Railways and the Fremantle Municipal Tramways and Electric Lighting Board? 2, Has the board notified the Government that it intends to exercise the option of renewal of the agreement in accordance with the provision of Clause 23? 3, Has the Government approved of a renewal of the agreement?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, 26th April, 1942, with the option of renewal for another 25 years, which option has been exercised. 2, Yes. 3, Yes.

QUESTION—AGRICULTURAL BANK.

Policy as to Stock Liens.

MR. PATRICK asked the Minister for Lands: 1, In cases where a farmer has not had assistance from the Agricultural Bank

for seasonal accommodation and his statutory interest has been paid on the due date, has the Bank insisted on his surrendering his wheat certificates as a condition to granting assent to a stock firm willing to make advances on a stock lien? 2, Is this the policy of the Bank?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied. 1, Yes, in cases where finance against stock was obtained by settler pending payment of wheat dividends. Branch managers granted discretionary powers in this connection. 2, Yes, when the client's stock position warranted such action.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Eighth Day.

Debate resumed from the 8th August.

MR. WILSON (Collie) [4.38]: In common with the other members of this Chamber, I attended at the Legislative Council to hear the Lieut.-Governor deliver his Speech. I found that, as usual, our accommodation there was disgraceful. We had to stand behind the Bar—may I say the penitent form?—to hear the Speech, while the public was provided with seats and members of the Upper Chamber were lolling in their easy chairs. Those responsible had not even the decency to provide a seat for our lady member.

Member: Shame!

Mr. WILSON: That state of affairs has been allowed to continue too long; and while I live I shall not go again to be subjected to such inconvenience and indignity. It was an exhibition of bad manners.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. WILSON: It was a travesty of good sense and fair play. I did not listen to the Lieut.-Governor deliver his Speech, but I have read it many times since, more out of courtesy to His Excellency, who I desire to say is one of the best Governors we have had or will have in this State. I read the Speech also out of courtesy to the Premier and the members of the Government. I notice from the Speech that the Governor says there are still thousands of our workers depending for sustenance upon the State. In his Speech, the Lieut.-Governor said that despite the number of men who had enlisted for service in the various forces, 6,000 unemployed are dependent on

the State for sustenance. At this stage of the world's history that should not be so. In my opinion, every person should be given work or allowed to do his bit at the present time. It is up to us to consider what is the root of all this evil. I shall give the answer is just one word—machinery. Until we adapt ourselves to the evolution of machinery we shall always have unemployed workers. Many years ago, in Victoria, I suggested that miners and sewerage employees should work six hours per day. I went so far some years ago as to obtain the assistance of the then Labour Government to secure the passage of a Bill through this House providing for a seven-hours bank to bank working day. The Bill passed through this Chamber and was in due course transmitted to the Upper House; but the members there who loll in their chairs objected to the measure and it was defeated. I remember that many years ago I had the experience of standing for the Federal Parliament. One of the planks in my platform was a six-hours working day for sewerage men and miners. Every paper in Australia got on my track, but only one supported me, and that was the "Bulletin." The "Bulletin" said, in effect, that Wilson was a quarter of a century ahead of his time. That was 33 years ago, and I now consider it time to again introduce it.

The Lieut.-Governor in his Speech also dealt with the manufacture of munitions. The municipality of Collie and the people residing at Collie are alive to the possibility of manufacturing munitions in that district. I shall now read a letter written by Mr. Simpson, the Town Clerk of Collie, to the Under-Secretary for Public Works. It is dated the 23rd July, 1940, and reads as follows:—

As the matter of the manufacture of munitions, armaments, etc., appears to be receiving attention in this State, I have been directed to report that in this area there exist ample supplies of electric power, land and labour considered suitable for this class of employment. If these facts were brought under the notice of those in charge of such developmental work it may be of some help.

Just in passing—I hope I am not rude—I would ask the Deputy-Premier what has become of the report of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the South-West power scheme. Nothing so far has been said about it in this House. Can I get an answer to that question?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member cannot ask questions at this stage.

Mr. WILSON: I take it that the matter has not been shelved.

The Minister for Works: No.

Mr. WILSON: The Under Secretary for Works replied on the 26th July to the letter I have quoted—

I have to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 23rd inst. regarding the manufacture of manitons, etc. Your communication has been passed to the Under Secretary, Premier's Department.

On the 1st August the Town Clerk of Collie wrote to the Under Secretary for Mines as follows:—

It is understood that the production of aluminium from alunite or bauxite is receiving attention with a view to this industry being started in Western Australia.

As there are certain deposits of bauxite within easy distance of Collie, it is thought that if a visit of inspection by the Government Geologist would prove beneficial, it could be arranged.

There are many aspects that support the idea of producing aluminium in this district, and if the above suggested visit can be arranged, it would be appreciated.

I have been informed by the Mayor that this industry is quite within the range of possibility. A committee has been organised to investigate the matter and is endeavouring to help the Minister with a view to getting some of these industries established at Collie. May I give an indication of what this committee is doing? It is known as the South-West Industrial Development Committee and is representative of local governing authorities, chambers of commerce, trade unions and all other organisations in the district. I am a member of the committee, but on account of my Parliamentary duties, am not able to attend often. The committee meets regularly, and its first operations have been directed to making inquiries into mineral resources, the use of coal in relation to iron and steel works, and other activity which it is considered can be profitably developed. Deposits of mica and vermiculite are being tested and, with the co-operation of the Department of Industrial Development, some mica has been placed on the market. The possibility of producing aluminium from bauxite deposits is also receiving attention. Other inquiries are being made into the use of Collie coal for iron smelting. Although the older smelt-

ing processes demand a plentiful supply of good coking coal, the chances of introducing a process operating on brown and similar coals is receiving attention. The question of producing flax has also been raised. I understand that our south-western farmers have planted a good many acres of flax. The production of flax in Australia is important from both the economic and defence points of view. This matter was receiving the attention of the committee, but since then the State, at the request of the Commonwealth Government, has arranged for a number of experimental crops, and these are now being cultivated.

Another proposal receiving consideration is that of the establishment of a textile mill. A provisional directorate has been appointed and preliminary organisation work is now being undertaken. I know a little about textile mills. I was employed in one for six years as a spinner and weaver. That was away back in the early eighties. I was a half-timer, and I say that if similar conditions of employment prevailed to-day, I would suggest that the industry be abandoned. I received 4d. for a half-day and 8d. for a whole day's work, the day consisting of 10½ hours hard work with two breaks of three-quarters of an hour each for meals. Members can imagine for themselves what it was like to work under those conditions. I am pleased to say that at the Albany Woollen Mills the conditions are good. I had a look over the machinery there and found that one of the employees on the spinning-jenny or mule was a man. I asked him what he was receiving per day and he replied that he was getting the basic wage. It was the same kind of job as I had done for 4d. a half-day, or 8d. for a full day—the same old sort of spinning-jenny made by Sir Richard Arkwright. I can only express the hope that we shall never revert to the conditions that existed in my young days, and we can all join in wishing that the committee dealing with this matter will be successful.

I notice in the report of the Railway Department a statement that the quantity of coal imported last year for the main system amounted to 11,127 tons. That coal came from Newcastle, New South Wales, and it could have been produced at Collie. At the

present price, that coal would cost about £23,000, and so we may say that we are sending out of the State £23,000 a year for coal that could be produced at Collie. If Collie coal were used exclusively, that sum would keep 70 additional coal-miners at work at £6 a week. There is no need for the Railway Department to send out of the State for coal, and 70 coal-miners are being kept idle because the department is spending that sum on Newcastle coal. I remember that during the 1914-18 war quite a large sum of money was sent to Newcastle for coal. Ultimately the quantity was reduced from 60,000 tons to about 11,000 tons for the year and it did get down as low as 5,000 tons. During the last three years the railways have been burning more Newcastle coal than was used in the last three years of the 1914-18 war, and so I say that the Railway Department could be more sympathetic to the Collie people. We produce Collie coal at 14s. 2d. a ton, whereas for Newcastle coal we are paying 41s. a ton. That should not be. Newcastle coal is not thrice the value of Collie coal and so, from the standpoint of economy, something is wrong and attention should be given to the matter. Last year this State purchased 13,000-odd tons of Newcastle coal; the year before last 13,000 tons; and then 18,000 tons; and so it went on up to 25,000 tons of Newcastle coal over the years between 1919 and 1939. That should not be. I ask the Minister now to investigate the matter and see whether Collie coal cannot be used exclusively for the running of Western Australian railways, with the sole exception of coal to be used on the Port Hedland line. I appreciate what the Government has done in the matter of road construction. The Government has kept my district going practically as well as it could possibly be, and the Collie men have had a fair share of work. Now, however, things are getting worse. I hope that the Premier on his return will see that more money is given to country districts to keep their roads in good order. In the South-West there are still districts in need of road construction. I tender my best thanks to the Commissioner for Roads and all his staff for their interest in the Collie district.

I do not wish to speak about the war, because that is a job for the Federal Parliament. However, in common with other people here, I regret very deeply the tragic

accident which occurred yesterday near Canberra. That calamity strikes home to me perhaps a little more than to others, as I had, shall I say, the honour of dealing with one of the best men I ever knew, one whom I may describe as the eyes and the brain of the A.I.F.—Sir Brudenell White. I had the honour of serving under him in France, and I think that experience was one of the high lights of my existence. I regret intensely the loss to his family and the loss to the whole of Australia. There is one point I desire to mention in regard to the disbursement of sums collected for trench comforts. If it is at all possible, those moneys for comforts should, I consider, be spent here, and the comforts despatched from this State. We are capable of sending to our soldiers at the front any quantities of products grown here and manufactured here. Western Australia produces biscuits equal to any made in the world. Why not send biscuits for the soldiers from Western Australia instead of from other parts of the Commonwealth? Again, we grow here tobacco and other things required by our soldiers. It would be an advertisement for our boys and an advertisement for Western Australia, as well as money to the Western Australian people, if all those things were grown and made here and despatched from this State. I have noticed that many societies have seen fit to donate ambulances, and perhaps I may be permitted to mention that my friends in the Collie Miners' Union intend to donate an ambulance. Would it not be possible to have that ambulance made here? I consider that it is up to us to see whether that is not possible. Let us make all our gifts something homely. I am sure that an ambulance constructed here would bear comparison with anything made in the Old Country. I trust that the various societies will endeavour to operate in the direction I have indicated. I greatly regret having to refer to an incident which has occurred in my district and which affects a Western Australian soldier. I went down one morning to see a trainload of recruits who were coming from Bunbury to Collie. Being told that one of the boys had had his arm nearly cut off on the Brunswick railway station, I made investigations and discovered that the injured boy lived not far from me. I shall give the result of my efforts on his

behalf so far as I know it. It was not my intention to bring this matter up without first consulting the Defence Department. Accordingly, to-day I rang up Brigadier-General Durrant, but was told—and I believe quite truly—that he was engaged in a conference with the naval authorities. Let me say just here that the officer I spoke with treated me most nicely and civilly. I could wish for no better treatment. He told me that unfortunately the case I mentioned did not come before the department, but that if I rang through to Captain Brockman, to whom he would put me on direct, I would be able to obtain information. I got through to the captain, who was all kindness and courtesy, but said, "I am afraid I cannot help you." Eventually he said, "I will put you on to Major Munroe." Then I told the major about the case, of which he said he had knowledge. I asked, "What can be done?" The reply was, "I am afraid nothing more can be done. We have certain regulations to work under, and I am afraid I cannot do any more." Thereupon I said, "I have had some little experience of being up before the military authorities, and I know that any man charged with an offence gets a copy of the charges. Thus he knows what he has to defend himself against. But this boy was not given a copy of the charges." The major repeated, "I am afraid I can do nothing." That is where the matter stands. I shall presently read the whole of my letter dealing with the subject. Before sending that letter I spoke to Mr. Benson, Secretary of the R.S.L., and also saw Mr. Ferguson. All the help I could get from the R.S.L. officers was a promise that they would do what they could. I say, "God help the boy!" The case should have been under the control of a board. The old fellows of the first A.I.F. League would not mind those other fellows doing good work for the new A.I.F. that is to be. So far as I am aware, until I saw him in the hospital, no R.S.L. man had interviewed him. That should not be. Here are the particulars of the case as I set them out in a letter to Mr. Benson:—

The case of John Henderson, of Collie: I visited the Perth Hospital at 2.15 p.m. on Monday, 24th June, and interviewed John Henderson. He was accommodated in No. 10 ward and gave me some particulars regarding his claim for compensation for injuries received whilst he was a member of the military en-

listed quotas. He left Collie on the 1st February, approximately, on the train that conveyed over 100 men from Collie via Brunswick and Perth to Northam. All were mostly young men and were very excited when leaving their parents and families in their home town. Henderson and his elder brother enlisted at Collie for service. When the train arrived at Brunswick Junction they had to alight there to enter train for Perth by the Bunbury train which had to pick them up. Under orders the men were allowed one liquid refreshment only. He believed that was carried out right through.

This is his statement: "I got in the train at Brunswick and afterwards found out that I was in the wrong compartment. My brother told me so. We did not have any scuffle, but as I was hastening out I slipped, through having new soles on my boots, and my arm shot through the window. They gave me first aid and took me to the hospital at Harvey. Next day I was taken to the hospital at Claremont, and stayed there until the 29th April, when they took me to Perth Hospital. I was put in No. 11 ward and afterwards sent to No. 10 ward, and I am still there."

His injuries are: Little finger completely removed from his right hand. Thumb of right hand has been affected with dry gangrene, and probably will have to be removed. His right arm is wasted; the arteries and sinews are practically gone. He was told he would get compensation. Some time ago he was shown a form as under—

Australian Military Forces—Western Command, 44th Bn., Claremont, 3rd May, 1940.

Pte. T. Henderson,
Perth Hospital.

Compensation Claim.

A compensation claim has been made out up to the 2nd May. You are instructed to make your usual cross as a claimant and to return this form to 44th Bn. Headquarters immediately.

(Sgd.) J. CUNNINGHAM
for J. McNamara, Lieut. A.I.C.,
Asst. Adj. and Qmstr., 44th Bn.

He put his cross to it and was then told to go to Claremont for his money. He went to Claremont and was told there was no money for him, and they sent him to James-street, where he was told the same story. He says, "Now I am stranded and left neglected and I am faced with hospital expenses all through."

To-day Henderson is about 22 years of age; at the time of this occurrence he was twenty-one and a half years old. The boy assisted to support his father and mother and the remainder of the family. Now he is at Fremantle where he is receiving medical attention. His people interviewed me and spoke about his position. I subsequently went to see him. During the time he

was in hospital, an officer visited him with a form, which he was asked to sign. This is what the form contained—

Australian Military Forces—Western Command, 44th Bn., Claremont, 3rd May, 1940. Pte. T. Henderson, Perth Hospital. Compensation Claim: A compensation claim has been made out, up to the 2nd May. You are instructed to make your usual cross as a claimant and to return this form to 44th Bn. Headquarters immediately. (Sgd.) J. Cunningham, for J. McNamara, Lieut. A., Assist. Adj. and Quartermaster, 44th Bn.

Henderson told me that he signed the form; but when he went to collect the money at Claremont, he was informed there was nothing for him there, and that he should go to headquarters at Francis-street. He did so and was told that there was no money for him at headquarters. That is the position now. When he was moved from Ward 11 to Ward 10 at the Perth Hospital, Henderson was practically told that he would have to pay his own expenses. I do not know the meaning of the provision in the Workers' Compensation Act that a man who is in employment should not receive any payment. True, the young man broke the window, but would that be considered a serious crime in the army? If the lad did it wilfully, he would deserve all that he got, but the window was broken accidentally, and now he is maimed for life with no chance of securing redress. I spoke to Mr. Benson, the State Secretary of the Returned Sailors and Soldiers' Imperial League of Australia, and discussed the matter with him. I furnished him with a copy of the letter I have just quoted. After a week or so I tried to hurry up Mr. Benson and in a note to me he said he anticipated receiving a reply in a day or two. After a short time I did receive a reply, which I shall read to the House. In the course of the reply Mr. Benson quoted an excerpt from the letter sent to him. I have been wondering what was in that letter, seeing that he sent me merely an extract from it. The letter mentions nothing about the charge, nor does it set out why Henderson received no compensation. The letter was as follows—

Anzac House, Perth, 2nd August, 1940. Dear Sir,—Re Tom Henderson, Collie. Further to my letter of the 29th ult., I now show hereunder copy of a communication received by me from the 13th Infantry Brigade.

I shall also read to the House what the military authorities sent to Mr. Benson, ac-

cording to the extract sent by him to me. It was as follows—

Your several letters on this subject have been referred to Headquarters, Western Command. I am now directed to inform you that the matter has been investigated and Headquarters Western Command have ruled that, in the circumstances of the injury, no claim for compensation can be admitted.

There was no signature shown to the extract from the communication from the Commonwealth military authorities. I want to know what charges have been levelled against the lad. Surely it is merely fair to Henderson to have some information on that matter, seeing that he has lost the means by which he could earn his living. I shall not weary the House by enlarging further on the matter, except to say that, for my part, the case will not be dropped at this stage. I hope those members of this House who are on the State Executive of the R.S.L., and other members too, will help me in this matter. Surely help could be provided from one or other of the patriotic funds to tide the lad over the period that will elapse before he can secure some compensation.

Mr. Lambert: They could help a lot more than that.

Mr. WILSON: That is so, but even that assistance would be of advantage. I do not know of any worse case than that I have cited. Here is a young man, 22 years of age, with one finger amputated and his arm in a wasted condition that will remain in that state for life. I suggest that those in charge of the War Patriotic Fund, or some other appropriate fund, should get into touch with me and interest themselves in young Henderson. In the meantime, I and others who I hope will assist me, will see what can be done. I do not believe that General Durrant knew anything about this matter, or that he knows anything about it now. I believe the military officers did their best, but they should have given the lad a chance before his accusers, if he had said anything that was untrue. I again ask for the assistance of members of the executive of the R.S.L. and other members as well in an endeavour to secure justice for this young man and some hope for his earning a living in the years to come.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne) [5.8]: I regret that the Leader of the Opposition is tem-

porarily out of his seat because it is my intention, on behalf of the Premier, to deal with a few points the hon. member made in the course of his remarks. I did not have the privilege of listening to the speeches last week, but I have taken an opportunity to read the contributions made by members from both sides of the House. The speeches delivered last week and previously, furnish, in my opinion, a complete answer to the query as to the value and, indeed, the necessity for the Address-in-reply debate. I refer not only to the splendid effort of the member for Pilbara (Mr. W. Hegney), who moved the adoption of the Address, but to the excellent contributions of the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Tonkin) and the member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Triat). I was also very much impressed by the speech of the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe (Mr. F. C. L. Smith), which seemed to me to be one of the most thoughtful contributions we have listened to in this Chamber for quite a long time. There will be other matters to which I shall particularly refer at a later stage, but first of all I wish to touch upon a few points made by members of the Country Party. I will deal with statements by the Leader of the Opposition, regarding which some corrections are necessary or perhaps some further information should be given. With reference to the erection of hutments on the land opposite the Technical College, the hon. member said that the work had been hung up because agreement could not be reached between the Federal and State Governments. The facts are that the Federal Government never directly approached the State Government regarding the use of the land. Negotiations took place between the Federal Government and the State Parks and Gardens Board, in whose authority the land in question is vested. There was never at any stage any doubt whatever about the land being made available. The work has gone ahead from the inception without any interruption for the reason suggested.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Who are the members of the Parks and Gardens Board, if they are not officers of the Government?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: They constitute, as the hon. member knows, an authority set up by the Government to carry on a number of particular functions.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Yes, but who are they?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The board is an authority with whom it is competent for any other authority, State or Federal, to make contact. That is what happened in the instance referred to by the Leader of the Opposition. The required accommodation has been provided, and at no time has any complaint been made by the Commonwealth Government or the Defence Department respecting any delay in the matter. Negotiations regarding rentals are still in progress, I understand, so that matter has not yet been finalised. Another point raised by the Leader of the Opposition was that he wanted to know what the Government was doing with an amount of £15,000 that the Commonwealth Government announced on the 13th July it would make available to the State for the purchase of equipment for technical training. That money has not yet been received, but nevertheless the Technical College is going ahead with the purchase of the equipment, and possibly members noticed advertisements that appeared in the Press in which reference was made to certain of the equipment considered necessary.

Mr. J. Hegney: I understand that the £15,000 is by way of loan and does not represent money made available to the State.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We are hoping that it will be made available to the State.

Hon. C. G. Latham: There was nothing to indicate that it was merely a loan?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We anticipate that the money will not be merely a loan, but it may be that the advance will be granted with certain conditions attached. At any rate, we certainly do hope that the money will be made available to the State. The Leader of the Opposition made another point when he said he understood many men had resigned from the Railway Department rather than, when their war service was ended, return to the department and be loaded with arrears of superannuation payments which they had been told they would have to provide. The hon. member further stated that the railway authorities had informed him that if men who had enlisted returned to the department when their war service was over, they would be charged with the arrears due to the Superannuation Board. The Leader of the Opposition told the House that he was giving Ministers in-

formation about something of which they were not aware. That is quite true, because the hon. member told Ministers something incorrect. The position is that on the 6th October last a circular was issued to all Government departments by the Public Service Commissioner, setting out conditions that would apply to Government employees who enlisted in the military, naval or air forces. Upon further consideration, the circumstances and conditions were amplified and an additional circular was issued in December. That circular made it quite clear that the Government would pay superannuation contributions of all permanent Government employees enlisting for active service with the various forces, while those employees were on leave without pay.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Permanent officials?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, and full publicity has been given to those conditions. For those who are qualified to come within the ambit of superannuation the Government has contracted to make those payments, as has been fully set out in the circulars which have been issued to all Government departments. If the Leader of the Opposition desires to have full details, I have no doubt the circulars would be available to him. I did not originally desire to refer to those matters, but I have done so in order to provide answers to erroneous statements that were made.

My purpose is to address my remarks mainly to the position of rural industries in this State, the effect of the war upon those industries, the serious position confronting many sections of them, and also how our export activities are bound up with those of the Commonwealth. A time like the present brings home to us the fact that agriculture is the first of our national industries. There are times when the value of agriculture to Australia is overlooked and when this industry is relegated to the background as being something not of major importance. Every day, however, there is being forced upon us the fact that the surplus food available within the Empire is one of the greatest needs of the United Kingdom in its present war effort. The daily increasing difficulty of getting those surpluses to the United Kingdom is causing great concern. Previous to the war the Australian Agricultural Council took stock of Australia's rural activities. That

council is composed of the Federal Minister for Commerce as chairman, and the Minister for Agriculture of each State or his representative. It is noteworthy that the members of the council include men who have served on it continuously for eight years, five members having some personal interest in farming matters. Quite apart from the administrative side, therefore, the council is composed of men with considerable practical knowledge of the industry. The survey made before the war gave each Australian State an opportunity to assess what industries should be encouraged and stimulated. It gave us also an idea what industries should not be encouraged and also those that should be wholly discouraged. The inquiries were made with a full knowledge of world markets and conditions; of the availability of foodstuffs in every country of the world; and of the effect of trade treaties, the policy of self-sufficiency, and such things as most favoured nation treaty clauses, many of which have contributed considerably to the cause of war. We were aware that when a new trade agreement was made with continental countries there was some military significance attached. In the general survey to determine which agricultural industries might best be encouraged, all those factors received consideration. We knew the reasons why Great Britain could not, in some instances, give preference to its own dominions and colonies. There are many people who have spoken in serious terms of the neglect to admit the responsibility of Great Britain to absorb some of the many foodstuffs produced in the dominions. Have we not heard it said that the Argentine has had preference over us in regard to meat contracts? Have we not heard it said that Turkey has received preference over Australia in regard to certain dried fruits? We know that that is so, but these matters are very involved and such preference, because of the international conditions then obtaining, was necessary.

Because of the knowledge possessed by the Australian Agricultural Council, all the States that were alive to their responsibilities were able to foster certain agricultural pursuits. The growth of the pig and bacon industry in this State is an outstanding result of the examination that was made. I do not know whether hon. members are

aware that this Government took advantage of the position and did its utmost to encourage that industry, with the result that in the last three years its growth has been remarkable. In 1937-38 Western Australia produced 820,000 lbs. of pork products. In 1939-40 it produced 5,700,000 lbs., and this year, if the right thing is done in regard to the release of wheat suitable for the pig industry, I think it will exceed 10,000,000 lbs. This is one of the direct benefits of the survey of industry that was made by the council. I could mention others. There have been other reactions. Unfortunately, one State—Victoria—spent millions in constructing the Hume Reservoir with the object of irrigating a lot more of the areas adjacent to the Murray River. So far the reservoir has not been used for that purpose because it was found that to produce the crops for which the water was intended was not an economic possibility.

All these matters have been looked into with the idea of endeavouring to diversify the agricultural activities in the various States. The survey was made under pre-war circumstances. War has not only created the difficulties that were outlined to this House by the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Tonkin), but it has also made the circumstances of our rural industries intensely difficult. Pre-war planning might be of very little use for application in the post-war period. Not one of us can anticipate from day to day for exactly what commodities there will be a demand, or for what goods there will be no room in the ships available for transport. Circumstances change from day to day. The closure of the Baltic, the over-running of Denmark, and the occupation of France, for example, have not only completely altered the outlook of the British Ministry of Food, but they have also changed the outlook with regard to every country with which England had made war contracts. It may be news to hon. members that while the collapse of France was a staggering blow from the military and naval point of view, it was also a staggering blow from the viewpoint of the Ministry of Food. There were cargoes of wheat en route for continental ports that were diverted to America. There were also cargoes of wool intended for Great Britain which have gone to America, and the whole plan of victualling

the United Kingdom has had to be remodelled in the light of the collapse of France. Many people are pleased even at this stage to treat post-war planning very lightly and airily, but he would be a very wise man indeed who could formulate a basis on which to begin such planning. While the subject should receive the utmost consideration, and while we should endeavour to evolve every possible method of maintaining production, and finding some outlet for our products, it is difficult to establish a starting point. What sound guide have we to the future of markets? We only know that if, after this conflict is over, we remain an integral part of the British Empire with our standards and methods intact, we will be more than ever dependent upon overseas trade for our very existence. Our sovereignty will depend on the goods we are able to sell to consumers in other parts of the world. Thus we become absolutely implicated in any trade treaty or agreement made between Great Britain and any other country or between Great Britain and any of her dominions.

One great difficulty has always existed with regard to negotiations for trade treaties and in the matter of tariff impositions and the like as between Great Britain, Australia and other parts of the Empire. I doubt if there is anyone present who could advise the House of the constitutional differences between the United Kingdom and its dominions and colonies. Australia has the right—we might think the privilege—of imposing tariffs at her own free will; but there is no such right in respect of some of the mandated territories. Some of the Colonies of the Empire are exceedingly circumscribed in regard to the action they may take in the matter of tariffs, free trade or protective measures of any sort. So that within the Empire trade arrangements were very involved in peace time. When war occurred Great Britain demanded a guarantee of supplies from her Colonies and Dominions. She sought every exportable commodity that had any war significance at all. Australia was very fortunate in that we—and by “we” I mean the representatives of the States and the Commonwealth—had been examining the position of our agricultural industries for some years. We knew where certain food-stuffs were obtainable and in what quantities and we knew which States could best produce certain commodities and which could most profitably supply them.

The ex-Minister for Commerce, after the finalisation of the first war contracts, set out very clearly in a statement he made the work involved in leading up to the clinching of the first war contracts with Great Britain. He laid great stress on the availability of shipping and the capacity of England to hold perishable commodities, particularly refrigerated commodities. It must be remembered that when the negotiations were proceeding, the seven seas were open to all traffic. We not merely had our own mercantile fleet, but we had all the mercantile fleet of the great seafaring nations such as Norway, Holland, etc. Things have now changed. The anticipations of shipping have fallen short to a tremendous extent of even the most pessimistic view of what would be available. In that sense, Australia has been materially affected, greatly to her disadvantage. We have now reached the position when England gives Australia very great concern by suggesting that she might have to refuse to take this or that commodity, or relegate this or that to the bottom of the priority list. The position concerning refrigerated space likely to be available to Australia is so serious that we as a Government have taken special precautions, and made special requests to the Department of Commerce to guarantee the lifting of our fat lambs, as one instance. We are on such excellent terms with the Department of Commerce—I say that without fear of contradiction—that it is prepared to divert shipping to Western Australia on its way from the United Kingdom to the Eastern States, if we receive a pressure more than our refrigerated space can bear. That is considered to be, and it is, a very great concession. The Eastern States are likely to have to spend millions on hurriedly constructed refrigerated space through being unable to hold all the meat that represents the invisible supplies and all the other products for which England at the moment can find no accommodation. The refrigerated space of the United Kingdom to-day is bulging with refrigerated foodstuffs. There is, in these few words, an example of the difficulties of one class of shipping and the stagnation that can be caused in Australia's markets if something we have contracted for, that is, a perishable commodity, is suddenly left entirely on our hands. That position is likely to arise. The Marketing Boards, which have been set up in Australia and

which in common with all other authorities have received a measure of criticism, have assisted in short-cutting the negotiations that have taken place. I think they have been responsible to a very great extent for clinching certain war contracts for foodstuffs. The history of the arrangements in regard to wool is well known to members. In spite of all the complaints concerning whether one person was in the first or the last assessment, I think we are in a very fortunate position in that we have the guarantee of the United Kingdom Government to take at a payable price all Australia's wool for the duration of the war.

In regard to wheat, the contracts for last year were, I think, the best that could have been thought possible when a year ago wheat was a little over 1s. a bushel in this State. We were fortunate in Western Australia in that the first of the wheat contracts involved the clearing from this State of 200,000 tons of old wheat—wheat of the year before. The first contract involved the clearance from this State of that quantity. The milling records throughout Australia have reached big figures. There has been a greater milling of wheat in Australia in the last 12 months than has ever taken place before. That encouragement and stimulation have been due to the desire to save space, and to ensure space for certain portions of eastern countries where it is possible that flour will be an army requirement. One would think, particularly members of the Country Party who know the tremendous demand for milling offal, that these are commodities which should have been cheaper to-day in view of the tremendous milling operations. These commodities, however, have not only been expensive to procure, but they have been scarce. The underlying reason is something that I think has never been publicly disclosed, namely, the huge contracts for milling offal, bran and pollard, that were made with the New Zealand Government.

In the event of members not being aware of the magnitude of last year's contracts, I will give the figures to the House. The total export value of the goods concerned in last year's war contracts was £100,000,000 Australian. The details are as follows:—

	£
Wool	54,000,000
Butter	13,580,000
Cheese	1,240,000
Eggs	600,000

	£
Beef and veal	4,500,000
Mutton	680,000
Lambs	5,000,000
Pork	1,250,000
Edible offal	380,000
Sugar	6,100,000
Lead	3,000,000
Zinc	810,000
Copper	380,000
Dried fruits	1,700,000
Canned fruits	1,100,000
Wheat	8,000,000

There was an endeavour to effect a renewal of all these contracts. Some of them have been very disappointing and others very encouraging. For example, the United Kingdom asked the Commonwealth of Australia whether 20,000 tons of cheese was all that could be supplied. When, however, two months ago we tried to sell an additional 15,000 tons of butter to England, she could not offer us any prospects. Things have changed again. Great Britain is prepared to take all the butter that Australia can supply, and to renew, possibly with an appreciation in price, contracts for all pork and pork products. I have the details of all these contracts, the prices for each class of every commodity, and if any member would like to have access to them I shall be only too pleased to make them available.

I have shown how the position varied from day to day. I have two communications which give a complete indication of what a very slim hold we have in respect to some of these commodities. For example, in a letter dated the 26th July—only a few days ago—that I received from Canberra, the full details of the dried fruits contract were given to me, each particular grade of each variety the Old Country had contracted to take being specified, and the total being 50,500 tons. I have also particulars of the canned fruit contracts which were sent from Canberra on the 26th July, giving the prices for all canned fruits that Great Britain desired Australia to send. There is set out all the arrangements for the carrying out of contracts, and indicating that there were 644,000 cases of our fruits in the United Kingdom, and 126,000 cases the shipment of which that country was anxiously awaiting. On the 1st August, when most of the contracts were finalised, not merely were some of these items shifted from the list of priority, but we could not get an assurance that canned fruits would

be taken. Great Britain has made a statement to the Department of Commerce that there is little or no prospect of her lifting the quantities of canned fruits that have been ordered from Australia. The effect on the Murray River, Renmark and other districts can well be imagined.

Hon. C. G. Latham: There should be a good market for dried fruits.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Some of these fruits will not dry. Certain varieties of pears, for instance, will not dehydrate. One would think that fruit in cans would not only find a war market, but a constant market. Commodities that can be moved from place to place in containers are easily handled. The reply of the United Kingdom, however, is that it does not want shipping space between Australia and England occupied by tin plate and water. However, the Old Country guarantees to take the whole of Australia's dried fruits output. That is of very great importance to this State, and, as the total of the contract last year was £1,700,000, it is of great importance to Australia generally. Because of the circumstances obtaining in connection with concentrated foods, England is spending a tremendous sum at present in investigating nutrition standards. She is prepared to alter her contracts at a minute's notice if it can be shown that cheese or any other commodity is superior pound for pound or space for space to any other commodity which at present is in equal demand. She is prepared to investigate from the point of view of rationing all food not merely to the army, but to the whole population. When the contracts were finalised for this year the Secretary of the Department of Commerce communicated with me by telephone. We had a long conversation, in the course of which he outlined the whole of the food contracts which had been completed, completed with the proviso that they were likely to be amended and altered according to the circumstances of the war position. When alterations to contracts are made it may only mean that delivery is suspended until there is available that type of ship which is required for the shipment of that commodity. The availability of shipping is not the only difficulty in that connection. There is the port of discharge, and the availability of ports in England is one of the major worries of the moment. We have

read what is happening in regard to the eastern ports of England. Some papers advance the theory that very little shipping is going in there. They stress the point that the western ports are still open, but whatever may be the position now it may be seriously altered from day to day. So it does not matter whether it be a refrigerated commodity or a commodity to be stored, the position is always very difficult in regard to dispatch. Great Britain is prepared to guarantee to take, as far as shipping space is available, all that we can supply in the way of eggs, butter, condensed milk, dried fruits, and pig and pork products. Britain will take yearly 20,000 tons of these commodities, and more if available, for the duration of the war. The position in respect to wheat is rather obscure, but it is definite—and this will shock some hon. members—that Britain, until the middle of next year, will not be able to lift all the wheat it has contracted to take. This means that a very large proportion of Australia's last harvest will still be in Australia in the middle of next year.

The meat position is somewhat difficult because of seasonal circumstances in the Eastern States. Although 240,000 tons were contracted for, actually 268,000 tons passed through the meat works since the contract was made, and that, coupled with the point I have just referred to, the pressure on refrigerated space in England, as I have said, renders the position difficult, not only for the meat works and the operatives, but also for the growers of the cattle and the employees at the wharves. Still, we are expected to have available at least 268,000 tons in store in Australia. The Minister for Food in Britain is not prepared to commit the United Kingdom to any expansion of contracts, although he has guaranteed to take the commodities I have enumerated, and in the quantities set out. So that it may be the responsibility of the Commonwealth as well as of the States to hold these commodities until a suitable opportunity arrives to dispatch them overseas.

The position of the apple and pear industry in Australia is very serious indeed. In normal times the apple and pear export needs 14,000,000 cubic feet of refrigerated space, and not any of that, so far as we know, is at present likely to be available. This will mean that Australia, with its production of 13,000,000 bushels of apples and pears—the consumption is 6,000,000 bushels

—will have the staggering task of coping with the chaotic conditions that must arise in this industry. Unfortunately, the greatest stimulus which we could possibly contemplate would not increase Australia's consumption by more than one million bushels. The position is seriously involved, because some of the States are not situated as is Western Australia. Tasmania and Western Australia particularly derive a tremendous income from the export of apples and pears; the other States are in the position of being importers. New South Wales does not care twopence whether Western Australia perishes as far as the fruit industry is concerned. That unfortunately is the attitude adopted by New South Wales Ministers. I assure members that those Ministers were told certain things regarding their attitude on the question of secondary industries in other parts of Australia. They were not prepared to help either Western Australia or Tasmania. Western Australia has a prospective export of one million bushels and Tasmania two and a half million bushels of apples, and it was hoped, too, to frame a scheme on an Australia-wide basis. We hear the cry from some people who do not go into the matter very deeply, "Let us have cheaper fruit." There are tremendous sums involved already in the production of current crops, and the industry, as I have mentioned, lives on an export market. I am hoping, as an outcome of the recent conference in Sydney and the submission of our case, that we shall be able to arrive at a better understanding and that we may at least secure a return that will cover the cost of production. If we can do no better than that, we shall have done something to tide the industry over until better conditions return. That is what Western Australia has been fighting for. Different States have different points of view, not merely the point of view of production but production per acre, and yield. Queensland produces only 73 bushels of the fruit per acre whilst Western Australia produces 129 bushels per acre. New South Wales produces an average of 95 bushels per acre, and that State is an importing State. It is not very concerned about the industry, and we know that its first varieties are inferior to many of our second varieties. But it can get a price which is far in excess of the price we expected to obtain from the English or any Continental market. We

had hoped to increase our export because of the shutting out of certain American varieties. So I repeat that the position of the apple and pear industry is very serious. We have endeavoured to reach an agreement; we have put up our proposals, which are fair and which will not adversely affect any one State as against another. So far, however, they have been unacceptable to the more populated Eastern States. The whole scheme was submitted to the Agricultural Council in Sydney at yesterday's meeting, but I do not intend to weary members with further details at this stage, because it is a subject which would probably take an hour and a half to present adequately. Unfortunately, up to the present I do not think an agreement has been reached, because of the attitude of New South Wales.

Mr. Patrick: Victoria ships apples, I think.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Victoria has an oversea export of 610,000 cases. The attitude of New South Wales is really trivial, especially when we remember that its rural industries represent only a small proportion of its total income. In one respect New South Wales, judged by its attitude, would see the other States of Australia fall into a condition of bankruptcy.

Mr. Stubbs: A dog-in-the-manger policy!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have given members an idea of Great Britain's difficulty as to an assurance concerning the market from month to month, let alone from year to year. In any request being made by Britain, a great duty devolves on the Dominion administrations in respect of endeavouring to supplement Britain's war effort and to provide war essentials. Thus the Dominions in good faith are stimulating the production of a commodity which might not be an economical production after the war. Western Australia has this difficult position to face. We can expect that where Great Britain is exercising pressure within her own Empire regarding the making available of certain commodities, she can give no guarantee of post-war purchases, and so at the risk of over-production, we must at this stage make a decision in favour of the Empire's present requirements.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: It is our duty to do so.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The member for Subiaco states it is our duty to do so. I feel it is so, but a little later I shall relate to the House what we have endeavoured to do, realising that when the war is over we might not have all the space available for the commodities the production of which we are at the moment endeavouring to stimulate. It is obvious that with regard to some commodities, if we survey them in a world sense, Australia will be hard-pressed to produce them economically under post-war conditions. The co-operation between the States and the Commonwealth in the matter of marketing commodities has up to the present been cordial. We have even endeavoured to anticipate any possible darkness arising out of the possibility of the United Kingdom being overrun and the Government being transferred to Canada, and so we have responded to the request for the provision of war requirements, particularly foodstuffs, for the troops and particularly those in the Near East. Our contracts include all requirements for the Near East troops. Definite pressure is being exerted by the Ministry of Food in London in the direction of the production of some of those commodities, and having regard to our geographical position we may have an opportunity of rendering a great service to the Empire in its terrific struggle for existence. No one can say how long the war will continue. No one can suggest what kind of post-war troubles we may have to meet. Who can imagine what peace terms may be dictated? Who can suggest what the trading policies will be? Who can say whether Empire preference will be dominant or might have to be wholly relaxed? I mention those difficulties not in an aggressive spirit, but to suggest to those who talk lightly and insist on a policy and its declaration at this stage, some of the difficulties that lie in the way. We are denied any long vision with respect to any markets. Any member who has studied Empire stocktaking in pre-war times will realise the difficulties that lie in trade agreements between Dominions in peace time. What will the difficulties be in a post-war period? At present we are in possession of an Empire in which during every month there is a harvest somewhere. There is not a commodity which can be mentioned, whether a necessity or a

luxury, that the British Empire does not produce in almost sufficient quantities for the Empire. Even in peace time we have extreme difficulty in finding markets for the many commodities Australia produces. Some of those commodities Australia is peculiarly adapted to produce, and in some districts of the Commonwealth they can be produced in great abundance. Those are some of our difficulties. Although we have from time to time taken stock of Australia's rural prospects, we know more at this moment of Australia's capacity to produce any given commodity than we did at any other stage in our history. But it is still extremely difficult, in the light of present circumstances, to anticipate markets or to plan for markets. I have on my desk perhaps the best collection of agricultural statistics that has ever been put up in one small volume. Any member who is curious enough to ask the number of operatives or workmen in any rural industry in Australia can be furnished with that information by me. If he desires to know the price of baconers in the month of June, 1936, in Sydney or in Perth, I can tell him. If he desires to know the number of beehives in Australia, he can be told. We are armed at this stage, following years of examination and study, with the best collection of information on this subject that we have ever had. I do not know whether it is put up in this manner in other States. The book is my private copy, but I have placed a copy on record in the library of the Department of Agriculture.

Mr. McLarty: Is it compiled by your own department?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Much of it was compiled by me personally. For the purpose of getting a proper perspective of any possible expansion of any rural industry, no matter how remote that possibility, this information was garnered. Australia has taken stock, and Western Australia has recently had submitted to it by my colleague, the Minister for Industrial Development, just what we can anticipate and what particular commodities we can specialise in or substantially stimulate. The dairying industry is an outstanding example. Its record, despite all that can be said respecting the wisdom of group settlements or the settlement of the South-West, or the cost of clearing—which should have been borne by ten generations, not one—is a circumstance

of importance in the rural life of this State. The industry started in 1922. We have thousands of acres in a 30in. to 50in. rainfall, virgin, unalienated land which ultimately will be developed for the dairying industry.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Including thousands of acres of alienated land.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. There are extremely large areas of alienated land in excellent districts which, if developed, would give a fillip to the dairying industry and increase it 30 per cent.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have recently perused legislation on our statute-book relating to the enforcement of development of that class of country. In my opinion, Western Australia should make a desperate attempt to ensure that land at present alienated but not put to use should no longer remain idle because it belongs to this or the other person. In travelling between Perth and Bunbury, one notices large areas of undeveloped land superior to land which has been cleared and developed 200 miles from the capital city. This House should take steps to ensure that we effectively occupy, or force the effective occupation of, some of that territory.

Mr. Sampson: The House is very anxious to do that.

Mr. Marshall: It is still very necessary.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I agree with the member for Murchison. We should again attempt it.

Mr. Sampson: We never really started on it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There is nothing to halt the progress of the dairying industry. Although we expect to produce 1,500,000 lbs. of butter this year, we could, by 1943, produce 7,000,000 lbs. What a great counter that would be to allegations of lack of occupation of this territory! The dairying industry is a great employing industry. It holds a big population wherever it is carried on. The number of operatives engaged in the industry in each of the States is tremendous. I have the figures here—there are 163,000 workers permanently employed in the dairying industry of Australia. In this State we could increase not merely our exportable wealth, but we could secure a more effective occupation of our territory,

more thriving towns and a better community. But we must insist upon the better utilisation of land at present unoccupied.

Mr. Marshall: Did you say there were 163,000 people engaged in the industry?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes.

Mr. Marshall: But the industry is maintaining a much bigger number than that.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Certainly. That is the number permanently working in the industry.

Mr. Hill: Is there a guaranteed price for butter fats?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: For the duration of the war Australia can export all it can possibly produce. If we consult Australia's records, although there has been tremendous manipulation of prices and imposition upon the consuming public of Australia, the dairying industry can to-day be said to be in an extremely healthy state.

Mr. Doney: Do you attach much importance to the margarine question?

Mr. Lambert: A sum of £6,000,000 has been spent on the establishment of the dairying industry.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That has always been the contention of the hon. member and I sharply disagree with it. Whatever the amount, it cannot all be allocated to the cost of establishing the dairying industry. Whatever the amount may be that is involved in group settlement, it is my firm view that the money will ultimately prove to be, if it has not already proved to be, an investment for the State.

Members: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The world position of fats and oils is a subject well worth the study of any person interested in the dairying industry. He should trace the development of substitutes for butter, the demand for such substitutes—always in war time—and the fact of war competition, because it is alleged that such substitutes masquerade as butter. Four years ago I endeavoured to get the States of Australia to agree to pegging the production of margarine at a certain figure, but the big dairying interests in Victoria and New South Wales would not agree. Since then consumption of margarine in Victoria has doubled; it has reached 35 tons per week. The best thing we can do is to fix a quota and so restrict the manufacture and distribution of margarine for table use to a quantity not greater than Australia's existing production. For

export, I have no objection. That is an entirely different matter. If we can manufacture margarine in Australia to compete with other countries, that is to Australia's advantage.

Mr. Lambert: Tell us what is wrong with wholesome margarine?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am not prepared to debate that point with the hon. member at the moment. Sir David Rivett, when asked that question, declined to answer it, because he felt he had some obligation to protect the dairying interests of Australia.

Mr. Lambert: Because he could not reply.

Mr. Holman: It was because he felt his obligation to the producers of Australia, and to the producers of Western Australia in particular.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I recommend any member who has skirmished and laboured around the outside of this subject to make a study of it. Involved in it is the world position with regard to fats and oils.

Mr. Lambert: Margarine has always had a big sale in England.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The trade runs into hundreds of millions of pounds. It involves substances from whale oil, peanut oil and cotton seed oil. It involves animal fats and any fatty substance which can be coagulated or held together. Whale oil has been a most important component of margarine during recent years. Its food value, its calorific value, is very little inferior to that of butter. Therefore I say that Sir David Rivett's reason for not replying to the direct question which has been asked by an hon. member is right.

Mr. Lambert: He did not wish to reply.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: This is one of the industries to which we can look for great expansion. The pig and bacon industry presents a tremendous scope. I have had an argument with the chairman of the Australian Wheat Board on the question of the supply of wheat at a price reasonable to the wheatgrower. I do not know whether he is offended, but if so I cannot help it. My idea was that we should not limit or restrict the pig production of Western Australia, but so far my pleadings have been in vain. The Australian Wheat Board is not interested. The board said it refused to help an industry against the wheat industry. My answer was that every consumer in Australia had made some contribution in recent years

to the wheat industry, and that if an opportunity existed for the distribution of surplus wheat we should take advantage of it, particularly if the ultimate result was the building up of another industry.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I was dealing with the primary industries of the State which recently have been subjected to a very complete review, and more particularly was I mentioning the scope for pig and pig-products in our rural economy. Until the pig marketing arrangements were organised in England, the interest in pigs in Western Australia or in any other Australian State fluctuated with the cost of the primary commodities used in the finishing off of bacon pigs, and the wheat figures of Western Australia show a direct relationship between the pork production and the price of wheat. On every occasion when the price of wheat has risen above 4s. a bushel, pork production in this State has shown a decline. Recently when a strong case was put up in another place, I received almost a rebuff from the Australian Wheat Board, the representatives of which body alleged that I was making a request for the wheat industry to subsidise the pig and bacon industry. That impression was entirely erroneous. Surely it is in the best interests of all the Australian States which have a ready market for this commodity at present, to find some outlet for a commodity, for which there is neither accommodation nor sale at present, by transforming wheat into pig meat! As I said, the representatives of the board stated that I was asking the wheat farmers of Australia to subsidise the pig farmers of Australia. I was wondering whether that would be the viewpoint of the wheatgrowers, who are at their wit's end to know what is to become of next season's harvest and the surplus from our last harvest.

Mr. Marshall: What price did you propose to pay for the wheat?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Three shillings and fourpence a bushel, and there would be an immediate stimulus if that price could be guaranteed to pig-raisers for small lots. The reply of the board, after we had made persistent representations, was that pig-raisers could get the wheat at the existing f.o.b. price, which is about 4s. 2½d.

a bushel, provided truck lots were taken. But who on earth wants a truck lot of wheat for pigs?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You understand that would have been the British price for all Australian wheat?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The loss through shrinkage and other causes during the currency of the storage of wheat in this State will be a fairly large one. To meet that statement, if we could conceive of a position in which the Australian Wheat Board became a pig and pig-products board, would its members be able to see neither to the right nor to the left? At the moment they appeared to be concerned only with the wheat farmer and with their attitude to the storage of wheat.

Mr. Seward: That is their object.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Surely it should be their concern to get rid of as much of the commodity as they can at a reasonable price level all over Australia! Suppose they reduced the price from 4s. 2½d. to 3s. 4d. a bushel, the price to Australian wheatgrowers would decline by .28d. a bushel, and the price for wheat sold in Australia would be reduced by not more than about .75d. a bushel. Therefore I should not be surprised if the board finds it advisable to take advantage of the opportunity afforded by the stimulation of the pig and bacon industry.

Mr. Patrick: Would you advise all the wheatgrowers to become pig producers?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: In many parts of the wheatbelt conditions are not favourable for the man who is solely a wheatgrower to embark upon pig production. At present we are finding pigs in the wholesale markets of Australia in a half-finished condition, which is a distinct loss to the people desirous of building up the industry. Only by making representations to the Barley Board have we succeeded in securing a relaxation of its conditions. That board also would deal only in truck lots. Mr. Thomson, of the Wheat Board, advised me recently that he was quite prepared to consider supplying a farmer with small lots when a bin was open. Surely there is some bin with a man constantly in attendance where a farmer could get wheat at least at the f.o.r. price! Surely those

who take a sectional view of the position should endeavour to regard it in proper perspective!

Mr. Withers: There would be no merchants' charges?

Hon. C. G. Latham: Yes, there would, and rail freight to the port as well.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Surely it is better to get the wheat consumed, especially when we remember that a large proportion of that already contracted for by the British Government will be in Australia next year! Surely we should make a major effort and examine every point with a view to easing the position which, as the member for Guildford-Midland knows, is very acute!

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is so, but there is another side.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, but those who are interested in wheat are pleased to put only their point of view.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is not fair.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is fair.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask hon. members to keep order and allow the Minister to make his speech.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Every rural industry at present being developed in this State, as well as any industry likely to be suitable for our soil, rainfall and climate, has recently been examined. The tobacco industry is one which is causing us considerable concern. A rise in price of only about 3d. a lb. would be needed to guarantee an increase of 700,000 lbs. in the production. The margin that the producer is receiving in his endeavour to make a living solely as a tobacco grower is so small that unless the average price is half-a-crown a lb. he cannot get an adequate return from the acreage he is able to handle. Involved in that question, of course, is the Commonwealth Government's policy in relation to excise. Something should be done, not to give a guaranteed price for all tobacco, not to raise it to a specific figure, but by imposing additional excise, to enable Australian supplies to be increased to meet the market requirements. If that were done, I am sure that not only would the outlook for tobacco be improved, but that the present heavy imports would largely be counteracted. The imports are terrific.

Mr. Cross: We shall be lucky if we are not rationed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: As to the quality of the leaf produced in Australia, we have no need to be apologetic, and we should examine thoroughly ways and means to ensure an adequate return to the people engaged in the industry. Statistics show that in 1930 we had only 25 acres under tobacco and produced 12,500 lbs. of leaf, whereas last year we had 11,000 acres and produced 660,000 lbs. We could double that production within two years if we could ensure a rise of all prices by 3d. or 4d. a lb.

The position regarding flax is also causing the Government great concern. Our recent introduction to this industry arose from the action of the Commonwealth Department of Commerce in arranging for other States to meet Britain's request to plant 20,000 acres of flax. The flax industry is one that is very deficient in the British Empire. Only about 6 per cent. of Britain's requirements is produced within the Empire. Therefore, with climatic conditions so suitable as they are in many of the States of Australia, Britain was anxious to obtain the establishment of this industry while conditions were very favourable. Western Australia, however, was left out of consideration. Knowing that we have grown flax, excellent samples, too, from Denmark to Northampton, we decided that we should exert every effort to get the industry established here by guaranteeing the Commonwealth to put in an acreage to supply one mill—from 1,000 to 1,500 acres in areas somewhat contiguous. We have taken something of a risk in this matter because we have involved the people concerned in an intense patriotic desire to serve the Empire. They have agreed to do so, and many of them will be applying land to the growing of flax that could be used more profitably in other ways. The Government, however, thought that the other States should not be permitted in this period of demand to get the whole of the 20,000 acres, and that we would be neglecting our duty if we did not exploit every possibility to get the industry established in this State. The seed is here. It arrived 10 days ago, and has been all parcelled and despatched. There is a contract between the Commonwealth Government and each farmer for a guaranteed price per acre. The State Government is inquiring into all

the necessities of harvesting, such as seeing that reapers and binders and other requisites will duly be furnished to the people interested. All those matters have been gone into; but we have taken a very serious risk, because this is one of the decisions which, as I mentioned earlier, we have had to make, involving the possible introduction of a crop which cannot offer Australian economic circumstances under peace conditions. But since we have learnt that, climatically, a large part of Western Australia is suitable to that crop, we have taken the risk; and we have taken it while there is a prospect of a guaranteed price at least during the war period. The price of flax in England is very high. Water-retted fibre is worth £102 per ton, and all that is being guaranteed to the growers of this State for the article before being retted is £4 10s. per acre. That is the basis of the contract into which our people have entered to grow the crop, and the prospect is that they will do much better than the immediate outlook suggests that they will.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Is the flax to be grown in irrigated areas?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We have arranged for 920 acres in the irrigated areas, and about 200 acres outside. I cannot forget, however, that we are using expensive land. Still, if we can get a unit of 1,000 acres here, we at least will not have neglected our duty, although the decision which has been taken may prove ultimately to be wrong. We cannot help that. If we are to wait until every decision that we have to make in the interests of the Empire is water-tight, we shall never make a decision.

There is one commodity which involves a prospect of great expansion in Western Australia, particularly in the undeveloped south-western portion of the State; and that is the baby beef market. There is a huge area of about 1½ million acres privately owned in the South-West of which about 300,000 acres have been partly cleared, and there is about 4,700 square miles of country in our South-West which has no pasture on it and which can be developed for this particular industry, an industry which, if any world indications are a serious guide, offers for a long period the opportunity of developing a highly valuable trade. The survey that has been made shows that if stimulated, and without interfering at all with the present sheep and lamb trade,

we can have 18,000 year-old beef carcasses within three or four years from our south-western areas—export carcasses. Extension of the beef and cattle industry in the North-West is also possible if we had big moneys for water supplies, fencing, the introduction of new blood, and so forth; but the south-western portion of the State offers a very big possibility in connection with that commodity which is likely to be in great demand.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Are you referring to the irrigated areas?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There is one very large area I could mention, lying between Bridgetown and Mt. Barker, which of itself offers the possibility; but all those districts have been examined, and although we do include irrigated districts, the country under review embraces much more than that. The Leader of the National Party (Mr. McDonald) said we must be ready to share in any markets in the reshuffle of trade. I agree with that observation, and I think we should take a risk in agreeing to develop an industry which involves a particular commodity urgently needed; because if we can at this stage encroach on the markets of countries at present held by the enemy, if we can encroach in a tangible sense on markets previously held by the Scandinavian countries, surely we shall take some displacing from those markets. So that the Government is giving attention to stimulating production in any line where there is likelihood of some post-war demand for the particular commodity. It is an angle of the war position to which not very many people give serious consideration. Agriculture involving the production of raw materials for the Empire is, in my view, one of the fundamentals of victory. And yet the position is obscure. But is not all our home life, are not all our domestic arrangements, in the same category? Can we plan the future for our children, or can we guarantee that any plan we might evolve or any desire we might have for them can be carried to a successful conclusion, at this stage?

I now want to refer to a statement of the Deputy Leader of the Country Party, the member for Greenough, in connection with the wheat position. The hon. member said that what is needed is a definite policy in regard to wheat. He quoted what Mr. Cameron had said to a deputation of wheat-growers. Mr. Cameron is alleged then to

have stated that he was coming round to the opinion that if the Commonwealth had to accept any more responsibility in that respect, he would have to control the entire production of the industry. So far as I am concerned, that statement means nothing. The Commonwealth has been able to help the wheat industry and many other industries without filching from the States any further privileges of the States in the control of their internal economy.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: But you are having trouble.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We are; and can the hon. member suggest that we should be in any better position if the States lost control of this particular commodity?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I suggest that there are troubles.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There are very many troubles. The member for Greenough further said that Mr. Cameron was sick of the States endeavouring to "pass the buck."

Mr. Marshall: The Commonwealth is not sick of taxing us.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It would be a very wise and most desirable thing to have a policy for everything, if we could evolve such a policy. Not any of us are doing anything to prevent the formulation of any policy or plan to put that into effect. However, there are many difficulties. The difficulties in regard to wheat have not eased. We know that at the outbreak of war there was 1,200,000,000 bushels of wheat surplus over world requirements. Interstate conferences were held in an endeavour to overcome that difficulty, and we had almost reached a successful conclusion. Although in an international sense the matter was fraught with very great difficulties, at the time of the last conference held in Melbourne, at which the Premiers of all the States were present, wheat was round about 1s. 0½d. in Western Australia. The one who was responsible for preventing an Interstate arrangement at that time was the Country Party Premier of Victoria. He was responsible for the inability of the States to agree on an all-Australia plan. At that time the Australian Wheatgrowers' Federation presented to the Commonwealth a plan involving the guarantee of a price at an equivalent of 3s. 10d. free on rail at ports. It was demanded that there should be no increase in wheatgrowing

areas in any State, and that production should be licensed. All that was in November of last year. Recently the Primary Producers' Association of this State addressed me in connection with this same subject, alleging as follows: Wheat production ranked so largely in the Commonwealth and Western Australia that the Primary Producers' Association desired to ask had the State Government any wheat policy, or was it the Government's wish that the industry should drift until it reached its economic level? The Primary Producers' Association went on to say that it felt that an organised effort by the Federal and State Governments was necessary on behalf of the industry. That as a part of the Wheat-growers' Federation the Primary Producers' Association had for nearly 12 months made urgent representations to the Federal Government that the Agricultural Council should devise a stabilisation policy for the wheat industry of Australia, but with little effect. Such are the allegations of the Primary Producers' Association.

Mr. Patrick: That came from a gathering of farmers.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No. I will quote it as coming from those from whom I received it, from the Primary Producers Association, of which all hon. members opposite are members. I repeat that the one who made it impossible for Australia to have a plan formulated was the Country Party Premier of Victoria. If it is the desire of members opposite to ask, "Has the State Government any wheat policy?" then I say—

Mr. Warner: What did you put forward?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member will have the opportunity of reading my reply if he attends the next meeting of the body in question. At that time the Prime Minister also had a policy. I have here a document which is entitled, "Commonwealth Government's Wheat Policy," which was enunciated by the Prime Minister of that time and was published in all the newspapers of Australia at that time. That offer from the Prime Minister—we well know it—was that there should be on a total realisation for the season, on the basis of free on rail at ports, 3s. 4d. per bushel, subject to two limitations: (a) that the supplementary finance to be provided by the Governments of the Commonwealth and the

States should not exceed £3,500,000 per annum, and (b) that the annual advance would not operate so as to bring the total realisation beyond 3s. 4d. per bushel for a marketed crop of 140,000,000 bushels. And included in that statement of the Commonwealth Government's policy was a request that the States do their utmost to restrict production and to contract their wheat areas. It involved the financing by the States of up to £3,500,000 with the Commonwealth Government. The responsibility which the Premier of this State accepted—I can quote it—was to find £187,000 on behalf of the wheatgrowers of Western Australia if all the other States came into the scheme. However, this is what Mr. Dunstan said—

Hon. C. G. Latham: You know why Mr. Dunstan said it.

Several members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The Minister for Works: This cannot be too palatable.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I must ask hon. members to keep order.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is quite useless for members opposite to say, "We must have a policy for wheat." I agree that it would be a very good and most desirable thing; and nothing that I could do to bring it into effect would be left undone. But I want members to be fair enough not to say here and elsewhere that the State Government has no policy but to give us the credit that at least we put up as forcible a case as any other Government for the wheatgrowers of the Commonwealth. Mr. Dunstan said:—

I cannot understand why the States should now be asked to provide half of the money required to assist the wheatgrowers. I admit, of course, that at Canberra some time ago the Commonwealth said that the provision of the total cost was the States' responsibility. Upon reconsideration of the matter, however, the Commonwealth is now prepared to accept half of the responsibility, and to ask the States to accept the other half. As a representative of Victoria, I say again that it is not the States' responsibility to accept the other half; the obligation is entirely on the Commonwealth to do what it has always done in the past. The Commonwealth has a responsibility to do its best to retain this national industry in the interests of Australia as a whole.

That was the view of the Country Party Government of Victoria.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Kept in power by the Labour Party.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Mr. Dunstan went on to say—

I object to the proposal because first, the price is insufficient; secondly, the date of payment is too late; and, thirdly, this is a responsibility which ought to be accepted by the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. Doney: The Country Party plus the Labour Government.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is the view of the Country Party Premier of Victoria, but the Country Party of Western Australia asks and pretends to ask innocently: "Has the Government a wheat policy?" The Government has put forward, and the Premier has directly put forward, a masterly case in the interests of Western Australia. The Premier offered to pay £187,000 towards the requisite amount. Victoria's share was to be £381,000. But Victoria and its Country Party Premier have jockeyed the other States into such a position that Victoria would have the benefit of £381,000 and then pass all the buck on to the other States.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That rather justifies Mr. Cameron's contention.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: But Mr. Cameron's all-embracing statement that the States passed on the buck was not justified. It is useless for Mr. Cameron or the Country Party Premier of Victoria to include Western Australia as one of the States that has passed on the buck. We have accepted our responsibilities in the matter and I resent very strongly the suggestion that any representative, or representatives, of this State has, or have, been negligent in stating the case on behalf of Western Australia. On the other hand, this State has agreed to participate in the scheme, unpalatable as it may be to some, in the interests of the wheatgrowers of the State. Questions were raised at the conference I have referred to regarding the responsibility of the States to the uneconomic farmers in the industry, and the statement was made that perhaps 25 per cent. of the wheat farmers of Australia could not make wheat farming pay, even if they had no debts at all. It was further stated that all causative factors of uneconomic farming should be examined, including in that category the unnecessary excess profits of secondary industries. Western Australia's representative

had a very heated argument with the present Prime Minister on that point. I read the comments of the member for East Perth (Mr. Hughes) on the relationship between the Commonwealth Government and the Broken Hill Proprietary Co. I do not know the facts of that position, but I do know that the average dividend payments of Australian secondary industries represent 6 per cent. Some of them have been 20 per cent.; some 10s. on 5s. shares.

Mr. Hughes: That is 200 per cent.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: All of those companies have some relationship to uneconomic farming. My attitude towards protection and tariffs is the same as towards bounties for wheat. It is that the object of a bounty is to make further bounties unnecessary. That is not the attitude usually adopted. If a bounty is paid—the Commonwealth Government claims to have paid £14,500,000 to the wheat industry of Australia in the last ten years—the object of those in the industry seems to be to perpetuate that assistance. In an examination of the wheatgrowing industry it is essential closely to examine the cause of uneconomic farming in each State. Western Australia has endeavoured to put its house in order. Western Australia has directed its effort along those lines to a far greater degree than has any other State, and I disagree entirely with the point of view expressed by the member for Avon (Mr. Boyle). I read his remarks. His was his usual type of speech. He struck the same note throughout. He spoke of the impoverishment of farmers as though that condition applied to all the farmers of Western Australia, which would be an untrue reflection upon the farming industry. I suggest to the member for Avon that if that is the only tune he knows, he should purchase a new tuning fork.

Mr. Doney: Did he say that applied to all farmers?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. It is all very well to single out one phase and apply that to a consideration of the position of the industry as a whole. If we are to have a discussion on that problem, let us have the whole tune, the whole story, not merely a part of the tune, a part of the story. I suggest to the hon. member that he would be better occupied if he applied his talents to preaching better farmers and better farming methods in this country. If he

were to do that, the State would be in a better position. Not very far from the district the member for Avon mentioned, there are places, within the knowledge of the Leader of the Opposition, where people who have share interests in farming, although they were engaged in the work as pioneer farmers originally, can show a profit over all working expenses by an amount equivalent at least to the income of a member of Parliament; and that position obtained during the last season. So I say to the member for Avon, let us have the whole story. Unless we have that, we have not the benefit of the true story. Would that hon. member get up and say that the successful farmers who sit on the Opposition benches—and there are several of them who are successful—are exceptions and that the majority of the farmers in Western Australia are in a state of penury? If he were to raise that contention, it would not be true.

Mr. Seward: It would not be far from the truth.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: By all means let us do our utmost to assist the industry in view of the present situation and the difficult circumstances involved. I advocate no other attitude towards the industry, but let us examine the whole situation. Let us investigate the effective profits of the Broken Hill Co., or any other company, and the relationship of the excess profits of secondary industries to the farming industry of Australia.

Mr. Patrick: And the costs over the last 20 years?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I wish to dwell for a minute or two on the question of bulk handling. We have listened to much discussion, and there has been considerable investigation, regarding what should be done in the various districts of Western Australia. I say without any fear of the statement being successfully contradicted, that the Government has faced up to its responsibilities, examined the position thoroughly and, in the light of all the circumstances and the facts it possesses, has endeavoured to arrive at correct decisions.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: And that is appreciated, too.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We have the problem of the Albany zone, which has not had the benefit of bulk handling facilities although producing 1,600,000 bushels of

wheat per annum, all of which has to be bagged and then emptied out of bags. The farmers claim to have lost pence per bushel because of the absence of bulk handling facilities. After examining the position and holding conferences with Bulk Handling Ltd., we ultimately decided that sidings within the zone should first be equipped and the consideration of port equipment be deferred until seasonal considerations gave some further indication of the prospective harvest. Since then the war position has deteriorated to such an extent that the problem of wheat storage has also altered. The Commonwealth Government, through the Australian Wheat Board, has made definite requests that country districts should be used for the storage of wheat at suitable points, so that the whole of the storage should not be rendered vulnerable. It may be that since we have been able to arrange with Bulk Handling Ltd. for 80 per cent. of the crop to be dealt with by means of siding equipment, most of the crop will have to remain there until, perhaps, towards the middle of next year. Until we have a prospect of shipments to other countries, we cannot consider effecting any installation at Albany, but it is possible, and likely, that before that harvest has to be moved elsewhere, the necessity will arise for port equipment there. I have endeavoured to induce the Australian Wheat Board to agree to finance the provision of a terminal elevator at Albany, and we are now awaiting a decision. All the issues have to be considered, and the matters I have referred to have received attention.

Regarding matters affecting the Lakes district, three or four members of this House are interested in that problem. The issues have been gone into thoroughly and the Government in making its decision had the assistance of a responsible committee in conferring with Bulk Handling Ltd. We know their position and what the actual situation is with regard to material and labour. We know that the desire is to assist if it is at all possible, but the material position is serious, particularly with regard to structural steel. As members may have observed from reports in the Press, a decision has been arrived at to arrange for storage in the Lakes district at points that have some bearing on the position where the railway might have been. The settlers there

have been producing heavy crops for many years past and claim to have had a definite promise of the construction of a railway before they went on their holdings. The Government has provided carting contracts costing upwards of £8,000 a year during past seasons and has carted the wheat over a 50-mile radius, the first 15 miles being the farmer's responsibility. Now the decision has been arrived at to require wheat to be carted to the bins, as well as to Newdegate and other sidings. Farmers are now required to deliver their wheat to bins where required. That decision may be criticised and some may contend that it is wrong. Those who so contend cannot have had an opportunity to ascertain all the facts. Were they in possession of those facts, they would not raise such a contention.

To sum up the wheat position, while Britain guaranteed to take from Australia all the wheat for which shipping space could be found, that is the most hopeful point of view that we can take at this juncture. The responsibility of the State and the Commonwealth is to endeavour, if the shipping position further deteriorates, to give some idea of what advances may be forthcoming for next season's crop. I suggest to members that we should say to the farmers that that is the position. When the member for Greenough (Mr. Patrick) was speaking, I interjected that it would require the wisdom of Solomon to formulate a policy at this stage. I can go further and say that, in addition to the wisdom of Solomon, we would require the patience of Job and the judgment of St. Peter.

Mr. Patrick: Your party in the Federal Parliament solved it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No; they have not had the opportunity.

Mr. Patrick: That is their policy.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I would not raise that issue, for it is an unfair argument. I agree with the hon. member that members of his party had an opportunity to do it, but refused to do so.

Mr. Patrick: Not of this party.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Victorian Country Party adopted that attitude. They had the opportunity and would not accept the responsibility. So I suggest we should say to the farmers that they continue to produce wheat at the present price or diversify their farming to such an extent

that they will be able to relieve their own difficulties. Until the Minister for Commerce is able to secure some agreement between the States—and I notice that he intends to try again—we cannot get finality. I have no quarrel with the member for Greenough (Mr. Patrick) in his desire that we should have a policy with regard to wheat, but I think he will agree, in the light of the difficulties I have enunciated, that it is a very difficult task for anyone to set himself or for any body of men to undertake, to formulate a definite policy.

Hon. C. G. Latham: A conference is being arranged now.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, but—

Hon. C. G. Latham: It will be a trial.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, and I hope the hon. member will use his influence with his colleagues in Victoria—

Hon. C. G. Latham: You know very well we have no such influence.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I would not say that the views of Mr. Dunstan were the views of the Labour Party.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Very definitely.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is something new to me. However, the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues should exert considerable pressure on the Country Party Premier of Victoria by showing what it means to have a uniform policy.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Now you are talking rot.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member and his colleagues should take steps to indicate to the Premier of Victoria what an agreement on an Australian basis would mean to this State.

I wish now to refer to the child refugee problem, a matter which has given the Government of Australia and the State Governments considerable concern. A fortnight ago this Government received word that children and refugees from Hong Kong were on their way to Australia and Western Australia. There was no information as to whether the newcomers were eight or eighty years of age, whether they were males or females, or whether they were married or single. The authorities could not tell us anything about these people; they could not inform us whether they had any

money or not. We were, however, asked to do our utmost to prepare for their reception.

Mr. J. Hegney: The Department of Information should have been able to tell you something.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We could get no information from that department. However, the Department of Lands and Migration has been in constant touch with the Department of the Interior. We have arranged for the vaccination of some of our officers who volunteered to be vaccinated when they knew we had plans in progress, because the Customs authorities would not have allowed them out of Gage Roads unless they were so treated. We have secured information regarding accommodation at every boarding house and hotel in Perth and the rates they charge. We have arranged before the vessel ties up at the wharf, to ascertain the class of accommodation the newcomers need and have made plans for their reception at Fremantle and for their being brought to Perth and distributed to the places that will constitute their future abodes. I do not know whether we have overlooked anything but we have tried to prevent a repetition of what is alleged to have occurred in Queensland, where some refugees were left on the wharf in a cold, open shed with no one to welcome them or give them any idea where they might go. All we know is that there are boats due in Australia within a day or two with evacuees from Hong Kong, some of whom are coming to Western Australia. We know no more than that.

With regard to children from England, hon. members will recollect that a definite statement was made in the House of Commons a little over a fortnight ago that no children would be evacuated from England except under convoy, and that since convoys were not available the scheme was to be abandoned for the present. This State agreed to co-operate with the Commonwealth and to receive some of the children and had all the machinery in motion. About 5,000 children were expected to come to Australia, of whom we would have received a few hundred, and we arranged for their reception. We had about 1500 applications from people who desired to give refuge to the children. The information given in the House of Commons was such as might be

expected to be given for enemy consumption but unfortunately the Colonies received the same information. But a fortnight after the declaration was made, 500 children arrived in a capital city of Australia. Thus the position is difficult day by day, no matter whether one may be handling refugee children, the sale of wheat or the marketing of apples and pears. The Department of the Interior knows nothing about the children who arrived in Sydney the day before yesterday. They are not nominee children as we know them—that is, nominees by application, but children whose passages have been paid and who have a definite port of destination. Some of those 500 children are coming to Perth. But all of those who are at present in Australian waters have parents who had arranged the payment of their passage money before the institution of the British Government's scheme. We expect a revival of the scheme for the reception of overseas children and if there is such a revival we can expect very short notice of the coming of the evacuees. The first intimation we will have will probably be a telephone call from the Signal Station that such-and-such a boat has arrived and we shall have to arrange for the reception of the children. Everything that we can possibly anticipate as being needed to be done we have endeavoured to do and the whole matter is well in hand.

In conclusion, I wish to refer to the accusation of complacency made against the Government by the Leader of the National Party and Leader of the Country Party. It was very ill-timed. I do not know whether the statement was the reflection of a guilty conscience or not, but no charge of complacency can be successfully laid against any member of either the Imperial, Commonwealth or State Governments. I hope that a different attitude from that will be adopted and that in these times no one will suggest that any member is doing anything but his utmost to further the war effort. In the interests of Australia and the Empire no statements of that kind should be made. I hope we shall emerge from this conflict with the Empire intact, our principles and standards of living inviolate, that the White Australia policy will continue, and that with all the material resources we have in this great Commonwealth we shall become in a real sense a circumstance in the affairs of the world.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [8.24]: We have all been interested in the remarks of the Minister for Lands but I would have liked to hear a few words of hope from him. I venture to trust that the position is not quite as bad as we might be led to think after having heard what has been said. A matter in which many hon. members are interested concerns the export of apples and pears. I realise, and I have not hesitated to say, that the apple and pear acquisition committee has done very good work in the past. The Minister made no comment to the contrary, and I am hopeful that, in spite of any misunderstanding that may exist to-day, the work of the committee will be continued and will be equal in value to what has been achieved during the last season. The committee was faced with innumerable difficulties during the past year—its first year of operation—because it set out really to provide a measure of control. While objections have been raised, they were not reasonable, inasmuch as to bring about control of a big industry such as this there are bound to be matters of detail which do not meet with unanimous approval. It would have been better if the funds payable could have been made available to each State but that unfortunately could not be done, or at least was not done. The method of placing a number on cases of fruit instead of the name of the grower as is usual was, I think, a doubtfully wise substitution. It has been claimed that some growers did not grade and pack under the new system as well as they did when the fruit was despatched under their own names. Other growers, I readily admit, packed their fruit and did everything as well as in past seasons. Growers are naturally concerned with the maintenance of their good name and I suggest therefore that in the future a variation of the method should be made by the committee.

Unfortunately we do not yet know what the future has in store for growers of export varieties of apples and pears. I noted the remarks of the Minister concerning the difficulties confronting those growers, and I agree with him that their problems are very great indeed. Since it appears to be impossible for the necessary space to be found in ships for export apples and pears in their natural condition, I have wondered whether the matter has been, or could be, submitted to the Council for Scientific and

Industrial Research to ascertain whether it is possible for the fruit to be dehydrated. I know that space is the main consideration and that where fresh fruit is concerned it must be refrigerated space, but the elements of the apple and pear would, I take it, be preserved if the fruit were not only dehydrated but also compressed into as small a compass as possible. Whether this is practicable or not I am unable to say, but the outlook for the growers is so difficult that I am hopeful that the matter will be referred to the C.S.I.R. for consideration. Foods, in order to secure freight overseas, must be concentrated. In the case of dried and dehydrated fruits—they are practically synonymous terms—dehydration might ensure the possibility of export. It is readily understood that canned or conserved fruits, fruit with a considerable quantity of liquid in the can, would not be a practicable export food. It would take too much room compared with its value. At this juncture I should like to refer to the Chief Inspector of the Department of Agriculture, Mr. George Wickens. That officer had a long and most honourable career. He proved himself exceedingly useful to the industry, and there is general regret that he is no longer with the department. The maintenance of the policy of retiring officers at 65 is not in the interests of the State. Mr. Wickens, on the day following his completion of work at the Department of Agriculture, was offered a position by a big company in this State, and accepted it. There is ample reason for further consideration on the part of the Government of the policy of deciding that all men are equal in ability, and that so soon as they reach the age of 65 they should forthwith be called upon to retire. That is a wrong policy. Many men are more mature in their judgment and better at their work when they have reached the age of 65, because of the experience they have had and the great regard they have developed for their work, than are those who may be younger. It would be a good thing for the State if that policy were revised.

Mr. Seward: What about the younger generation?

Mr. SAMPSON: Members of the younger generation will make their own way. The Government should be concerned about who can best do the job. In losing Mr. Wickens the Government lost a good man. I make

that comment without comparing him with any other officer. Mr. Wickens is a man whose services were most valued by the growers, and there is general regret that he is no longer with the department. I understand he is continuing to do somewhat similar work for the company to which I made reference.

At a time like this we are expected to refer to oversea matters. There are local difficulties, however, that I hope may receive consideration. A reasonable price should be paid on the local market for our fruit, vegetables and other produce. The Minister for Lands referred to flax. Some years ago an excellent sample of this commodity was grown at Kalamunda, indicating what could be done there. I have no knowledge to enable me to say whether Guildford grass could be used in any way. When I was in the Old Country in 1928 I discussed that grass with one of the paper makers, and was advised that if esparto grass from South Africa was not available a ready market would probably be found for Guildford grass.

The Minister for Lands: The Imperial Institute has tried it out since then.

Mr. SAMPSON: For paper?

The Minister for Lands: For handicrafts, etc., it is all right.

Mr. SAMPSON: It has a strong fibre and is exceedingly tenacious. It is a class of grass that is necessary for the manufacture of paper.

The Minister for Lands: It may be too costly to gather.

Mr. SAMPSON: That may be so, but it may be necessary to use it or something like it.

The Minister for Mines: With what machinery would you cut it?

Mr. SAMPSON: The Minister might use a small scythe or sickle. I am inclined to think that concentration on such work would be very advantageous. The matter is worth considering. The growth of Guildford grass is extending, and is a serious menace in areas in the immediate vicinity of Perth.

I should like to quote a few figures dealing with exports. I have the most recent figures that are available, and they relate to the six months ended the 31st December last. They are—butter, £178,000; eggs, £46,000; beef, £164,000; lamb and mutton, £259,000; pork, £63,000; condensed milk,

£59,000; other animal foodstuffs, £55,000; making a total of over £824,000. The export of butter is of great importance. In 1929-30 the value of butter exported was £3,229, and in 1938-39 the value had risen to £233,542. I wish to pay a tribute to the efforts put forward by the member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. McLarty). That hon. member has done and is doing a great deal in the interests of butter producing.

The Minister for Mines: How many cows has he?

Mr. SAMPSON: The difficulty respecting margarine has been referred to by the Minister for Lands, and is continually being referred to. I do not know that we are to be congratulated altogether on the attitude we adopt towards that commodity. When I was in Batavia I noticed that the Federal Government was advertising in the newspapers of Java the advantages of butter. The representatives of that Government located in Batavia told me that as a result of what was being done the sale of butter had greatly increased. Margarine is also advertised. We have to see to it that the quality of the butter exported is maintained, that it is regularly shipped, and that we do not inadvertently boost margarine to such an extent as to prompt people to change over. Experts tell us that from the standpoint of food value and vitamin contents there is no comparison between margarine and butter. We must see to it not only in the interests of our butter producers, but in the interests of the health of the people, that real butter is consumed. It must be made an offence for margarine to be added to butter, and people thereby misled in respect to the purity of that food.

The Minister for Mines: Surely you would not do anything like that.

Mr. SAMPSON: I wish to bring before the Minister for Health the question of the anopheles mosquito—the type that carries the malaria germ. Such mosquitoes are plentiful in Perth. Other varieties also carry malaria. The difficulty facing Western Australia in respect to the mosquito pest is that, by stinging persons who have arrived here with the malaria germ in their blood, they may transmit it to others.

The Minister for Mines: I thought a mosquito died when it had stung anyone.

Mr. SAMPSON: I do not know enough about mosquitoes to say whether that is

so or not. My advice is that if a mosquito becomes infected with malaria by stinging someone who is suffering from it, that mosquito immediately becomes a great danger to others who may be stung by it.

The Minister for Mines: You do not know whether a mosquito dies when he stings?

Mr. SAMPSON: I am doubtful about it. Up to this moment I had some confidence in the Minister. I am now convinced that his knowledge of mosquitoes is such that I shall cling to the knowledge I have acquired myself.

The Minister for Mines: You are between two bricks.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minister will have a chance of talking about mosquitoes later on.

The Minister for Mines: I hope so.

Mr. SAMPSON: When a mosquito stings a person who is infected with malaria it then becomes a carrier and a menace to all people with whom it comes into contact.

The Minister for Mines: We will inoculate the mosquito.

Mr. SAMPSON: In Singapore it was discovered that other mosquitoes carried malaria.

Mr. Cross: But not the kind we have here.

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes.

Mr. Cross: What is your board doing to keep down the mosquitoes?

Mr. SAMPSON: It is treating the water in tanks or stagnant places, and is doing all it can to control the pest.

Mr. Cross: The same thing can be said of other boards.

Mr. SAMPSON: If so, whence come all the mosquitoes with which Perth is afflicted? If it is possible for the local mosquito to be infected with malaria, the likely resultant evil is almost beyond the bounds of understanding. The effect of a general outbreak of malaria would be to reduce the capacity of the people by probably not less than 50 per cent. That is serious to contemplate because there are so many mosquitoes here, and the fact is established that once a mosquito becomes infected with malaria it is a carrier.

Mr. Thorn: We should send a shipment to Germany.

Mr. SAMPSON: When I was in the Far East I made some inquiries regarding this insect pest and I was advised that many

of the native towns were afflicted to a most serious degree by malaria. One man told me there was a place in Thailand where if one slashed the air with a razor, not less than half a dozen mosquitoes would be killed.

The Minister for Mines: That is a cowardly way to attack them!

Mr. SAMPSON: I hope the Minister will take this matter up.

Mr. J. Hegney: With a razor.

Mr. Fox: And raise a gang.

Mr. SAMPSON: I hope the Minister will give the matter serious attention. There are many country towns where it is difficult to sleep at night, except under a net, because of mosquitoes. One of the first steps to be undertaken is to provide for the full control of the mosquito pest. The residents of Singapore appreciate the danger of the mosquito as a carrier of malaria, and have spent thousands of pounds upon efforts to prevent the spread of the pest. An almost perpetual movement along those lines is maintained at that centre.

Mr. Fox: Was not the pest wiped out in the Panama Canal zone years ago?

Mr. SAMPSON: I understand that is so, but here the fact does not seem to be realised that our mosquitoes are carriers of malaria. In view of the number of people coming to Western Australia from the Far East, the danger that threatens us is indeed great. I hope the Minister will regard the matter seriously and do everything in his power to secure immunity for the people of Perth from this grave danger.

The Minister for Mines: I will buy a razor.

Mr. SAMPSON: With other members, I regret that the Royal Agricultural Society's annual show is not to be held at Claremont this year, although I appreciate the special reasons that have made it impossible. I congratulate the various agricultural societies throughout the State that have decided to hold their annual shows. As the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Tonkin) said, the war is not merely one that is being fought on the land, in the air and on the sea, but involves the maintenance of the production of food supplies. It is our duty to encourage the production of good food to provide for the people's requirements.

One other matter that I shall refer to relates to the construction and sale of pro-

ducer gas plants. These are most useful and I am sure that the manufacture of such plants will receive all the encouragement possible. At present it is competent for anyone to manufacture a gas producer plant and affix it to a truck or car. I suggest for the benefit of the makers and those who decide to have gas plants added to their motor vehicles, that such plants should be inspected and the principles contained in them approved by some qualified person. Perhaps the University authorities could examine and pass approved designs submitted by manufacturers and issue certificates that ensured the producer gas plants being what was required. That would not impose a burden upon manufacturers but would be helpful to them and perhaps prevent them from proceeding along lines that have been abandoned elsewhere. It would enable them to adopt the latest methods in vogue and ensure that purchasers of plants had what was sound and suitable for the purposes for which they were to be installed.

MR. McLARTY (Murray-Wellington) [8.51]: I offer no apologies for taking part in this debate. The informative speech delivered by the Minister for Lands to-night justifies my saying that the fact that he had to reply to certain statements, makes the debate worth while. I was able to agree with quite a lot that the Minister said. The present is a time when planning ahead becomes rather difficult. He rather surprised me when he referred to evacuated children and stated that the Government would not know that a shipload of children had arrived until a message was received from Fremantle. That must surely lead to disorganisation.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Of course it does.

Mr. McLARTY: I cannot see why it should be so.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The arrival of a empty wheat ship is not signalled until it enters the mouth of the river.

Mr. McLARTY: That may be so, but surely there are ways and means by which the State Government could be informed that a ship with children would arrive at Fremantle on a certain date.

Mr. Doney: It might not be safe.

Mr. McLARTY: There are secret codes and other methods that could be adopted so that the information could be obtained. I believe the difficulty could be got over without much trouble.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The trouble is that they do not try to do so.

Mr. McLARTY: I think they do, but they have not tried very hard on this occasion. I indicated that it is difficult to offer practical suggestions in times such as the present. Our future and all we have are dependent upon the struggle in which we are now engaged. Like other members who have spoken, I feel that ultimately we will attain victory. I agree with the member for Katanning (Mr. Watts) who said we should attempt to consider some of our probable post-war economic problems. We know with a degree of certainty some of the problems which must arise. One, for instance, is the repatriation of our soldiers when peace is declared. Some thousands will be returning from overseas and we shall have thousands in camp in Australia. Now is the time when we should be thinking of that matter. After the last war we inaugurated a great land settlement scheme which absorbed great numbers of our returned soldiers. As a result—there is no question about it—much wealth was added to the State. But I doubt whether we could have another such scheme, certainly not on the same scale. I do not think the time will be opportune to settle large numbers of men in our wheat areas, nor would it appear at present that we could settle them successfully in our pastoral areas.

Mr. Marshall: Those in the pastoral areas have already been settled.

Mr. McLARTY: Yes. They have had an exceedingly difficult time. It appears that the next few years will not be a suitable time for further settlement in the pastoral districts. Apart from uncertain seasons in those districts, we have the menace of wool substitutes. Substitutes for some of our primary products were the result of the last war, and there will be substitutes as a result of the present war. Some people assert that substitutes will never play any great part. With the present blockade, however, and the almost impossible position of some of the occupied countries so far as wool is concerned, I feel they will concentrate more and more on substitutes, which may be greatly improved. In that event the men-

ace of substitutes becomes greater than ever. The wheat position, to which the Minister for Lands referred tonight, is a difficult one; and as I said it does not appear that we shall be able to settle our men in the wheat areas. The only areas that will be available for the settlement of soldiers are those in the mixed farming districts. These appear to offer some inducement. The Minister also spoke of the dairying industry and allied industries, and said that they offered considerable scope. The Agricultural Council, which is now sitting in the Eastern States, according to today's paper said that those industries could be expanded 30 per cent. during the next three years. I am in agreement with that view. The Agricultural Council was right when it said there would be a market for the products of those industries for some time after the war. As a result of the occupation of Denmark, Holland and Belgium and some of the other European countries, the large imports of dairy produce from them must cease.

Mr. Marshall: Increased taxation is going to reduce the purchasing power of the local consumer.

Mr. McLARTY: Whatever happens, a long time—some years at least—must elapse before those countries can again reach the state of production which they enjoyed in pre-war days. The Minister told us that enormous quantities of dairy produce will be required and that a million tins of condensed milk is to be sent to our troops abroad. I am not surprised to hear that. The Germans are now in possession of the greatest condensed milk factory in the world, that of Nestle's at Rotterdam. As another result of the German occupation of Holland and Denmark, we have already been able to establish a large condensed milk export trade with the Malay Peninsula.

Mr. Lambert: What about casein?

Mr. McLARTY: There will probably be a market for that.

Mr. Lambert: The Argentine sends 30,000 tons to America every year.

Mr. McLARTY: The Minister also mentioned cheese. We in this State are in a peculiar position with regard to cheese. We are still spending £80,000 a year on imported cheese, yet we are told there is a market for it overseas. True, the cheese we import is mostly processed; but the point I desire to make is that there is not much chance of the industry expanding in West-

ern Australia whilst the price of butter-fat remains as it is to-day. The cheese industry cannot compete against the butter industry under present conditions and at present prices. Therefore, if we are to expand that side of the dairying industry, it will have to be helped in some way. I mention these matters as an indication of how some of our soldiers can be placed after the war.

The Minister for Lands: Have you noticed that the Minister for Commerce said it might be necessary to switch from butter to something else?

Mr. McLARTY: No. Apart from settling our soldiers in the mixed farming areas, some will have to be placed in secondary industries. We lost money previously over our soldier settlement scheme, and it may be unavoidable that we shall lose money again in establishing returned soldiers in secondary industries. We are, however, faced with the problem of providing employment for them when they return. They will be coming back in thousands and will have to be absorbed quickly. Consequently we should hasten matters by establishing secondary industries. Those two methods appear to me to offer the best solutions of this post-war problem. It may be necessary for Australia after the war to maintain a standing army. That is, of course, unknown at present.

Mr. Cross: We should always have had a standing army.

Mr. McLARTY: We are now wishing that we had one. Many of the returned men will be engaged on public works. I desire now to say something about the rising cost of production. The Minister for Lands suggested to-night that we should have increased production in certain primary industries, but he did not deal with the important question of the rising cost of production. I wish that the Minister had delayed his speech until a little later in the discussion. I think the proper time for a Minister to speak on the Address-in-reply is at the close of the debate, but maybe we shall have a speech from another Minister before the debate finishes.

Dealing with the rising costs of production, I heard a member say to-night—I do not know whether "Hansard" heard it and I am not sure who said it—that butter in this country was too dear, and that was why

it was menaced by margarine. Those who are authorities on this matter tell us that once butterfat falls below 1s. a lb., to produce it is not payable, and I think that is right. Recently we have had a tremendous increase in the price of super. That will certainly mean a reduction in the quantity that will be used, and if there is a lesser quantity of super employed, there will be a considerable decrease in production. I suggest to the Minister that this increased cost of super should be borne by the community generally in the interests of the people as a whole. In these times it is particularly necessary that we should have increased production.

Mr. Lambert: What about cyanide and high explosives?

Mr. McLARTY: I would not like to suggest anything in connection with cyanide. I wish to make reference to a matter raised by the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald) who referred to the difficulty of the farmers in obtaining labour. That is a real difficulty, and in this respect I think the Minister will soon be faced by a problem of considerable magnitude. There is certainly a disinclination on the part of young men of this country to follow rural activities; and it is not to be wondered at. The farmer cannot get long-service leave, annual holidays, a 40-hour week and other amenities enjoyed by some people. Nevertheless the farm labourer is an absolute necessity, and some consideration should be given to him. I marvel that members on the Government benches are not anxious to do something for this particular kind of labourer. It may be necessary, as suggested by the member for West Perth, to consider the granting of a subsidy. If farmers are unable to obtain labour we will be faced with a reduced output with its consequent detrimental effect upon the State. The difficulty is becoming greater, and I feel it will become increasingly so. The problem is one that will seriously confront the Minister in the future.

I know that it is still necessary to keep some 6,000 sustenance workers on public works. Generally speaking, I think those men are doing good work. The work on which they are engaged should be reproductive, even though we may have to take a long-range view. I do not know, however, if we are justified in saying that all

this work should be manual. I cannot help but think that if it is cheaper to use a machine, that course should be adopted. If by using a machine we saved money that money could be spent in other directions. I have seen large works carried out in my own district by the pick-and-shovel method when a machine could have been used more effectively.

Mr. Lambert: What would we do with the men?

Mr. McLARTY: I have heard some members from the goldfields districts advocate the construction of a wide-gauge line to the goldfields, and many other public works have been suggested. Money saved in one direction could be used in another.

Mr. Cross: By sending it to America for machines.

Mr. McLARTY: No, not by doing anything of the sort. I am not suggesting that. Generally speaking, the men are employed on useful works such as road construction. I do not think too many developmental roads can be constructed. I suggest also that this is the time to undertake a more vigorous housing policy. We have our own timber and our own brick yards.

Mr. Fox: Would you build wooden houses?

Mr. McLARTY: Yes, why not? We heard to-night of the shipping difficulties. It struck me when the Minister was speaking of the difficulty of finding accommodation for certain freight, that trouble of this kind will be experienced with regard to our timber. Timber is a very bulky commodity and, moreover, there may not be a demand for it overseas. If that unfortunate position arose our timber mills would be seriously affected. The district of the member for Forrest (Mr. Holman) and the district of the member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) and my own district would be seriously affected, and I suggest that as the Government has its own timber mills and brickyards, now is the time to have some policy—

Mr. Holman interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: I must ask the member for Forrest to keep order.

Mr. McLARTY: —in regard to housing which could be put into operation quickly. There is a need, as we all know, for more houses in this country.

Mr. Lambert: You must remember that you killed the scheme that would have made that possible.

Mr. McLARTY: I do not remember helping to kill it. The member for Greenough (Mr. Patrick) referred to the building of flats. I would certainly help him to retard such building which is not in the interests of this country. I do not regard flats as healthy for the children who have to live in them, although I admit that very few children are to be found in flats.

A suggestion has been made that legislation should be introduced immediately to deal with mortgages and the financial institutions generally. I hope the Government will not rush into this matter. Such legislation is not always in the best interests of the State. When I think of the crop of emergency legislation we put through some years ago, I cannot fail to remember the hardships it has entailed. I admit that much of it was necessary, but some has caused considerable hardship, and when that hardship is likely to end, I do not know and I doubt whether anyone can tell me. Seemingly once emergency legislation is put on the statute-book it becomes permanent, and nobody can tell when it is likely to be terminated. There has been a good deal of criticism of banks and insurance companies in the course of this debate. I consider that insurance offices are one of the most desirable institutions we have. Insurance is merely the savings of hundreds of thousands of people throughout the country, and to interfere with those savings would cause hardship to people who could ill-afford to bear it. I do not wish to defend the banks, but people outside Parliament seem to have the impression that one or two men own the banks, whereas the average holding of a bank shareholder in Australia is about £500 or £600. Before we rush into passing legislation to deal with those institutions, it should receive very serious consideration. Even the talk of a moratorium has repercussions. Though such legislation is likely to give the debtor some relief, we should ask ourselves, "What will be the position of the lender?" He probably will need some relief as well, and it is difficult to know how far-reaching will be the effects of such legislation.

I should like to say a few words in reply to the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Tonkin). I cannot but commend him

for his enthusiasm in the matter of doing something for the defence of this country and creating similar enthusiasm in others, but I do not think that his criticism of the Commonwealth Government was justified. The Commonwealth has been working under tremendous difficulties. First of all compulsory military training was abolished. Then the cry was raised that no troops should be sent overseas. Some people maintained that the only place where Australian soldiers should be required to fight was on Australian soil.

Mr. Holman: What are they doing now?

Mr. McLARTY: There was no end of opposition to the compulsory register, and generally speaking there have been organisations that have been doing all they could to embarrass the Commonwealth in its war efforts.

Mr. Fox: Do you say the same thing in regard to the additional powers recently granted?

Mr. McLARTY: I am speaking of the past; to deal with the present without referring to the past is difficult. I think the member for North-East Fremantle could not have taken these matters into consideration when he criticised the Commonwealth for the war work it has done. In the circumstances I believe the Commonwealth has done remarkably well.

Mr. Tonkin: Are you satisfied with things as they are?

Mr. Holman interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the member for Forrest to keep order. I have had occasion to warn him already.

Mr. McLARTY: I am satisfied that the Commonwealth Government is doing everything possible to rectify wrongs and put the country on a sound defence footing. The member for Subiaco (Mrs. Cardell-Oliver) asked a question of the Premier regarding concession fares on the railways for soldiers, and the Premier, in reply, said the matter was under consideration. My opinion is that the soldiers should be given concessions. Men in the Northam camp wishing to visit their home towns in my electorate have to pay 10s. 6d. or 13s. 6d. to travel there, and some of those men are on 2s. a day. That is wrong. They should be granted a flat rate and a very cheap rate.

Mr. Needham: Should not the Commonwealth Government provide it?

Mr. McLARTY: The Commonwealth does not run the State railways. Trains are run to and from the camp, and I cannot believe that the Commissioner of Railways would suffer any hardship if he made a considerable reduction in the fares.

Mr. Watts: The trains run whether the soldiers travel or not.

Mr. McLARTY: That is so. The other day the wife of a soldier in the A.I.F. had to pay 7s. 6d. in order to obtain copies of birth certificates of her children before she could collect her husband's pay.

Mr. Needham: Do you blame the Government for that?

Mr. McLARTY: Someone is certainly to blame, and the State certainly collected the 7s. 6d. The men in camp should be given all possible concessions.

When the Minister for Lands was speaking, he agreed that the Address-in-reply was productive of good. He told us that he had read all the speeches delivered during his absence and he quoted four good ones. But those four were on his own side, and I am afraid the Minister has been using only one eye because I can assure him that some excellent speeches have been delivered by members on this side of the House.

On motion by Mrs. Cardell-Oliver, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.24 p.m.