

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 30th August, 1944.

	PAGE
Questions: Vermin destruction, as to strychnine supplies	325
Goldmining, as to cyanide supplies	325
Motion: Fremantle Harbour Trust Act, to disallow bagged-wheat charges regulation	325
Address-in-reply, tenth day	327

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

QUESTIONS (2).

VERMIN DESTRUCTION.

As to Strychnine Supplies.

Hon. F. R. WELSH asked the Chief Secretary:

(i) Is the Government aware that pastoralists and farmers are unable to obtain sufficient quantities of strychnine to poison vermin—particularly foxes and dingoes?

(ii) Is it a fact—(a) that only limited quantities of strychnine are permitted to be imported from India; (b) that the quota thereof allocated to Western Australia is not nearly sufficient to meet requirements; (c) that supplies of strychnine from Great Britain, also, are available?

(iii) Will the Government approach the Federal authority concerned, and impress upon it the absolute necessity that supplies of strychnine be immediately made available in Western Australia, from whatsoever source, to combat this definite menace?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:—

(i) The Government has drawn the attention of users to the shortage of strychnine and suggested substitutes, pending additional supplies becoming available.

(ii) (a) The only restriction upon imports is lack of available supply.

(b) 18,576 ozs. have been allotted Western Australia, for delivery by December, 1944. This is more than normally used.

(c) It has only been possible to obtain small quantities from Great Britain.

(iii) The supply indicated above followed representations of the Government.

GOLDMINING.

As to Cyanide Supplies.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS asked the Chief Secretary:—

(i) Is the Government aware that licenses to import cyanide from Canada are not now being granted, owing to the alleged fact that cyanide is now available from the United Kingdom?

(ii) (a) Are supplies available from the United Kingdom; and, if so, (b) what quantity has been allocated to this State?

(iii) If supplies are not available, is the Government aware of the urgent necessity that prompt action be taken to obtain sufficient supplies to avoid the closing down of any mine in this State, thereby adversely affecting those towns dependent on the gold-mining industry, particularly Kalgoorlie, Boulder and Norseman?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:—

(i) Yes.

(ii) (a), (b) Certain supplies are available from United Kingdom, and 670 tons are now being supplied and a request for 65 tons monthly is being considered.

(iii) The Government recently approached the Commonwealth authorities strongly urging that imports from both England and Canada be permitted, as it is most unlikely that one country can meet all requirements at present.

MOTION—FREMANTLE HARBOUR TRUST ACT.

To Disallow Bagged-Wheat Charges Regulation.

Debate resumed from the previous day on the following motion by Hon. C. F. Baxter—

That new regulation No. 148 made under the Fremantle Harbour Trust Act, 1902, as published in the "Government Gazette" of the 24th December, 1943, and laid on the Table of the House on the 1st August, 1944, be and is hereby disallowed.

HON. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [4.38]: I support Mr. Baxter now as I supported him last year when he moved a similar motion. It is a matter of surprise that the same subject is brought up again by the Government. Apparently the Government considers it fair game to impose another levy upon the farmers. For many years the Fremantle Harbour Trust Commissioners included a representative who

protected the interests of the wheat producers. One representative of the growers, Mr. Basil Murray, died, and Mr. Henry Tanner, a wheatgrower, was appointed to succeed him. Unfortunately the growers lost Mr. Tanner; and from that time forth farmers growing wheat and putting the whole of their produce over the gantries have never had anyone to look after their interests.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Who succeeded Mr. Tanner?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Mr. Mann.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Is he an ex-farmer or a farmer?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: He is not a representative of the wheatgrowers, but is, I understand, a union secretary. Of the other members of the Trust, one represents shipping interests, one the merchants and one the Treasury, and two represent Labour. There is every inducement for the Trust to increase the cost of handling—in the interests of Labour. Certainly nobody on the Trust has any interest in trying to reduce the cost to the farmer; he is fair game. The new regulation increases the cost of handling bagged-wheat by 100 per cent.; that is, the amount levied jumped from £50,000 to £100,000 from the time the change was made in June, 1943. That is an enormity. I look upon it as a ramp; I cannot see it in any other way. Ever since the farmers lost their representatives on the Trust they have been without representation, for although an appeal has been made to the Government to appoint a farmer's representative, the request has been refused.

The farmers' property was thrown to the wolves. I cannot view the matter in any other light. I draw attention to the fact that this is a method the Government adopts to defeat the intentions of members who desire to see respect paid to proposals passed by this Parliament for good and sufficient reasons. I congratulate the Chief Secretary on the case he submitted on behalf of the Fremantle Harbour Trust. He claimed that the costs to the Trust had increased and that we must ensure that the Trust received sufficient revenue to prevent a loss being recorded. For a number of years we have been operating under the rates that were originally fixed and even if there has been a loss—which I query—the Government should admit that this has been more than

made up by the enormous profits from handling farmers' products.

The Chief Secretary: There is no profit at all.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: On other lines there have been profits galore.

The Chief Secretary: The only point to be decided is whether the Trust should be recouped the actual cost of handling bagged-wheat. That is the only question involved.

Hon. J. Cornell: The alternative is to hold it here in bulk.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: The attitude of the State Government conforms to that of the Commonwealth Government. When the Commonwealth Government took over the handling of the whole of the farmers' wheat it directed that Western Australian wheat should be handled in bags. That decision was made within the last couple of years. Fortunately we had on the Australian Wheat Board two farmers' representatives—Messrs. Teasdale and Diver—who combated that proposal, pointing out to the Australian Wheat Board that Western Australia had adopted its own method of handling wheat, which was in bulk. That cost the Government of Western Australia nothing, because the farmers themselves, at their own expense, installed the whole system of bulk-handling. Incidentally the railways are making huge profits as a result because the department derives wonderful revenue from the sites—which were originally only heaps of sand—on which the bulk-handling bins are erected. In addition, wheat is carried in bags at a lower freight than that carried in bulk, the department having imposed an extra charge per ton on bulk wheat. Nothing was done towards helping the farmers to carry their wheat in bulk.

The Government would not construct vans to transport the wheat, so vans had to be lined with canvas and that was done at the expense of the farming community. That cost comes out of the proceeds from their wheat. The Midland Railway Co. followed the lead of the Government in imposing the extra charge on the carriage of wheat, but ultimately the company found that the carriage of wheat was so profitable that there was no need to continue making the extra levy on bulk wheat and consequently decided to cancel that extra payment. Accordingly bulk wheat is carried at the same rate

as bagged-wheat over the Midland railway. That was the attitude of a private company but from that day to this the Government has never seen fit to make a similar reduction. Although the Government knows full well that the carriage of bulk wheat has been highly profitable to it, this unreasonable and atrocious charge is made, leading to a doubling of the cost of handling bagged-wheat at Fremantle.

There will be every inducement to increase the charges if we approve of the existing regulation. The tendency will continue for ever. Probably it will be said that the regulation constituted a war measure. When hostilities cease we will, I trust, revert to the bulk-handling of wheat. I quite understand that owing to circumstances arising out of the war it has been necessary to despatch a larger proportion of bagged-wheat from Fremantle. But it must be remembered that when the Commonwealth Government assumed control of the export of wheat, the representatives of the farmers on the Australian Wheat Board were deprived of their seats. I refer to Mr. Teasdale and Mr. Diver. They were got rid of because they protested that Western Australia could handle wheat in bulk far more cheaply than was possible in any other State. They also asserted that the wheat handling system in this State was much more favourable than the systems operating elsewhere.

The Chief Secretary: That sounds like one point favouring this Government's policy.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: It was not a matter of Government policy; it was in spite of the Government that bulk-handling was inaugurated. The Government wanted to continue handling wheat in bags.

The Chief Secretary: You should change your adviser.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Under the bulk-handling system extra facilities were installed at various railway sidings and the whole scheme operated highly successfully. I do not agree that the frightful increases in the cost of handling bagged-wheat should be approved, and I commend Mr. Baxter for his attitude in endeavouring to disallow the regulation.

On motion by Hon. A. Thomson, debate adjourned.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Tenth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. G. B. WOOD (East) [4.53]: I desire to join in the congratulations that have been extended to members who were re-elected to this Chamber, some with substantial majorities, others with majorities not so substantial.

Hon. L. Craig: What do you mean by that?

Hon. G. B. WOOD: Just what I said. In my congratulations I include those who were returned unopposed. I understand, from conversations with some of the older members, that the return of all ten members who sought re-election constitutes a record for this House. Generally, one or two fall by the wayside. In this instance we can all be highly satisfied with the result of the elections. I desire to make a few brief references to the recent Referendum, which I regard as the most important ever held apart from that dealing with the question of Federation. I wish to enter an emphatic protest regarding the wanton expenditure of public funds by the Commonwealth Government at such a time.

I do not refer so much to the expenditure on the Referendum itself, although I do not altogether agree with the taking off such a vote in wartime, but rather to the action of the Government in spending hundreds of thousands of pounds—how much the expenditure amounted to would be interesting to ascertain—in furtherance of the "Yes" vote. The Commonwealth Government fought the "No" voters with their own money! In my opinion no earlier Commonwealth Government was ever guilty of such a shocking action. We know what happened in the past when referenda were held by Governments led by Mr. Hughes, Mr. Menzies and others. The cases for the affirmative and the negative were put before the people, and that ended the propaganda.

On this occasion we had a lot of talk and the expenditure of a tremendous amount of money on propaganda. I understand the Commonwealth Government issued at least 20 pamphlets; I have seen 15 of them. We had the propaganda indulged in by Dr. Evatt. We have seen the full-page advertisements, of which some were not truthful, and others, if truthful, were

misleading. The Commonwealth Government told the people to vote "Yes," failing which they would not secure houses, they would lose their pensions, and so on. What is most amazing to me is that many people were led to believe, because of the utterances of Commonwealth Ministers who came here and of others as well, that there would not be any housing scheme if the Referendum did not result in approval of the Government's wishes. Yet within a week of an overwhelming "No" vote being recorded, a housing scheme was formulated as a result of a conference between representatives of the Commonwealth and State Governments. How they had the audacity to do that in view of their pre-Referendum statements, I cannot understand!

Hon. J. Cornell: You know them now.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I certainly do, and I enter my emphatic protest against what has been done. In my opinion, not sufficient protest has been made against the huge expenditure in advocacy of the "Yes" vote. While gratified at the defeat of the Government's proposals, I was very disappointed with the result of the voting in Western Australia. I was interested in the excuses made by the Prime Minister and his colleagues as to why the Referendum was not agreed to in the affirmative. I have made a note of some of the excuses. The Prime Minister, in a public statement, said he had been inclined to avoid holding a referendum in wartime. Perhaps that is so. Evidently he was over-ruled by a stronger mind—that of Dr. Evatt, I suppose. The Prime Minister also said that the Referendum had been prejudiced by the Commonwealth being engaged in a war. I do not think it was. If the Referendum had been held in peacetime there would have been a still more overwhelming majority of "No" votes.

Then again Dr. Evatt said that had there been more time there would have been a different tale to tell. I believe that if the Commonwealth Government and its spokesmen had had more time, the result would have been far more in opposition to their desires than it proved to be. I know that most people were heartily sick of the whole thing. I took every opportunity to turn my wireless off when I heard people indulging in Referendum propaganda. Yet Dr. Evatt had the audacity to claim that there was not sufficient time! The propaganda

availed of in Western Australia—I do not know what was the position in the other States—was such that as the people were told that if they did not vote "Yes" they would be done out of this and done out of that, they finally did not know where they stood. I suppose there was some excuse for the attitude of the people in this State because of the statements made by the Ministers of the Crown.

Hon. J. Cornell: The outstanding feature of the Referendum was the Queensland vote.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: Yes. I hope such an episode will never again occur in the history of Australia. So much for the Referendum. Dealing now with the Electoral Act, I am glad Mr. Baxter has indicated his intention to move for the appointment of a Select Committee to consider that legislation with a view to recommending necessary amendments. I certainly believe the Electoral Act is long overdue for a thorough investigation, particularly with regard to the sections dealing with postal voting. I am not going to suggest what I think about it now, but will give a few of my experiences in regard to postal voting in connection with the last Legislative Council election. I believe I shall be able to convince some members that it is desirable to appoint a Select Committee, and that many aspects of our electoral system require rectification.

There should be more responsibility evidenced than at present in connection with our postal vote officers. When an election is being held certain paid officials should be posted in specified places to take postal votes and do nothing else. I made arrangements for certain people at Cottesloe to visit the Town Clerk's office there and have their postal votes taken. I went to the Town Clerk and told him that these people were calling on the following day or the day after in order to record their postal votes, and whilst he agreed that he was a postal vote officer he said that he had no papers and would not be able to take the votes.

Hon. J. Cornell: That was his fault.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: Yes. There should be available responsible persons to look after such people. The date I am speaking of was some ten days before the election. I journeyed from Perth to Cottesloe and took with me all the necessary papers, envelopes, etc., so that when these people called at the Town Clerk's office their votes

might be taken. One does not expect persons to have to go from one postal vote officer to another before they can record their votes. I found that the officer in question was sick and I had all my trouble for nothing. I do not know now whether those votes were ever taken. On another occasion I saw the Town Clerk at Guildford who said that, although he had been a postal vote officer, he had resigned. I went to another man who said that he had received no instructions and could not take any votes. I told him that the nominations had been mentioned in the paper and suggested that he could well take the postal votes, but he said he had received no instructions. I suppose he received them later on. Seeing that the names of the candidates had appeared in the paper I cannot see why a postal vote officer should not accept the postal votes.

Hon. J. Cornell: He did not know his job.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: It is difficult enough to get people to vote without having this sort of thing going on. I told another man that he could record his vote at the office of the Perth Road Board, but when he went there he was told that he could not vote for a candidate for the East Province, though he could have done so for a seat in the Assembly.

Hon. J. Cornell: Those people did not know their job.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: We should have responsible people to look after these things. A list of officers is available and one naturally assumes it is all right to send voters to them in order that they may record their votes. There is much room for improvement at the Perth electoral office itself. One cannot expect old people to tramp upstairs in order to record their votes and, furthermore, there is no notice posted outside to say that people can record their votes in the building. Two or three of my friends had a job to find a place in which to vote.

I saw one old gentleman in Barrack-street who did not know where to vote, but I was able to tell him. Surely it is possible to post a man on the ground floor and put up a notice some two or three weeks before an election so that the votes of people may be taken by that man. These are matters which could well be looked into. Then there is the method of enrolling for the Legislative Council. I said to one man I know that he might as well record his vote, but he said he was not on the roll although he had received no notifi-

cation to that effect. When people are put on the roll, why should they not be notified?

Hon. L. B. Bolton: They are notified if their names are removed.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: Yes. If a person is put on the Legislative Council roll, why should he not be notified? He receives such a notification in connection with the Commonwealth or State Assembly rolls. Names of people are taken off that should not be removed from it. I know of many instances of that sort of thing.

Hon. A. Thomson: And not notified.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: Some are notified. People accept the position and say they suppose they are not eligible to vote for the Legislative Council.

Hon. J. Cornell: As a rule they do not take the trouble to reply.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: That is so. Many people who have received a notification that they have been taken off the roll imagine that they are not eligible and therefore do not have to vote. The methods employed are all wrong. A lady in Northam who owned property and lived in her own house and had never moved from Northam was taken off the roll, but does not know why. She says she was not notified. I do not know what methods are adopted, but perhaps all these things could be inquired into by a Select Committee and the necessary alterations made. I now wish to refer to some of the propaganda which emanated from Trades Hall in regard to the abolition of the Legislative Council or altering the franchise. Many people think they must own property before they can vote. They are told that this is the House of capitalists and a rich man's place.

Hon. L. Craig: They ought to look at our overdrafts.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: People get that idea. I said to a bank manager, "You must go on the roll." He replied, "I am not eligible because I do not own a house." I know two or three instances of the same kind. I said to this manager, "You live on the bank premises," and he replied, "I do not pay any rent." I said, "That does not matter. A man has only to occupy a place worth 6s. 10d. a week to be put on the roll." Surely that is a reasonable enough franchise. People have all this propaganda pumped into them and do not know where they stand. The sooner they are educated on the matter the better. Another piece of propaganda

is in regard to the number of persons who record their votes for the Upper House. I saw a statement made recently that only about one-ninth of people on the roll record their votes.

Voting for this Chamber is not compulsory. I venture to say that if people did not have to vote for the Legislative Assembly there would be just as low a vote for that Chamber as there is for this one. At the time of the election for the East Province there was also a by-election for the Swan electorate. I took the trouble to segregate that roll and found there were 1,370 persons in the Swan who were eligible to vote for the Legislative Council. I gave them some special attention, and I know they would all go to the poll. I subsequently found that 500 of them did not vote at all for the Council election. They went to the poll in connection with the Swan by-election because they were compelled to do so, but they did not trouble to vote for the Legislative Council, although they received plenty of attention from me as well as from my opponent. Many people do not seem to want to vote and appear to be hurt when they are obliged to vote. If they can get out of going to the poll they do so. Many people say that they do not want to vote and only vote when compelled to do so.

Hon. L. Craig: Scores of people make that remark.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: They seem to want to get out of voting if they possibly can. The figures in connection with the Swan electorate are illuminating. Some 5,000 people went to the poll in the 32 polling booths, and 500 did not vote for the Legislative Council candidates because they did not have to. That shows the difference between compulsory and non-compulsory voting. It is the answer to why we have so small a number of people recording their votes. We would have the same thing in connection with the Legislative Assembly if it were not compulsory for votes to be recorded. Certain people should be told off for two or three weeks before an election for the sole purpose of taking postal votes. People should not have to wander all over the place to record such votes. Such officers should be paid and would have to carry out their duties.

I know we cannot have absentee voting as it is conducted in connection with Commonwealth elections because of unopposed seats. I hope the House will agree to the appoint-

ment of a Select Committee and meanwhile I will say no more about the subject. With regard to rural matters, we know how important superphosphate is to Australia. I have often wondered why the American Forces, in particular, have done nothing about retaking Nauru Island where our superphosphate deposits are. I do not know whether this Government could make representations to the Commonwealth Government with a view to Nauru Island being taken in the near future. Other islands all around that one have been re-occupied. In view of the importance of superphosphate to Australia, and particularly Western Australia, I am surprised that nothing has been done. No one seems to care very much about the matter.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: You do not expect us to advise the Army authorities to do this, do you?

Hon. G. B. WOOD: It may not have occurred to them that it is necessary to retake the island.

Hon. L. Craig: It is of No. 1 priority.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: Definitely, as is also the manufacture of the machinery necessary to handle the deposits. In view of the importance of this question to Australia I hope something can be done at no distant date to have at all events the machinery got ready for installation against the time when the island is re-taken. Apparently it has been by-passed altogether. Our Allies are taking on much harder jobs.

I desire to touch on some Agricultural Bank matters. Some of our road boards are perturbed because the bank is taking all the proceeds of farmers' crops and not making provision for the payment of rates owing to the road boards. Some of our country road boards are in a very bad way indeed, as they practically have to depend upon the payment of these rates, for instance, the Lake Grace and Wongan Hills Road Boards. I believe that 70 per cent. of the rates owing to the Wongan Hills Road Board are in respect of properties mortgaged to the Agricultural Bank. Only yesterday I received a letter from the secretary of that board. I shall read it, as it clearly explains the position—

The matter of outstanding Agricultural Bank rates is causing my board considerable concern, and in view of the fact that of an amount of £2,293 18s. 9d. outstanding at 30th June, 1944, Agricultural Bank rates amounted to £1,989 12s. 7d., leaving a balance of only £304 6s. 2d. against other clients, any assist-

ance you could render in having a reduction made by the Agricultural Bank would be appreciated by the board. We have on one or two occasions issued summonses against defaulters who were Agricultural Bank clients but this does not seem to be of much benefit as these people claim that the Bank takes all proceeds and will not advance the money for the payment of rates.

Members will note that there is owing to the Wongan Hills board nearly £2,000 by Agricultural Bank clients, while only £304 is owing by other ratepayers. The bank will not do anything about the matter. It seems to me very wrong that the bank should not assist the board by releasing at least some of the money to pay the outstanding rates. Other boards are concerned besides the Wongan Hills board. I trust the Minister will give me a reply on this point. I have on previous occasions in this Chamber had something to say about meat supplies for Western Australia. Two years ago I warned those concerned that if they did not leave meat price-fixing alone there would be a shortage of meat. I told the late Mr. W. A. White then that he was dealing with a matter of which he knew nothing and that the result would be that fat stock would not be available for the market. That position has arisen.

We are faced today with a definite shortage. However, I want to be quite fair; the shortage which we see looming ahead is due not only to price-fixing but also to the drought. A great deal of the shortage has been brought about by producers not bothering to fatten their sheep in view of the high prices obtainable for wool. People with 1,000 or 2,000 wethers run them on their property for wool, and that practice will continue as long as wool remains at its present price. Those responsible for price-fixing know very little about this matter. I pointed out to the House three years ago that price-fixing of meat was practically impossible, as there were such great disparities in the quality of the meat and in the cost of producing it. Some producers pay more interest than others; some producers have better properties than others. I shall read to the House what Mr. R. B. Williamson said on this matter recently. He is the Western Australian representative on the Australian Meat Board and what he says confirms what I said some years ago. He says—

(1) The failure of the Minister of Commerce, Mr. Scully, to accept the Meat Board's plan of July, 1942, to increase production and

give producers security in so doing for a specified term; (2) disregard until recently of the advice to increase lamb export prices to give the producer the same relative increase as producers of other types of meat and wool (one probable effect of this has been that in Victoria about 400,000 less ewes were mated for export lambs than the previous year); (3) failure of rationing to produce the estimated surplus anticipated by the Meat Industry Commission; (4) lack of control over strikers in abattoirs; (5) curtailment of transport for store and fat stock in the Eastern States through coal shortage, and (6) the entire lack of co-operation with producers by the Minister of Commerce (Mr. Scully) and the Controller of Meat Supplies (Mr. Tonkin). A local example of this was seen during the recent visit of these gentlemen to this State—

That was while the Referendum was on.

—when neither considered it worth while to discuss the expected difficulties of supplies in Western Australia during the ensuing months with either producer organisations or with even the members appointed by the Minister as advisers to the Deputy Controller of Meat Supplies (Mr. Farrell).

To me it seems appalling that such people will not even seek the advice of the elected representatives of the State. We do not wish to send a special representative. We have the Australian Meat Board, on which all the producers of Australia are represented, but that board will not even consult the producers throughout Australia. As an example, Mr. Scully and Mr. Tonkin made an arrangement regarding the price of meat for export to Great Britain and did not even consult the Australian Meat Board, notwithstanding that representations were made to them to do so. If this sort of thing is to continue, I fail to see how we can get people to produce mutton. When I saw Mr. White some years ago, he said, "We will come and take it from the farmers." I replied that it would not be fat. Now we have got into this jam; but, as I said, I want to be quite fair.

Part of the trouble has been caused by the drought, but quite a lot has been caused by this silly interference, which will continue as long as wool retains its present price. I desire to touch briefly on soldier land settlement. I do hope that those who are concerned in putting soldiers on the land will use the utmost caution. I believe that in 1939, when people were talking of placing soldiers on the land, they said the soldiers would not go there. However, prices were lower then than they are today. I hope we

shall not be led astray by the present high prices in any scheme for soldier land settlement; let us base any such scheme on the prices prevailing in a normal year. It is all very well to say that Mr. Scully can keep prices up; he may do so for a time, but he cannot do it indefinitely.

Hon. J. Cornell: We are watching that aspect of it.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: Let us put the soldiers on the land on that basis, with a debt as if the prices were those prevailing in 1939. That is the point I make. Much has been said during the debate about our high schools. I notice in today's paper that Mr. Clare has said that a big programme is in hand for the erection of additional schools. That is very pleasing, but I hope some attention will be given to our existing schools. I desire to refer particularly to the Northam High School. Last year on the Address-in-reply I mentioned that children had to walk right across Northam to the domestic science centre which was established a mile away, but the only answer I got was that that was all right because children in Perth and Fremantle had to do it also.

Today the Northam High School is hopelessly overcrowded and I trust the Government will do something about it very shortly. It is not a big job, such as erecting a new school. As I was passing the school the other day I saw to my amazement from 100 to 200 bicycles parked on the footpath. I thought it extraordinary that these bicycles should be thrown on to the footpath and be exposed to the weather. I accordingly spoke to one of the children and asked how many bicycles there were at the school. I was told there were about 200. Some boys had a little shed to accommodate their bicycles, but the rest were parked in the street. This seems to me to be very wrong, especially in view of the shortage of tyres. Surely a shed could be built to hold the machines.

The Chief Secretary: Would you give it first priority?

Hon. G. B. WOOD: Yes. It would not cost very much. It is unsightly to see all those bicycles parked in the street, besides which their exposure to the weather is deteriorating them. Dr. Hislop mentioned the retirement of Dr. Atkinson, and I would like to bring up the dismissal of Mr. Lee, the headmaster of the Northam High School.

Mr. Lee reached the retiring age early last year and was asked if he would like to continue in his position indefinitely on account of the war. About two weeks before the end of the last term of 1943 he received a telephone message from the post office; the official telephoned a telegram to him stating that he was finished with in two weeks. That is how he was dismissed. I would like to hear from the Minister on this matter, as it is an unfair way to treat a man like Mr. Lee, who was till then the only headmaster the High School had had. He did not mention the matter to me, nor did he ask me to bring it up. I consider the way in which he was dismissed was scandalous. He had been at the school for some 25 years and that is how the department got rid of him. He naturally thought he would be retaining his position until the end of the war. He has many years of service left in him. As soon as he retired, three secondary schools ran after him—the Wesley College, Scotch College and Hale School. He is now teaching at the Hale School.

The Chief Secretary: Did you check up on that?

Hon. G. B. WOOD: Yes. Had he received the telegram, that would have been bad enough; but it was telephoned to him. The notice he got may have been three weeks before the end of the term, but I believe it was only two, otherwise I am positive about the facts of his dismissal. I have had a good deal to say about the pass around the Greenmount tunnel and I desire to congratulate the Government on having put the work in hand, but why should only 20 men be employed on it? I am not altogether blaming the State Government.

Hon. J. Cornell: Why wait 40 years to do the work?

Hon. G. B. WOOD: There is something in that remark. Twenty men are engaged on that work like a few ants shifting sand to an ant heap. At the present rate of progress 12 months will elapse before the work is completed. I have asked questions on this matter, about the loss of time and the loss of money involved, yet our Government cannot induce the Commonwealth Government to release more than 20 men to fool about on the job that they are doing now. I support the motion.

HON. H. SEDDON (North-East): I would like to add my voice to those that have been previously raised in extending congratulations to the members who have succeeded in being returned. As the last speaker pointed out, it is a rather unique experience for this House. Usually one or two fall by the wayside at the triennial elections. There are a few matters in regard to the Goldfields that I would like to bring under the notice of the Government, and this, of course, is the occasion when the opportunity to do so arises. During the debate on the Supply Bill I asked the question: What is the Commonwealth Government's attitude in regard to goldmining? Since then we have had the opportunity of hearing from the Federal Minister, Senator Keane. He expressed the opinion that the Commonwealth Government was seriously concerned with the future of goldmining.

On the same occasion the Premier of the State also advanced the same views. He was supported by Mr. Johnson, the Federal member for Kalgoorlie, and one would expect to find him concerned with a matter that so vitally affects his own district. At the same time we had an expression of opinion from Mr. Ward who is, perhaps, an even more important member of the Commonwealth Government. He said that he, for his part, could not see that there was any use in taking gold out of the ground in one part of the world and putting it in a hole in the ground in another part of the world. Of course, that is quite a common expression. Considerable use has been made of it during the last few years. The obvious reason has been overlooked. The reason why it has been placed in a hole in the ground in some other part of the world is that no Government has been game to put it into circulation.

If any Government did so it would make such an exposure of the way in which the paper merchants have trafficked in the currency of every country that the people would see what has been done to them by the carefully managed currencies, and by the manner in which they have been manipulated, very frequently to the disadvantage of the citizen. So I would like to know, first of all, just exactly what the Commonwealth Government intends to do in regard to the goldmining industry, and how soon we may expect that industry to receive the consideration to which it is entitled. My reason for saying that is that the

mines at Kalgoorlie have been battling for some 12 or 18 months in an endeavour to get something like reasonable and continuous fuel supplies. But they are now in the same position as are many industries in the Eastern States.

Latterly they have been living from hand to mouth in regard to fuel supplies, and it only needs a particularly heavy wet day or two to close down the Kalgoorlie Power Station and thereby affect many of the mines on the Golden Mile. Representations were made to the Commonwealth Government with a view to overcoming this difficulty, but so far I have seen no reply, or indication of any action being taken. Reference has been made to the fact that the Commonwealth Government has assisted the industry by providing the sum of £100,000 in order to keep in condition those mines that were closed down because of the manpower position. Some two years have past since that arrangement was made.

Hon. J. Cornell: More than that.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Yes, and we find ourselves in this position that, while a certain amount of maintenance work has been kept going on the mines, it has not been anything like sufficient to keep the mines in such a condition that they could be readily worked again. The fact that in many cases machinery has been taken from these mines by the military authorities or by the Civil Construction Corps for use in more important war work has also been mentioned. That is all right, but the fact remains that this industry needs a considerable amount of attention if it is to carry out what is expected of it after the war in the way of providing employment for a considerable number of men during the change-over period.

I also raised the question as to the price of gold and as to exactly what steps the Commonwealth Government has taken to secure the world price as against the fixed price of £10 an ounce. A reply did not come directly, but I did see an article in the Press a day or two afterwards in which was set out the arrangement made with the Imperial Government. It stated that the fixed price of £10 an ounce had been arrived at by agreement with the Government. But the whole story was not told. Reference was made to South Africa and the fact that South Africa had raised this question, and that the Minister there had

definitely settled the situation by his reply. However, as I say the whole story was not told in our Press and I think the people in this State should know it.

I have here an extract from "The Economist" of the 22nd April, 1944. "The Economist" is a journal which is accepted as being of sufficient importance and authority to be quoted with confidence. This extract commences—

Mr. Hofmeyr, the South African Minister of Finance, has this week effectively answered all queries which have recently been raised in South Africa about the open market price for its gold and the policy the Union should follow in the sale of its gold output.

It later continues—

The South African Reserve Bank takes such gold as the Union requires for its own needs and the Bank of England is given the option to purchase the balance at the official price of 168s. per fine ounce. This gold is paid for at Capetown or Durban and the British Treasury, for whom the Bank of England acts, bears the expense of shipping the gold to London or New York, or more latterly, Bombay.

The report goes on to describe the difficulties in South Africa to market that gold in Bombay. A little further on it states—

A few months ago, added Mr. Hofmeyr, the British Government had advised the Union of its intention to sell gold in India. Mr. Hofmeyr pointed out that the Government in India was maintaining the rupee rate despite inflation, that the British Government, therefore, had to pay much more for its requirements in India and that, by selling gold at the open market price it could, to some extent, offset the effect of these inflated commodity prices and at the same time combat inflation by offering Indians gold for hoarding. The Union had pointed out to the British Government that it had to pay rupee value for certain purchases in India and that, to that extent, the Union was importing Indian inflation. A case was, therefore, pleaded for allowing the Union some of the benefit of the higher gold price in India. An agreement has been reached whereby the British Government is giving the Union facilities for sharing in the sales of gold on the Indian market to the extent justified by the Union's imports from India.

The latter part of that statement is the comment not made public in our Australian Press, and it does indicate that the Commonwealth Government has not yet cleared up the situation, nor has it answered the question as to whether it sold gold at the increased price and whether, if so, it received the benefit. Nor were we told whether the Commonwealth Government used that

gold, as did the South African Government, to make purchases in India and thus get the benefit of the inflated price. In any case, the gold producers of this country are entitled to know just exactly what the position is and to have it clearly stated.

Hon. J. Cornell: South Africa is dependent on its gold, but we are not.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Gold did form a very important part of the economy of Western Australia. A statement appeared in the Press this morning in connection with the quantity of gold and sterling being held against our note issue. Ever since the war started the particulars of the actual amount of gold and the actual amount of paper behind the paper currency that we issue to the people have not been clearly defined; at least not for a long time.

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch: It was a long time before the war.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The latest figures I saw showed that only a very minute proportion of gold was held behind the note issue. The balance consisted, more or less, of British securities. In other words we had paper to support paper! It seems to me that the Commonwealth Government could do a great deal for the goldmining industry by increasing the amount of gold behind its currency, in spite of the fact that a good many people have the idea that gold is no longer required, and that it does not form part of modern fiduciary systems. The best answer to that is for any country to be game enough to issue gold currency and see what happens.

Another matter I would like to mention concerns the School of Mines at Kalgoorlie. Through many years the school has established a reputation of which Western Australia should be proud. Numbers of students have been turned out of that school with a mining diploma, and occupied important positions in the mining industry, not only in this State but in other parts of the world. One country was particularly eager to get students who had qualified at the Kalgoorlie School of Mines to work its mines, and it found these men very valuable. Men have been sent from overseas to this State in order to attend the School of Mines, and to get their training in our mines. Their ultimate objective has been to get their diploma at the school. So, the Kalgoorlie School of Mines has established its status not only in this State, but outside. There is one aspect that ought to be stressed and it is an aspect

on which I would like a pronouncement from the Minister.

Why is not the School of Mines directly connected with the University of Western Australia, and why has there been a sustained and persistent attempt through the years to reduce the status of the School of Mines to that of a technical school? By adopting a policy of this sort, we are definitely damaging our own country and its students. The young men who study at the School of Mines and gain their diplomas are the ones to whom we must look to form the professional staff of our mining industry, and if we place them in the position of being able to show only a diploma obtained in an institution that our own State regards as a technical school, we are definitely interfering with the prospects of those young men in the career they have undertaken.

Hon. A. Thomson: Is the Government or the University responsible for that?

Hon. H. SEDDON: I should say the Government is responsible to the extent that it is maintaining the School of Mines. This policy was started by the Government in the time of Mr. Davy, and has not been remedied. The time has arrived when it ought to be remedied. I appeal to the Government, which a good many goldfields people regard as a coastal Government, to take up this question and definitely put the School of Mines at Kalgoorlie on the same basis with regard to our University as the School of Mines in Adelaide has in relation to the University of Adelaide. In other words, our School of Mines ought to be regarded as part and parcel of the University, doing the mining section of the University work.

Having dealt with the status of the School of Mines, there is another aspect of the school's activity that should receive a great deal more attention and about which much more might be stated than has been said. I refer to the very valuable work being carried on by the research laboratory associated with the school. This laboratory has done exceedingly valuable work in the past. There is more than one mine operating in this State solely as a result of tests which were made by the research staff into the matter of dealing with the ore and advising the mine-owners of the best process to put into operation. One mine, which has a reputation for low costs and was showing a good profit at those low costs, was only able to start operating after research work had been un-

dertaken on its behalf by the staff of the laboratory. The staff showed the process that could be instituted; it was a process of which other people had not thought. That mine was in operation until a shortage of manpower caused it to close down, but it will be able to restart as soon as manpower is available.

The conditions under which the members of the research staff are operating leave much to be desired. One can go into that laboratory and see machines for every part of mining practice installed by the staff to make the tests. One can see other machines which are simply associated with the laboratory work carrying out their valuable tests. Work is being done in connection with an industry other than gold, the result of which we hope will increase considerably the value of a particular product that is urgently needed for war purposes. The work, however, is being done under considerable difficulty. Members can imagine the conditions under which these men are working in that climate when they are trying to secure delicate re-action or when endeavouring to ascertain exactly what treatment would be best for a certain class of ore. The laboratory is about the size of this Chamber and open to the infiltration of dust and other substances which interferes with the work. When it comes to the most delicate part of the work such as that involving the operating of the balances and also office work, it is necessary to go into the school proper. Surely a laboratory of this description is entitled to receive a little more consideration! The conditions under which these men work should be made more suitable to the work and more congenial all round.

Mention of the work of the School of Mines leads me to remark that a system has grown up in Australia that needs to be overhauled. The C.S.I.R., has done a lot of purely scientific work, but it has also tackled and solved problems which have saved Australia literally millions of pounds. I might indicate the outstanding achievement—the fact that by research work the scientists were able to combat and overcome the prickly pear curse over so many millions of acres of land in Queensland and northern New South Wales. Yet not one penny was made available to the C.S.I.R. by the people who benefited most. The institution was kept going entirely by Government grants. In the working of the School of Mines, the same thing applies. A considerable amount

of time and money is spent in carrying out this research work, and so far as I know not one penny has been paid by those who have benefited most. While this attitude to the industry certainly reflects great credit on the Mines Department, it does not seem to be sound commercially, and when we contrast it with the attitude adopted in the United States of America, where thousands of men are engaged in pure research work in the various Universities, we find that the arrangements between the commercial institutions and the Universities is quite different from the attitude adopted in Western Australia or even in the Commonwealth. I would like to read a paragraph dealing with this matter:—

Under the system introduced by Robert Kennedy Duncan, of the Mellon Institute, Pittsburgh, it is possible for a firm of relatively small size to establish a fellowship at a central research institution. The fellow, supported by the firm, has the advantage of associating with other scientists and of the use of superior equipment, which includes not only the laboratory but the library and machine shop. The findings of the fellow are at the disposal of the donor.

The 370 page report prepared by a special committee of the National Research Council was issued in 1941, by the National Resources Planning Board. In 1940, 2,350 companies employed 70,033 persons in 3,480 laboratories. More than half were professionally trained. Chemists represented 22.5 per cent. of the total and engineers next with 21.4 per cent.

There is an aspect of research work that might well be investigated by the Government. While these men are doing a lot of valuable work, not only in mining and engineering, but also in other directions, there should be a scheme whereby the discoveries they make should be recognised. In view of what is involved, I hope the Government will see its way to take advantage of the suggestion and do something along the same lines with respect to our School of Mines laboratory. I again stress the need for seeing that the conditions under which the men work are made more congenial in order that their efficiency may definitely be improved.

Incidentally, connected with this subject is the question of the scientific library. This is a very important matter. I understand that the scientific library in connection with the research institute is not kept as up-to-date as it might be. When we realise the tremendous progress that has been and is

being made, not only in mining practice but also in scientific work of all descriptions, surely it is necessary that the library should receive attention! Not only books but also periodicals should be provided and made available to the staff, so that their knowledge of what is happening elsewhere might be kept up-to-date. The work done at the School of Mines has been very valuable, and the Government should do something in the way of propaganda to show the nature of the work and the value of it to goldmining as well as to other branches of the mining industry.

In the years preceding the application of the flotation process, which made such a difference to the cost of goldmining, the staff of the School of Mines was engaged on flotation research and advocated that this method should be applied to the mines on the Golden Mile. Some of the staff are today investigating further developments in mining practice which might have as revolutionary an effect on the mining practice of the future as the introduction of the flotation process had in the past. These facts should be made known, and the work these men are doing should be recognised by the people of the State. I do not suppose that one in a thousand of the population knows anything about the work or its value, but these men go on working quietly day after day, trying to solve the problems that are presented to them. We have a museum at the School of Mines. I do not think there is a known mineral specimen of which cannot be found in that museum. Yet I doubt whether there are many people in the State who know of that, and fewer still who are aware that information can be obtained by referring to the School of Mines in the event of difficulties being experienced with minerals with which they are brought into contact.

Now I want to refer to a matter that is, I think, exercising the minds of most of our fellow citizens; and that is the question of just how far Governments have gone as regards dealing with the very important question of post war reconstruction. The course of the war has brightened considerably, so much so that people today are beginning to ask the question more and more urgently. They have been promised a lot of things, but I think they want a little more definite information and a bit more definite evidence too, as to just exactly how

far, and by what method, the reconstruction is to be carried out. A very significant announcement was made the other day that the Empire training scheme was to be discontinued. Emphasis has been laid on the fact that Australia would be required to participate more and more in the production of food, not only with regard to continuance of the war, but also in order to assist in post-war supplies of food to those European countries which have been over-run and deprived of their food supplies.

A most interesting statement was made by Professor Copland when he was recently in Western Australia with regard to the problem of post-war reconstruction, and I intend to refer to his remarks shortly, because they indicate the attitude of the economist on this question. Incidentally, the economist is coming in for a certain amount of publicity today; and it is interesting to note that in 1932, when we faced a national crisis in Australia, the economist came forward and did his best to alleviate the situation which he had had no part in creating but with regard to which, on the other hand, he had issued repeated warnings to the Australian people over many years. Because he was called in at the last minute to remedy the evils which had accumulated by reason of unsound methods, he received considerable abuse from a section of the community, largely the workers.

In view of the position today, when we are fighting through an even more important crisis and are confronted with economic problems of a greater magnitude than ever were faced before, the economist again comes in for a considerable amount of criticism. This time the criticism is coming from people who during the former crisis were very nice to the economist. I consider that the economist can take credit to himself to this extent, "Well, at any rate, whatever advice I am giving, I give quite realising that it is not going to please everybody; and I think I can claim to have been fair in my reports and in my statements, because I am attacked first from one side and then from the other." Personally I have a very great respect for the economist. My reason for that respect is that the groundwork inevitably associated with putting the country on a sound economic basis is that supplied by the economists through their statistical work, and through their reporting and advising on

the economic trends of the community. There they render a very valuable service. I consider they have done very good work during this war.

Possibly some of us may criticise them from the angle that we think they are trying to do too much in the way of control and limitation; but as long as they do it on fair lines we cannot very well blame them. However, I am inclined to think there is a danger in confusing the recommendations and opinions of the economist with Government policy. It is quite possible that the economist is being blamed for things that are being done not altogether on his recommendation, but because they fit in with Government policy. Therefore I would like to suggest that we study the economists' recommendations, and then the Government policy. A considerable amount of work has been done overseas in the direction of facing up to the war position internationally.

In two instances this has been very prominently before the public. One is the International Monetary Fund, and the other is the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development. On those two aspects the Commonwealth Bank report has quite a lot to say, and a deal of criticism to advance. It points out that the International Monetary Fund has been instituted to enable all the Governments to work together in the direction of assisting those countries which are in urgent need of assistance with regard to re-establishing their credit. Their idea is that those countries which are strong should be willing to help those countries which are weak. The Commonwealth Bank indicates the position which the Australian Government might well occupy on this question, and points out that Australia can do a great deal to assist as far as the International Monetary Fund is concerned. Incidentally, the Commonwealth Bank considers that—

Civilian consumption must still be restrained. The basic objective of a system of war finance is to increase production and to transfer resources from civilian to war uses. In the earlier stages of the war, these transfers had to be made practically without consideration of cost. However, since the major transfers have already been completed and the war effort has reached its peak, it is necessary to exercise a much closer supervision over all war expenditure, and to eliminate promptly any unnecessary projects or services. At the same time post-war problems also merit our earnest attention, and it would be unwise not to allot

some part of our resources to the work of preparation, to the extent that this can be done without serious detriment to our war effort . . .

The first problem of food production is to provide an increase in output, to meet immediate war and post-war needs. The long-term problem is to direct economic policy so as to secure improved nutrition and higher general standards of living.

The problems of international relief and rehabilitation will be on an unprecedented scale, and the production and procurement of supplies for liberated areas will be a grave responsibility. As an exporter of primary products, Australia will be directly interested.

Then, referring to the International Monetary Fund, the bank points out—

The purpose of the Monetary Fund is to facilitate the expansion and balanced growth of international trade and to give confidence to member countries by making the resources of the fund available to them to pay for a temporary excess of imports over exports. . . . In addition, it contains provision to maintain orderly exchange arrangements amongst member countries and to avoid competitive exchange depreciation. . . . So far as Australia is concerned, the maintenance of employment and consuming power among the major nations of the world is one of the most important determinants of the prosperity of her export trade, and therefore her main insurance against deterioration in her international balance of payments and disturbance to her internal economy.

Dealing with post-war re-organisation the report says—

Australia, because the major part of her export income is provided by commodities which are sensitive to seasonal changes, and liable to considerable fluctuation in world prices is in a relatively vulnerable position. She must therefore, always endeavour to maintain an internal reserve which is high in comparison with her total volume of trade in order to protect her internal influences.

These are interesting references because they indicate, if they indicate anything at all, the important part that the primary producer is going to play in supplying his quota towards the requirements of the countries needing it, and also point to the effect this is going to have on the economy of Australia and especially the economy of Western Australia. Because Western Australia has long played a vital part in Australian exports, the prospects of the primary producers in it should be extremely encouraging. From that angle we have every reason to believe that there is a bright time ahead for primary industries.

Professor Copland indicates the eight factors with regard to post-war reconstruction,

and some of them have a very vital bearing on the subject. The first one to which the professor refers is the enormous accumulated deferred spending power in the hands of the public, which will result in a considerable consumption of goods. He calls attention to the time lag in expansion of the supply of civil goods, and believes that the demand for houses, furnishings and equipment will be greater than ever before. He estimates that to overtake the lag will require from 50,000 to 80,000 houses per year for five years. The essential materials for construction being in short supply, he holds that priorities will be necessitated. The demand for factories, offices, hotels and picture theatres will compete with the demand for houses. Further, there will be the demand of State Governments and local authorities for essential deferred public works. That is a point I want to stress, because the other day we had a report of decisions by the Loan Council, and those decisions do not conform to priorities set out by Professor Copland.

It seems to me that there is on the Government side a desire to push on the national works, as they are called, at the expense of the rest of the community. The professor goes on to say that the rate of flow of demobilised personnel to the capacity of industry to absorb it in appropriate occupations calls for close consideration. His eighth point is that there will be a large external demand for Australian materials and food-stuffs to rehabilitate European and Asian communities. All these things demand continuance of controls. There must be some degree of rationing and priority of materials, and also direction of investments; and while price control will gradually diminish, the price level should be higher than previous to the war. I am quoting at length from the report of the Commonwealth Bank, but it has a material bearing on the future policy of Australia and of this State. The report says—

Whereas the primary purpose of the International Monetary Fund is to facilitate international trade, the United Nations Bank for Reconstruction and Development is designed to meet the needs of those nations requiring international loans. Some of the countries which have suffered severely during the war through devastation and disorganisation of their economic life will need foreign loans to help them in the work of reconstruction. This is an international responsibility. International

loans would facilitate the transition from war to peace, and by developing productive resources would also assist the growth of international trade. The Reconstruction Bank would therefore be a useful complement to the International Monetary Fund. It would also make international loans more attractive to creditor nations. Australia is not likely to require external capital from the bank to finance the transition to peace or for purposes of long-term development, but she will benefit from any increases in international trade and purchases in raw materials and foodstuffs which may be the results of the operations of the bank. The two institutions which have been proposed could represent a significant development in international monetary affairs. It is the opinion of the board that Australia should be prepared to participate in international arrangements of this kind.

Dealing with reconstruction problems the report says—

The internal situation in Australia after the war will be dominated by the requirements of reconstruction. The absorption into civilian employment of men discharged from the Services and the transfer of many people now engaged in war occupations to civilian activities will be an immense task. It is clear that one of the conditions conducive to the successful solution of the post-war employment problem will be the continued maintenance of a high level of industrial activity. This implies that the reconversion of industry to civilian production must be carried through with a minimum of disturbance, and that civilian production must be enlarged when necessary to absorb any surplus capacity left by declining war production. Some labour and materials will need to be allocated to undertake the necessary preparatory work, particularly in connection with housing and certain phases of manufacturing industry.

In the immediate post-war period there will be no lack of effective demand for both goods and services. Plant and equipment have deteriorated, inventories have been reduced, the supply of durable consumption goods in the hands of consumers will need to be replenished, the demand for housing will be urgent. The amount of purchasing power already available to the community in the hands of institutions and individual consumers, is extremely high. . . . The active assistance of the commercial and industrial community will be required in continuing enterprise and maintaining employment. . . . If the necessity for the postponement of some consumption of goods in short supply is not recognised, and suitable restraint imposed, then further inflationary pressures will be generated, which it may not prove possible to control.

I have quoted Professor Copland and also from the Commonwealth Bank report, because both those pronouncements are at one in pointing out the necessity of meeting demands for civil needs as soon as possible.

In one case it is pointed out that as the war demand diminishes in certain industries, arrangements must be made for an immediate change-over to supply civilian needs. It is interesting to note statements made by Ministers of the Commonwealth Government and having a bearing on this aspect of the post-war period. In February, 1944, Mr. Chifley, speaking at a meeting, said—

A Ministry of Post-war Reconstruction was established in December, 1942.

Mr. Ford, speaking at a meeting in May, 1944, said—

The Government would lift control in an orderly manner and avoid unemployment or depression.

Mr. Clarke, at the same meeting, said—

The Government should state clearly their intentions towards private enterprise.

Professor Copland made the remarks I have quoted. Referring to the transition period, he said—

The transition period from peace to war involves a number of problems, the most important of which is the natural reaction against restrictions after the war, and the great problem will be to reconcile further restrictions with the disturbed Australian economy then existing.

He then quoted the eight points I have mentioned, and concluded by saying—

The primary producer should be placed on a sound economic level.

Mr. McGowan, who is in charge of International Chemical Industries, said—

The best results are to be obtained by private enterprise in a system in which certain broad controls exist. These are beyond the power of private enterprise to secure, but adjustment between savings and investments should be established.

It is a recognised principle which has arisen as a result of economic progress that if stability is to be maintained in any country there must be a balance between the savings of the people and investments. If savings exceed investments, unbalance exists and the result is interference with employment. If investments exceed savings, unbalance is created and again unemployment results, and that country which can best preserve a balanced ratio between savings on the one hand and investments on the other is the one that will maintain the most stable economy. The importance of that and of these statements in regard to Australian policy in the post-war period can readily be recognised.

If we are going to carry out the advice of the Commonwealth Bank and the advice of the economists, we must give much greater attention to the necessity for encouraging private enterprise once more to enter into the field of supplying civilian needs. We should make that our first priority. If the Committee for Post-war Reconstruction has been operating since December, 1942, we would expect to find that its plans have so far matured that there will be no such thing as people being temporarily out of employment simply because war orders have ceased. Arrangements should be made, and should have been made, for factories that were supplying civil requirements before the war to start immediately on the manufacture of goods for civilian needs.

The other day Professor Mauldon issued a most interesting statement on an examination of the trend in Western Australia and indicated the directions in which we can expect to find the post-war economy adjusting itself. He pointed out that in certain industries there would be a shortage of employment but that in other industries there would be a surplus of employment, and indicated how one would balance the other. Both the Commonwealth Bank and the economists agree that Australia has a most important part to play during the time of reconstruction in Europe. That, I think, can be turned to Australia's advantage. While Australia could not be expected to play a very large part in the International Monetary Fund on account of the size of her economy, compared with that of the other big nations, so far as her own economy is concerned, her opportunity exists there and she could go a long way towards placing her economy, so far as internal trade is concerned, on a sound basis.

Before the war we had £400,000,000 to £500,000,000 of overseas debt. I noticed the other day that the Commonwealth Bank, in its figures, indicated that it had a credit overseas of £103,000,000. Surely Australia's part so far as the International Monetary Fund is concerned is to encourage by all means in her power the production of primary products for supply to those nations that we have found to be so seriously short of food and the necessities of life. By our adopting that policy and arranging our economy to enable the primary producers to carry on at a profit, those primary producers will be enabled to do a good job in this country in the way of putting us in a sound position overseas and reducing the

overseas debt by thus increasing overseas credits. They will put us in the position, so far as the international fund is concerned, that, assisted by our gold production, we will be able to take our stand as a member of the International Committee of Nations and be on a better basis than we could possibly have been on before the war.

With regard to our internal economy, the economists and the bank both say the same. The important thing is to arrange as far as possible for the supply to the civilian population of goods the need for which has been felt through the years to an increasing degree, and the lack of which has been occasioned by rationing and other restrictions endured by our people because they realised such things were necessary on account of the war. When the war ends, the people will be impatient to see such control removed. The more advanced our plans are, and the more advanced are industries to supply materials which have been in so short supply, the easier will be our change-over, and the less will be the danger of unemployment. What is the position in regard to Governments? In a report in "The West Australian" on the 25th August, the day after Professor Copland made the statement I have quoted, we found the Loan Council's programme for the States for next year. It was stated that a total of £16,000,000 had been provided for Government purposes. Out of that, £9,000,000 is to be used for housing.

It looks to me, therefore, as if one of Professor Copland's points is being provided for insofar as steps are being taken to provide essential materials for a post-war housing scheme. If that takes place during the coming year, it will be in accordance with the advice of the economists. But do not forget that is only third priority. His first priority is to provide for civilian needs in the way of simple goods we use in every day life. He points out that Governments and local authorities will naturally be looking for money for deferred public works. But that has a priority which is very much lower. If we are going to allow those works to step in ahead of the demand for consumable goods to meet the needs of civilians, we will be out of step with the advice of economists and, in my opinion, will prejudice the post-war recovery period. Any natural adjustment from war to peace requires that the first step shall be to supply civilian needs. The second thing is to meet

the demand for housing. The third, which will run in parallel with the other two, will be to supply the goods that are required overseas, while the fourth and last priority should be the provision for these deferred national works.

After all, the last mentioned are not more urgent and the others will do more to restore the morale of our people than will the embarking upon a programme of national works. From that angle it looks to me that quite possibly the attitude adopted by Governments has been affected by the threat of inflation, which was referred to in the Commonwealth Bank's report. They realise that, with the tremendous increase of money in the hands of the public and the demands that will exist for meeting the needs of civil life, there will be a real danger of inflation in the post-war period. If we look at what happened after the 1914-18 war we shall probably appreciate how that operated. The best way to avoid the extreme dangers of inflation is to enable that money to be expended by the public in buying goods that they themselves need, and the best way to restore currency to a stable basis will be by increasing production in order to place real wealth behind the paper wealth that has been placed in the hands of the public.

It is more from that angle that I wish to stress what, in my opinion, is the soundest policy for this country to adopt. It is certainly not to embark upon a scheme of national works, for that is one of the features that has placed us in the unsound position we find ourselves today. It is largely due to the fact that we insisted upon national works being given priority. One cannot help arriving at the conclusion that many of those undertakings were put in hand prior to 1932 really for the purpose of providing employment rather than from the standpoint of being justified on the score of increasing our development. That is the only excuse one can advance for some of the great schemes that have proved so disastrous to our public economy. For example, one can trace back the position in which the railways are today to the period when the enormous railway construction programme was put in hand in 1916 which resulted in the laying down of 800 miles of unproductive railway lines. As a matter of fact, our railway economy has never caught up with the handicap imposed upon it by the building of those unproductive lines.

Then again there was the main road policy as a result of which main roads were constructed alongside railway lines and were allowed, until the establishment of the Transport Board, to compete to the detriment of our railways. Obviously there was much that was unsound associated with such a policy. One cannot help thinking that had the development been more in the direction of advancing the interests of industries that supply our needs, the public economy would be in a much sounder position than we find it today. Referring to statistics in the Commonwealth Year Book I find that the average sum required in the form of capital expenditure to establish a worker in a factory is £500. If we took that amount and spent it on a national work, as soon as a job was finished the work available would be concluded.

On the other hand, the country, in consequence, had assumed the burden of interest and sinking fund payments necessary to repay that £500. If we spent the £500 in connection with a factory to supply the needs of the public, we would thereby provide permanent work because the community would continue to require the goods that the factory produced. From that angle, the permanent benefit to the State would be much greater. Again there is an increasing tendency in recent years for the State to enter the field of production with regard to the needs of the public. We have an illustration of this in the potash industry. We have been told that up to the date when the information was supplied, £37 per ton was the cost of potash. If they refer to the figures quoted by the Minister when the agreement dealing with the establishment of a potash industry was placed before the House, members will realise that the total cost of production at that stage was represented as in the vicinity of one-third of what it has actually cost to manufacture.

The Chief Secretary: Is not that a most unfair use of those figures?

Hon. H. SEDDON: I do not think it is. If the Minister will think back, he will realise that we were told that there had been a very thorough investigation of the processes required and that the result of that investigation was that a process had been discovered whereby we could produce potash at Lake Campion.¹ Furthermore, we were told we could expect production to take place in a very short time. As a mat-

ter of fact, the answer to my question shows that the total tonnage of potash produced to the date when the information was supplied was comparatively small, and, further, that the daily production at the end of the period when we could have expected those concerned to have got over their initial difficulties with regard to the large scale plant, was in the vicinity of between 4.5 and 5 tons, whereas in the figures placed before Parliament we were told that the production of the plant would be from 10 to 15 tons per day.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Do not forget the manpower difficulty and the fact that we are at war!

Hon. H. SEDDON: I am not forgetting that phase, but the fact remains that the results do not come up to figures placed before the House.

Hon. W. J. Mann: You are not quite fair!

Hon. H. SEDDON: Nor is the present position such as to lead us to expect that the tonnage anticipated will be achieved. I quote that illustration because I still adhere to the idea that these activities could better be developed by technical skill available to private enterprise rather than by technicians available to the Government.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Privately employed technical skill had the chance to develop the industry, but it did not look at it.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Did it not?

Hon. W. J. Mann: No. I know a little about the matter.

Hon. H. SEDDON: So do I. All I have to say about it is that after investigations had been made, private enterprise was prepared to carry on; but it was not prepared to do so if the Government came into it. That was the position.

Hon. W. J. Mann: That was only in the last stage, but was not so before then.

Hon. H. SEDDON: As the result of the 1914-18 war, a considerable number of new industries were established. For example, since that time wireless broadcasting has become an everyday feature of the household, whereas formerly it did not exist. Again the refrigerator was not available in the homes prior to the last war. The vacuum cleaner was not as cheap or so much in use prior to the last war as it is now. Anyone who takes note of the developments that have taken place, especially with regard to aviation, in the various instruments available in industry and the application of

science in many directions, directly as the result of the present war, will readily appreciate that there will be quite as many new industries established after the current war as was our previous experience. For instance, direction finding by means of wireless has now become an established fact. A plane can be brought safely to an aerodrome no matter under what conditions it may be flying. Then again direction finding is applied in other avenues.

On top of that there is a new development in the field of engineering which is positively revolutionary. By means of electrolysis it is now possible to make good the wear and tear of machinery in such a way that the wearing parts are placed in a better condition than they were originally. That change will affect the engineering trade tremendously. Engineering practice will be entirely altered in consequence. That serves to indicate a few of the directions in which industry will be influenced as the result of the present war.

As a matter of fact, under the pressure of the necessities of war and the researches I mentioned earlier, there has been already a tremendous advance in the application of science to human welfare. That is a factor that will affect our post-war position, especially with regard to the workers. Quite apart from the necessity to provide employment, we shall have to plan for a tremendous increase in technical and scientific education and also for a gradual increase in the leisure periods of the workers as production adjusts itself to the demand. In conjunction with that, there must be a steady rise in the standard of comfort of the whole community.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Are you suggesting a 24-hour working week?

Hon. H. SEDDON: That phase will depend on how the whole situation is organised. I am not prepared to say what the number of working hours per week will be if we have a soundly balanced economy, because the possibilities of the application of science to industry are beyond all human comprehension. It is all a matter of a sane, scientific approach to the problems of post-war reconstruction. That is what will convert the possibilities into more than a dream and into accomplished facts. I have taken that line of argument because I contend the progress which Australia has made towards

sound economy has passed the initial stages, and the country must make an approach from the standpoint of encouraging production of those things that are required in the daily lives of the people rather than embark upon large national works as the solution of our employment problem. As a matter of fact, that problem will not develop if our economy is soundly and wisely based. Certainly a certain amount of public control will be involved.

There will be the necessity for factories being allowed to embark upon the manufacture of civil requirements to a far greater degree than is apparent today. That means that the necessity for some control is indicated, and more materials and goods will have to be made available in various directions. I wish to refer to the factors that will bring that about. One is education. We should raise the standard of the technical and scientific education for our students in the high schools. They must be trained in the laws of science, social responsibility and citizenship. That should be an integral part of their education. That brings me to another question, the way in which our school buildings have been allowed to fall into disrepair.

Hon. C. B. Williams: There are showers at the high school on the goldfields.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Yes, and the rain is coming through the roof because of the state of its disrepair. There is a remarkable contrast between our high schools and ordinary schools on the goldfields and in the country and such schools in the metropolitan area.

Hon. C. B. Williams: We have not a school like the James-street school on the fields.

Hon. H. SEDDON: No.

Hon. C. B. Williams: As long as you understand that!

Hon. H. SEDDON: The country schools have had a raw deal for very many years. I quite agree with what Mr. Mann said about the difficulties experienced by children attending high schools. Those difficulties are very real and require prompt attention. If the Education Department is going to do its duty, it seems to me that it will have to concentrate more and more on the country and goldfields schools, if necessary to the detriment of the metropolitan schools, in order to make up the leeway. I wish to express my appreciation of the Govern-

ment's intended action to establish a clinic in connection with the laboratory on the goldfields to accommodate men suffering in the early stages of T.B. Such a clinic has been wanted for a long time and the doctors on the goldfields are enthusiastic in their attitude towards it and are giving it their whole-hearted support.

After all, there is a great prejudice on the part of the men against being sent to Wooroloo. The establishment of this clinic will result in educating them in their responsibility to their relatives and friends. If they can obtain attention on the fields and need not be sent to Wooroloo, that is all to the good. There is no comparison between the climatic conditions of the two localities. The goldfields are infinitely better for anybody suffering from lung trouble. It is a step in the right direction and I sincerely hope the Government will meet with the success it deserves in establishing this clinic. The men will be able to remain in their homes among their own friends. Unfortunately, we still have a complaint against the Commonwealth Government about the treatment of our men who are receiving assistance from the Mine Workers' Relief Fund.

Hon. C. B. Williams: That is right. We have to stick to our mates.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The State Government, I am satisfied, has done its best to induce the Commonwealth Government to view this question in a favourable light. I am still entirely unconvinced that the law relating to old age and invalid pensioners prohibits the Commonwealth Government from giving these men the monetary help they are entitled to.

Hon. C. B. Williams: They are not coal-miners!

Hon. H. SEDDON: No. They certainly have a strong claim for a liberal and sympathetic interpretation of the Old Age and Invalid Pensioners Act. The monetary assistance which they get from the fund should not be deducted from the amount which they should receive as old age or invalid pensioners. I sincerely hope the State Government will continue its representations to the Commonwealth Government and induce the latter to take a more liberal and sympathetic view of the question.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Irrespective of party politics.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Yes. These men should receive the complete benefit from the

fund that has been created by themselves, with the assistance of their employers and the State Government. I hope that the prospects of an early peace in Europe will be realised quickly, and that when peace comes we shall find that both the Commonwealth and State Governments have fully discharged their duty in preparing for peace in time of war, that we shall have established in Australia an economy which will not only be soundly based but which will give to the workers such a high standard as to make us the envy of the other civilised nations of which we form a part. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion.

HON. W. R. HALL (North-East): I intend to be brief in my remarks. I am fully in accord with some of the members in another place who spoke about the nature of the interest taken by Ministers in what was said by participants in the Address-in-Reply debate. I have been a member of this Chamber for only a few years and have listened attentively to the speeches that have been made and to the requests that have been preferred by various members in connection with the requirements of their constituencies. I can honestly say that if notice has been taken by Ministers of such requests there have been no apparent results. To my way of thinking this debate affords members an opportunity to bring before the Government the requirements of their constituencies. We make known their wants on the Address-in-reply debate in the interests of the people whom we serve. I shall confine myself tonight to one or two subjects affecting the North-East Province and particularly the goldmining industry. One of the serious difficulties of that industry today is its fuel requirements. Some of the mines use oil and therefore are not affected by a shortage in the supply of firewood, and it is with the latter subject that I propose to deal.

Much has been said during this debate with regard to fuel supplies for the mines, and I take this opportunity of warning the Government that if firewood supplies from the Lakewood line are interrupted, the result will be that our mines using firewood will close down for at least the duration of the war. That is a serious statement to make, but it has been made by the managers controlling those mines. On the 14th or 15th August—I am not quite sure of the date—a conference was held in Kalgoorlie at which

the Chamber of Mines, the local governing bodies, the Forests Department and other departments were represented, and the question of firewood supplies was discussed. We have always had the same reply, "We are sympathetic." We can get that reply from any Minister. Ministers are always sympathetic, but that is about the limit of what they will do for the industry. The firewood position on the Goldfields at present is not altogether the fault of the Government; the Forests Department, the woodline company and private contractors should co-operate more fully with the firewood cutters so that we will have an uninterrupted supply of firewood for the mines using it and for the power corporation.

Hon. C. B. Williams: And for the people generally.

Hon. W. R. HALL: I have not dealt with the question of domestic supplies, as I think the industry comes first. I know that the question of domestic supplies is just as serious, but it is the mines that keep the people in Kalgoorlie where they are today.

Hon. C. B. Williams: There is no gas supply on the Goldfields.

Hon. W. R. HALL: The Liquid Fuel Board has a lot to do with the shortage of domestic supplies of firewood. We have heard much talk about the rehabilitation of the goldmining industry, which, it is said, will absorb 20,000 men after the war; but if the mines close down owing to shortage of fuel they will be quite unable to absorb so many workers. Therefore I hope the Government will endeavour to see that the parties interested in the supply of firewood to Kalgoorlie co-operate more fully. I say further that the domestic firewood position has become very acute during the last three years. The old age pensioners have not a ghost of a chance of getting firewood to keep themselves warm during the winter. The domestic supplies for nearly all the families have become very short. The whole town has been very short supplied. A conference was called and the position made clear to the Liquid Fuel Control Board that if it made sufficient fuel available to the private contractors the position would be overcome. Within the last four months the board has seen its way to send a representative to the Goldfields with the object of providing the genuine contractors with the necessary fuel so that

they may maintain wood supplies. This move has had the desired effect.

Hon. C. B. Williams: You did your duty.

Hon. W. R. HALL: I am not worrying very much about my duty in regard to the matter. This is something which seriously affects the Goldfields. It is not something which has happened only this year. It occurs each year with regard to the supply to the mines. It is up to the Government to see that wood supplies are available before the position gets too bad. Another serious matter I want to mention is in connection with the Referendum campaign. This was brought up by some of the Federal Ministers on the occasion of their visit to the Goldfields and to the metropolitan area. I am not concerned with the Ministers' speeches so far as they dealt with the Referendum campaign, but I am concerned with what they had to say about the gold-mining industry in Western Australia. On Wednesday, the 16th August last, the "Kalgoorlie Miner" stated that Mr. Ward, of Melbourne—

Hon. C. B. Williams: He is not from Melbourne; he is from New South Wales.

Hon. W. R. HALL: I ask the hon. member to give me a chance to put forward my case.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Will the hon. member keep quiet?

Hon. C. B. Williams: He comes from New South Wales.

The PRESIDENT: Order! If the hon. member interrupts again I will have to take other steps.

Hon. C. B. Williams: He does not come from Melbourne.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. W. R. HALL: Mr. Ward is reported to have said that the future of goldmining would depend on the place assigned to gold in world economics after the war and that, as far as he was concerned, he thought it stupid to take gold out of one hole and put it into another. He would rather see other industries developed to take the place of goldmining. There may be some sense in what he says, but as long as there is gold to be won from the ground, there will always be men to dig it out, and there will always be prospectors drawn by the lure to find gold. Also, while gold is a medium of currency, whether it costs men's lives or not, they will always be there to find it. Although these fellows came over on the Referendum

campaign and tried to belittle the goldmining industry, they asked the people to vote "Yes." Kalgoorlie was very generous to them. Kalgoorlie voted "Yes" by a two to one majority.

The people on the Goldfields are very loyal. Mr. Ward's statement was not the only one made by a Federal member. I cannot find the cutting containing the other gentleman's remarks, but he also had something to say about gold. Where would we be if it were not for the goldmining industry of Western Australia? We would not exist; we would not be here talking about it! When Federal members, irrespective of the party they represent, come over from the Eastern States and try to tell us that they would rather see the goldmining industry out of existence, I am amazed. It is beyond my comprehension that men should say such a thing when they know what value gold has been to this State and also to the Commonwealth as a whole. I desire to deal with some other matters this evening. One concerns the present discontent in the Army and the other Forces of Australia. Every day I receive letters from men in uniform stating that the writers wish to be released from the Army. I think other members get the same sort of letters, and they come not in ones and twos, but in dozens. Men joined up two or three years ago and thought they would be posted to an operational area, but they have passed the whole of their time in Australia merely being transported from one State to another.

It is only natural that those men would become discontented. They feel that they could do a better job in civilian life, and I believe that that is so. They tell me how they are walking round the camps doing nothing for their five or six shillings a day. I brought this matter up two years ago when I noticed the same thing occurring the other side of Midland Junction. It is happening again today. I have letters from men in the Air Force and in the Army. This should be brought before the Army authorities so that they might take into consideration the question whether the services of these men should be put to something more advantageous to themselves in particular and the State in general than walking around Army camps in Perth and the suburbs, or in other States. I say this because I feel that the manpower authorities have not received proper co-operation, and

have not the requisite power to get men released from the Army.

There is another very serious aspect in connection with this matter, namely, where personal animus is displayed by C.O.'s. to their men who apply for release. Those officers have not the foresight to see that their men could be doing a better job in civil life than they are carrying out in the Army. If this were a matter of only two or three cases I would take no notice of it, but when these complaints come from dozens of men it becomes important. There must be some truth in what they say. All men are not liars. I hope the Commonwealth Government will, in the near future, see its way clear to release these men if they are not to be sent to an operational area, so that we can start on the rehabilitation of the various industries in the different States.

The question of education has been raised by each member who has spoken on the Address-in-reply. What they have said has been true. At Kalgoorlie, and on the Goldfields generally, and throughout the North-East Province, the schools are in a very bad condition. The educational facilities are poor. I understand it was mooted that the Brown Hill school, which has 19 scholars, should be closed. I suppose that was suggested in order to save expense. There must be some reason for it. Perhaps the reason is lack of manpower. Although the school is only three miles from another school the children attending it are so young that the parents will not be prepared to remain at Brown Hill, but will want to reside nearer Kalgoorlie. The same thing applies at Lake-wood, which is six miles from Kalgoorlie. I hear talk of a bus service for the children who have attained the required standard and are a certain age.

It strikes me that, in the last few years, the Education Department has gone mad on bus services. According to a question asked by a member last year the State Government, through the Education Department, spent some thousands of pounds on buses for the purpose of transporting children to school. Now I understand they want to start one at Kalgoorlie. One would think that Kalgoorlie is an isolated area! I attended the South Kalgoorlie school in 1908 and 1909 when it was something to be proud of, and later the Kalgoorlie school. These buildings now are just eye-sores; it is something of a disgrace to think that the child-

ren of today have to be educated at such places. They are only apologies for schools.

Another matter I wish to discuss is that of water charges. Recently a deputation representative of the local authorities from Mundaring to Kalgoorlie waited on the Minister for Water Supplies. That deputation stated its case a month or five weeks ago, and to date nothing has been heard from the Minister. I understood that he was working very hard on the question before the deputation waited on him, and I can only think that he must have been working hard on it since because we have received no reply from him, oral or written. I would be glad to hear that something is to be done regarding the matters raised by that deputation.

This House, in my opinion, has always had a very bad name in regard to its attitude to industrial legislation for the benefit of workers, and particularly measures pertaining to workers' compensation and mine workers' relief. During this session some amending measures will be brought before Parliament, and I ask members to give them their serious attention and appreciate what their effect will be on men whose days may be said to be numbered and who have a very short sojourn left to them on this earth. I think we are in duty bound to do everything possible to alleviate the sufferings of the men who have been affected by miner's diseases. These men have really given their lives to the mining industry and made it what it is. They have made the State what it is and the metropolitan area what we find it today. All this has cost the miners a great deal of suffering through loss of health. In conclusion, I am pleased that the war outlook is so much brighter. It seems that we are now at the beginning of the end. I hope the time is not far distant when we shall not be occupied with planning for post-war reconstruction but will be engaged in doing the actual job. I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

HON. H. TUCKEY (South-West): I support the previous speakers in their congratulations to our Fighting Forces and the United Nations on their excellent war achievements. A few months ago no one contemplated that such a rapid change could take place in such a short period. We are told that the end is in sight, and no

doubt there will be world-wide rejoicing when the last shot has been fired. Mr. Fraser, in moving the adoption of the Address-in-reply, said he congratulated every section of the people on their war effort. I regret that I cannot go so far. It will be agreed that we in Australia have a certain element who are actually disloyal. They are not true to Australian type and sooner or later will have to be dealt with. It is bad for the good name of Australia that such a small section of the people should persistently defy the accredited authority, namely, the Commonwealth Government. It is terrible to have to submit to what is going on at present. No doubt the war situation plays into the hands of those people, and it is difficult for the Government to deal with them.

Much has been said about post-war reconstruction and providing work for returned soldiers. I think that after the war the problem will be not one of finding work but of finding labour. It is not necessary to enlarge upon the responsibility of the Government after the war in the matter of finding jobs. If private enterprise is permitted to function in the usual way and the Government goes on with public works and land settlement, I feel sure there will be very little unemployment for a considerable time at least. In addition, local authorities have been encouraged to set aside fairly large sums of money for post-war reconstruction, and this will help greatly in making work available.

Land settlement is important for the future of this State, and the soldiers who desire to settle on the land should be discouraged from going into dry areas while there is plenty of land available with a reliable rainfall. I feel sure that many people have very little idea of the possibilities of this State in the direction of primary production. The South-West province alone could accommodate a large population if only reliable markets for the produce could be established. I am of opinion that unless delegates at the Peace Conference agree upon a fair measure of international trade, the future of Australia will not be so bright. This may be difficult to arrange, but without it population and development cannot be satisfactorily increased. I think that whoever represent Australia at the settlement after the war should be free and unfettered

to do the right thing and, if they are not sure, they should set to work to find out how far they can meet the delegates of other nations. The Commonwealth Government would have been far better employed in doing something along these lines instead of trying to carry through the Referendum.

The present tendency is to manufacture 100 per cent. of our local requirements which, of course, are not very great. If this policy is continued, it will probably mean that we shall revert to the days when butter-fat here was bringing about 8d. per lb. while in France butter was being sold at 4s. 6d. a lb. That was due entirely to the economic situation prevailing amongst the various countries. While we want to encourage industry, I think we ought to look at the other side of the picture and try to provide markets, because we are naturally a primary producing country and, if we would also absorb a large population, we must develop the country. I cannot see how we can do this and continue to live self-contained within our own borders. The problem is complex and perhaps one that I ought not to say too much about, but I have sufficient commonsense to know that if we want to become a great nation, we have to trade with other countries and we cannot accomplish that by remaining, as in the past, strictly within our own confines.

Just before the Referendum, the Commonwealth Government announced that it was making available £300,000,000 for post-war reconstruction. I do not know whether that was a bait to bolster the "Yes" campaign, but I took it that the £300,000,000 would be additional to the sum required for the work usually carried out with Federal money before the war. Now, however, I find that whatever amount was handed over by the Commonwealth Government before the war will be included in the £300,000,000. Doubtless the total provided by the Commonwealth Government for the several States would be a large amount in the aggregate, and it would be interesting to know what we are getting out of the £300,000,000 over and above what we would have received if there had been no war. It was certainly misleading to talk about making £300,000,000 available for post-war reconstruction without explaining that fact.

Another question requiring consideration is that of providing plant for some of the works proposed to be carried out after the

war. We have many committees and much has been said about the division of responsibility for finance. but I have not heard of anything being done in the matter of providing machinery. This is a very important matter. Road boards at the present time are unable to buy the plant they require, which is not surprising, but we feel concerned when we find that agents are not prepared to accept an order for plant. I tried to place an order for a road board the other day for a one-man grader, and could not do so. Nobody would accept the order, even for post-war delivery. The position seems obscure, and every effort should be made to provide the plant required not only for road-making but also for land clearing. We do not want soldiers to go into the country and clear the land with an axe; we do not want to dig drains with picks and shovels as was done at Harvey during the depression. We want to obviate that sort of thing and carry on work in a businesslike way and get it done at the least possible expense.

I was impressed with the wonderful work I saw being done on a farm with a machine called a bulldozer owned by the Department of Agriculture. It was the first time I had seen one of these machines working. It is said to be capable of clearing from eight to ten acres of fairly thick country each day, and I was informed that the cost was £10 per day. I am satisfied that the work being done was worth anything from £20 to £30 per day; in fact, I doubt whether it could be done in the ordinary way even at the higher figure. I am informed that a machine of this type costs several thousand pounds and it, of course, would be far too dear for any average farmer to buy. Besides, he would not have sufficient work to keep it fully employed. But it would be sound business for the Government to provide more of these machines and let them out to farmers at £10 per day, or a higher rate if necessary. I understand that on the charge being made, the Government was doing very well and, on the other hand, the farmer was doing well. Quite a number of farmers want the use of that machine and cannot get it because it has too much work ahead.

There are also smaller machines that might be provided in the same way. A great deal of land development could be carried out on a co-operative basis if only

such machines were provided. I would like to see them made available by the Department of Agriculture for preference, because farmers would then be able to ascertain when they would be available. If they were provided by a private contractor, the machine might be here today and gone tomorrow and next year not be available at all. It is most important to have machinery to do this work. Whether it be clearing land for new settlers, road-making or any other big work, we should have the right plant to do the job. I hope the Government will take steps to provide some of this machinery so that it will be ready for use when we begin to rehabilitate our soldiers.

There has been some criticism about the delay in providing farms for returned soldiers. Two or three cases have been brought under my notice in which returned soldiers have not been able to get any satisfaction from the Lands Department. I have reason to believe that this is not the fault of the Minister for Lands. I believe that he put up a scheme some months ago, but could get no satisfaction from Canberra. I am convinced from what I have read in the newspaper during the last few days that this belief is correct, because the Premiers' Conference has further postponed consideration of the question. We have a few soldiers who want to know where they stand, and when they make application to the department they can get no satisfaction. This is a very bad beginning, and I hope the Commonwealth Government will come to light and assist the State to give these men satisfaction.

In the South-West there has been a certain amount of disappointment over the proposed power scheme for their part of the State, because of the announcement of the South Fremantle project, without any definite move having been made to provide the South-West with power. I am not an expert and have no desire to criticise the Government, but I have taken some interest in electricity and have also taken the trouble to obtain certain information from Victoria. It seems to me that what we require is not too many power stations but plenty of consumers. The cost of electricity is governed by the consumption, and if we are going to have three or four power stations for a small community, the charge must necessarily be much higher than if we provided the power from one or two

stations. In Victoria, a great success has been made of the electricity scheme. When the Electricity Commission was formed in that State, it took over a number of undertakings, and though millions of money have been spent, the interest and sinking fund charges have been more than met.

It is an interesting fact that in the 78 country centres with local undertakings acquired by the Victorian Electricity Commission, the overall use of electricity has increased by 774 per cent. and the overall cost of electricity sold in such centres has decreased from 8.62d. to 2.45d. per unit. These 78 centres that had their own schemes—schemes such as we have in the South-West—were taken over by this body without any guarantee whatever. The commission has given them a very efficient service and reduced the cost from over 8d. per unit to a little more than 2d. per unit. We in the South-West do not expect anything to compare with that; at the same time, we are not asking for a scheme whereby we shall have to pay an exorbitant rate for current. Today we have small schemes dotted all over the countryside, but they are very expensive and we want to get a more efficient supply and a much cheaper supply. Already there are far too many small schemes authorised or started in the South-West, and of course these have to be dealt with when a larger and more efficient scheme is put in to serve the whole district.

In Victoria the country centres were not taken over simultaneously. They had to wait until the time was opportune, or until the Electricity Commission could take them over. That would apply to our South-West. In this country the process would take much longer because of the great distances separating the various towns occupied by small communities. We have a wonderful country in the South-West. I feel quite sure that all members of this House are not as fully aware of the possibilities of the district as they would be if they travelled the length and breadth of it. We have to make it worth while for people to live in the bush. Encouragement must be given them, and that costs a lot of money in the beginning. There is no risk involved in spending money in the South-West. At Pemberton recently some people told me of their wonderful success on the land. The outlook in the South-West is perfectly sound. However, the people there complain of various inconveniences.

The power scheme which the Government has announced is causing a good deal of dissatisfaction. If the experts are of opinion that it is out of the question to provide electricity for the South-West, why do they not say so, why do they not tell the people? At the last road board conference in Perth the Director of Works, in connection with post-war reconstruction, mentioned the works the Government was going to construct, including a water scheme which would cost the State £9,000,000. Road board delegates were asked to support that scheme because if it was not put in as a reconstruction work it would probably be delayed for 50 years. I was surprised that the Director of Works sat down without making any reference to this important electricity scheme. I trust that something will now be done one way or the other. We do not want an expensive scheme, and we do not want a scheme just because people are agitating for it. We want a scheme that will be economical for farmers and all concerned.

There has been some talk about the Agricultural Bank rate. That has been going on for a long time. The Road Board Association has sent deputations to the Department of Agriculture, and also a deputation to the Minister on one occasion; but we have never been able to secure any consideration in the form of part payment of rates. I would support a suggestion that something should be done, and more particularly done now, as the farmers are getting better prices for their products. It is only a fair thing that road boards which have rates outstanding should receive a small amount to enable them to carry out necessary public works in their districts. Farmers cannot carry on without roads, and roads cannot be constructed without money; and it is not fair to increase rates of interest on a property because there is a mortgage or lien on it. Road boards should now receive at least a small proportion of their rates.

The questions of main roads and transport and noxious and poisonous weeds are important. We have in this State a number of noxious weeds, some of which are highly poisonous. If the authorities do not take steps either to eradicate them or to keep them down, they will in time become a very serious menace. The worst noxious weed, in my opinion, is the Cape Tulip, which has a very attractive flower standing about 12 or 18 inches above the ground. At

this time of the year the cattle eat it readily, and it kills them in a few hours. The plant is spreading, and people do not understand what it is. There is quite a lot of it on the roads of the metropolitan area. The other day I was on a 12-mile section of a highway, and saw one single Cape Tulip and took the opportunity to eradicate it. The plant appears to spread in places where one would least expect to find it. The Agricultural Department should see that the local authorities employ competent inspectors of noxious weeds, or else take some other steps to have the menace checked.

The Department of Agriculture has been doing a very good job latterly, but prior to the war it was understaffed. I hope that position will not recur after the war. The department cannot be expected to police the various pests if it has not sufficient men to do the work. More especially the department should give attention to stock diseases. A number of them are going unchecked owing to the department not having the necessary staff. This matter is of great importance to Western Australia because we depend so much on stock. Another important subject is the question of our main highways. Many years ago, at a south-western conference, I put through a resolution recommending to the Works Department that all main and feeder roads should be surveyed not less than $1\frac{1}{2}$ chains wide. The idea is that a one-chain road is no use for fast-moving traffic, especially in country areas where stock are frequently travelled. The resolution was not acted upon, although sent forward by the conference. Many years afterwards, however, the Main Roads Board did widen one or two main roads, and a few others have since been surveyed wider than one chain; but there are still hundreds of miles of important roads only a chain wide. We have the spectacle of the Canning Highway, a narrow road today. What will it be in years to come? I do not see why the widening of that road cannot be carried out before there is too much development. If the roads were surveyed $1\frac{1}{2}$ chains no one would lose very much, because the land is not valuable now.

We have seen the mistakes that have been made in the past. Mr. Seddon said that it was wrong for the Main Roads Board to construct roads parallel with the railway line because that did the railways a lot of

harm. It may have done the railways some harm, but it has done the public some good. I assure members that the main roads have been a blessing to the people of this State. I hope that after the war our transport facilities will receive an overhaul with a view to their being brought up to date. It seems to me entirely wrong to prevent people from having the best possible transport, just because it is interfering with a Government undertaking such as the railways. The Transport Board has done a very good job, and has apparently come to stay. However, we should allow people to use road transport if that is so much better than other transport available. Although we have to pay for the railways, we do not want them to stand in the way of development or in the way of people getting to and from the country quickly. I do not think there is any need for me to say much about schools. We know that every district has some complaint concerning the need of repairs to schools, but that is not the fault of the Government but of the manpower position. It seems to me that not now but after peace has been declared will be the time to delve into these matters.

On motion by Hon. H. S. W. Parker, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.3 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 30th August, 1944.

		PAGE
Questions: Members of Parliament Fund Act, as to		
“prior membership” contributors	350	
Barbed wire, as to Army surplus stocks	351	
Mine Workers’ Relief Fund, as to contributors	351	
Superphosphate, as to railway freight	351	
State bricks, as to prices, etc.	352	
Bills: Companies Act Amendment, 1R., as to 2R.	352	
Evidence Act Amendment, 1R.	353	
Motions: Soldier settlement, as to Commonwealth		
policy	353	
Harbours, as to formation of State Board	357	
Meat supply, to inquire by Select Committee	364	
Post-war activities, as to development of tourist		
traffic	370	
Vermin Act, to inquire by Select Committee	374	

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

QUESTIONS (5).

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT FUND ACT.

As to “Prior Membership” Contributors.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Premier:

How many members of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly, re-