

Mr. BOYLE: I had better quote the Auditor General on that. He said that details regarding this expenditure had appeared in previous reports for 1939-40. The amount of £4,166 0s. 4d. was credited to the account during the year for material taken over by the Railway Department.

Mr. Cross: The department took £75,000 worth of sleepers.

Mr. BOYLE: Took them back! That does not alter the fact I am stressing that the company was required under the Act to furnish no more than an annual balance sheet. It was only when the company was abandoned and the sleepers were lying there that the State took them back. That was merely a matter of taking an available asset. Had the company operated—I doubt whether it did so—the only obligation to which it would have been subject was to submit an annual balance sheet. The Industries Assistance Board would not have seized the whole of the proceeds of the company. But that does not apply to the farmers; they are dealt with differently.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: You are very innocent with regard to the question of security.

Mr. BOYLE: What security was there? As far as the farmer is concerned, his security is entirely in the hands of the Commissioners of the Agricultural Bank. Under Section 15, paragraph (d) the Industries Assistance Act definitely says that any advances under the Act—

shall be, and, until fully paid shall continue, a charge on all other livestock, implements, machinery, plant, and movable structure of the applicant.

What more security would the board require than that? It has practically everything. Not only that, but the debtor is brought under the provisions of Section 51 of the Agricultural Bank Act. That is the drag-net section to which I objected as providing discrimination between different types of debtors under the Industries Assistance Act. Why that should be allowed to continue I am at a loss to understand. So long as I am a member of this House, I shall always oppose the re-enactment of this legislation. This is possibly the 28th or 29th time it has been before Parliament for re-enactment, and that very fact in itself is indicative of the weakness of the structure of this particular measure. If it were indispensable or analagous to other Acts, its provisions would be made permanent.

On the other hand, here we have a measure under which, literally, advances running into millions of pounds have been made in connection with transactions extending from 1913 until today, and yet is dependent upon annual re-enactment! If the House should decide to reject the Bill for the continuance of the Act, what would happen? The Government would be forced to introduce a measure of a permanent character. I do not intend to divide the House on the second reading. I tried that last year, and I am afraid the response was not to my satisfaction.

Mr. Marshall: You have emptied your own benches this evening!

Mr. BOYLE: I would not say that I have done that; I am afraid it was a voluntary action on the part of members. Perhaps time has something to do with it, although I did anticipate that when I rose to my feet those members would have flocked back to the Chamber. They did not do so. I content myself with registering my opposition to the Bill and shall oppose its second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment and the report adopted.

House adjourned at 10.15 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 8th September, 1943.

	PAGE
Question: Phosphate supplies, as to local deposits	355
Bills: Financial Emergency Act Amendment, 1A.	376
Public Service Appeal Board Act Amendment, 1A.	376
Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act Amendment, 1A.	376
Main Roads Act (Funds Appropriation), 1A.	376
Industries Assistance Act Continuance, 1A.	376
Address-in-reply, twelfth day—conclusion	360
Resolution: Daylight saving, Assembly's message	376
Adjournment, special	376

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

QUESTION—PHOSPHATE SUPPLIES.

As to Local Deposits.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Has the report on the recent

bulk test, or any other report regarding phosphatic deposits at Dandarragan, or elsewhere, been received? 2, If so, will the Minister lay the same on the Table of the House? 3, If not, why not?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, No. Advice has just been received from the British Phosphate Commission that a report will be forwarded within a few days. 2 and 3, Answered by 1.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY,

Twelfth Day—Conclusion.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. H. SEDDON (North-East) [4.36]: In considering the topics included in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech we are naturally inclined to deal first with the most important question, namely, the changed outlook which confronts the whole world as the result of the progress of the war. It is indeed a great change from the atmosphere in which, some 18 months ago, we were gathered together. I believe everyone of us realises the debt we owe to Divine Providence that we meet here today under the conditions which we enjoy rather than under conditions which might be very much less favourable. Today on all Fronts we hear of advances taking place. We realise that with the tremendous concentration of manpower and equipment, together with the will to win now being evidenced everywhere, we may confidently look forward to the day when peace shall once more be restored amongst mankind. As regards the position in Australia, the pressure is still very great. We still have to make many sacrifices.

We still have to realise that there is a great task ahead of us, and that the time which will be occupied before our enemies are subdued will be very much longer than was at first anticipated. It is interesting to note the progress which has taken place. We find now that the authorities which have been imposing all the various restrictions upon this thinning population of ours are beginning to learn. We find they realise that the question of civil morale is just as important as that of the morale of troops at the Front, and that this civilian morale can only be maintained so long as the people generally work under conditions enabling them to strive to their full capacity, and to

the same end the people must be enabled to retain that degree of health and that minimum of comfort which are necessary to their well-being. There is need for still further effort on these lines.

Rationing undoubtedly is the wisest system whereby to arrange for the distribution of goods of which there is a shortage; but, unfortunately, I do not think there has been sufficient allowance made in fixing quotas for quality of goods. That factor is having an adverse influence, especially among the poorer section of the community. If one goes to buy a pair of shoes, one has to surrender just the same number of coupons for a poor class of shoe as for a well-made, expensive shoe, though the lives of the two articles differ vastly. Because many people are compelled to buy a poorer class of footwear, they are to that extent being penalised. That applies particularly with regard to children's shoes and clothing. As regards clothing, many of the materials procurable today are of much poorer quality than was available to the public a few years earlier. In addition, prices have gone up considerably. In those circumstances there should be a revision of the coupon scale in order to provide for these factors.

I have a statement from a friend of mine with regard to that very point. Concerning the allotment of ration coupons for materials, he suggests that instead of there being an unvarying scale, a material being sold at 2s. a yard might well carry one coupon, whereas material costing 5s. a yard—which is so much more durable—might carry two coupons and material costing over 5s. a yard might very well be rated at three coupons. Thus cheaper quality goods would require fewer coupons than more durable fabrics offered at higher prices. Again, there are large numbers of stocks which are still being held and which could be marketed for the benefit of the public. These are some of the directions in which I think the authorities might well revise their attitude in the interests of the general public and particularly that section which finds it very hard to make ends meet. There is no doubt that in respect of the method under which price control has been and is being enforced on the community, there are many gaps existing which reflect the way in which our currency has depreciated so that the people are no longer able to exercise the spending power they once had.

A second field in which the authorities might still further revise their attitude is in regard to manpower. Mr. Roche emphasised an aspect of that yesterday, and his remarks were to the point and well worthy of study by those who have these affairs in hand. I do not think sufficient regard is paid to the demands that are being made today on the business people. Unfortunately their staffs have been depleted very materially, and those they have to employ are not up to the mark. Very often the young people understand nothing about the business in which they are engaged and have to be trained. At the same time the man who owns or conducts the business has thrown upon him the additional burden of trying to keep things going in the absence of his trained staff. That is having a very detrimental effect in many respects.

There are men today who are all out in running their businesses and sooner or later the inevitable result will occur; these men will break down and the consequence will be so much further disorganisation in the field of supply and distribution of goods—a field which unfortunately is not receiving from the authorities the consideration it should. We recognise, of course, that there is a constantly expanding demand for men for the Services. On the other hand, we hear of a very large number of persons who are still maintained more or less in idleness and, although perhaps that state of affairs is being remedied in some respects, there is too much comment in that direction for it to be entirely ignored. From that angle I would like to make the suggestion to the authorities that they would probably benefit by taking note of what happened during the last war.

If members will cast their minds back they will recall that in Britain, particularly, there was set up a kind of—shall I call it—technical audit of the war and the war effort. There was severe criticism from persons who were informed and who were people of capacity in the military field, and their criticism was directed towards the way in which the war was being carried on. In that and in other directions a technical audit had the effect of tightening up responsibility, and making people realise that they were in charge of an effort in which they must exercise steps towards efficiency from the standpoint of utilising the materials at their disposal. From that angle I think the

Government would entirely benefit—I am speaking of the Commonwealth Government—if it instituted something of that sort with regard to the number of persons now retained for the various Services, because there is not the slightest doubt that from the angle of efficiency a great deal of improvement could thus be secured.

I should like to refer to the matter of finance. When we criticise the trend of finance we are immediately confronted with the reply that the same thing is taking place in every country which is at war. We are told to look at the position in England. The answer is that the position in England is quite different. England is a country that lives upon manufacturing. It is a country which has to import raw materials and sell manufactured articles in the markets of the world, but Australia is a country which could be a great deal more self-contained than it is. From that point of view we have quite a different economy from the British economy. One is reminded, when one looks at the development that is taking place, that there is no need to tread the road we are following today, which is economically dangerous, though it may be politically expedient. In this connection I would like to refer to one or two developments that have taken place and which are exhibited in returns issued by the Commonwealth Bank. The return I have here is one issued for July. If members will refer to the figures contained therein, they will see that the development of Australian finance has been such that the total of Treasury bills, Government securities and special wartime deposits with the Commonwealth Bank, which have been made by the trading banks are very nearly equal to the advances that have been made to the commercial community.

In other words, the bank's credits have been made available to the Government to such an extent that the amounts so found to assist the Government in carrying on are equalled by the amounts devoted to commercial purposes. When the deposit figures are examined, there is room for thought there as well because it will be seen that, of the total deposits, those which are not bearing interest far exceed those which are carrying interest. In other words, the money which is at call is very much greater than the money locked up. That indicates a state of affairs which is not altogether desirable. It means that any depositor holding balances

on current account who wished to do so could immediately withdraw that money, whereas if it were tied up in the form of interest-bearing deposits there would have to be a definite period before it could be withdrawn. The gold reserve against the note issue is still negligible and the gold production policy is still adverse. Incidentally there is a great contrast in the policy with regard to gold production as compared with that in other gold-producing countries.

It is interesting to note that simultaneously with the interference with gold production in Australia there was an attempt both in the United States and Canada and also in South Africa to interfere with gold production. The immediate response was such that in those countries the step was immediately averted. In the gold producing States of America, for example, it was shown that the proposal was so unsound and that the benefit to be attained would be so small that they left it alone. In Canada there was another development. The proposal there was that the goldminers should be transferred to the nickel mines, the idea being that the goldminers, being familiar with mining practice, would naturally be better fitted for work in the nickel mines than would be those unfamiliar with such operations. But those who were in control of the nickel mines did not regard the proposal with any satisfaction at all and preferred their own labour, which they intended to break-in to the work, rather than to employ the goldminers in the work of production. Interference in Canada, to a great extent, was thereby averted.

In South Africa where gold plays such an important part in the country's national economy, the Government took a very definite stand and strongly opposed any suggestion of reducing the production of gold. So Australia was the only country that fell for the proposal and adopted the policy that has proved so disastrous to the revenue of this State in particular. In that respect I shall quote a few figures later on with regard to the revenue of the Water Supply Department. To return to the question of our finances, the greater part of the reserves behind our note issue today—the note issue, by the way, is greater now than it had ever been before—is not gold, the proportion of which is negligible, but is really another form of paper which is regarded as the security. So much for the position with

regard to Commonwealth finance which, in my opinion, is steadily tending towards the depreciation of our currency.

In this respect there has been an interesting development in connection with State finance. As is pointed out in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech there was a surplus for the last financial year, but the Premier was careful to point out that the surplus was entirely due to war conditions, and he indicated that those conditions were so exceptional that we must not in any way regard them as indicative of what would take place in the future. There is one other factor that stands out as most remarkable, perhaps for all time, and that is that we recorded a surplus for the month of August. I have looked back over a number of years and cannot discover a previous occasion on which a surplus was achieved in that month. That result was due to the fact that we received two monthly payments from the Commonwealth Government in August. Another effect on State finance that I find interesting is rather puzzling. In the past, while there have been steadily mounting costs in connection with many of our departments and while losses on some loan works have been fairly high, the policy of the Government was to endeavour to make up the leeway by steadily increasing taxation. That can no longer apply, because under the unified taxation arrangements the Government is no longer able to increase its taxation levies.

Although basic wage increases are taking place, largely as the result of the higher cost of living, and although we have recently had a war loading granted to men working on our Government railways, I am just wondering where the money is to come from with which to meet those added imposts. Any suggestion of increasing railway freights, for example, will be very strongly resented by people in the country areas and by those associated with industry, because those people feel that they are already carrying an unfair share of the financial burden in the form of the freights already charged. The Government cannot make it up by increasing taxation, so I would like to know just where the money is coming from. There is also another aspect that should be commented upon and it is that, while the war loading has been granted as a result of the decision of a Federal tribunal, there has been no attempt, as far as we can ascertain,

to make that authority responsible for finding the amount necessary for the increased pay. Apparently that authority is still willing to treat the State as commercial organisations have been treated in the past, and that is simply to impose the increased loading due to the war and let the State instrumentalities affected work out the solution of the problem as best they can.

From that angle I shall be interested to ascertain what steps are being taken to meet the situation which, I am inclined to think, is getting a little out of hand as regards our finances generally. I am looking with a certain amount of interest to the future to note exactly what course will be followed. Incidentally, further considering the whole subject along the same line, there is the question of the cost of water in the rural areas. We note that representations were made to the Government a little while ago, pointing out that water charges in the country districts and on the goldfields were out of all proportion when compared with the rates levied in the metropolitan area. The suggestion was advanced that it might be quite sound business if the metropolitan area was asked to take its share of the cost now imposed on the people in the country districts, who are to a great extent interested in the production of our national wealth.

With regard to the proposal to transfer some of the cost of country water supplies on to the shoulders of consumers in the metropolitan area, a return placed on the Table of the House and having reference to the State Budget provides some interesting reading. Looking through the portion dealing with the Goldfields Water Supply, I note that last year a loss of £66,000 was incurred on the project. It is also interesting to note that the interest and sinking fund charges have risen by £47,000 in four years. Equally interesting is it to note that the fall in revenue in 1943 was £82,000 compared with the returns for 1941. The result, of course, was entirely due to the effect of Federal policy on the goldmining industry. When we find that the revenue has gone down £82,000 and the capital charges have risen by £47,000, it is little wonder that the Minister for Works and Water Supplies gets a headache when he is asked to transfer portion of the burden of water charges from people living in the country to those residing in the metropolitan area. I might men-

tion in passing that a small loss was shown on the departmental operations in the metropolitan area during last year.

At the same time it must be recognised that if we are to induce people to live in the country areas away from the capital city, into which they are somewhat prone to crowd today, they must be able to enjoy decent living conditions, and I do not know any better course to adopt than the provision of cheap water if we are to gain our objective. If a man wants to have a decent home the first thing he looks to is the garden. He cannot have a garden in the country if he has to pay a high price for water and get an insufficient quantity of it. I notice a proposal has been resurrected to raise the Mundaring Weir with a view to conserving a greater quantity of water there. It is a good many years since a Select Committee of this House was appointed to inquire into the water position generally. In the course of that inquiry, the question of the raising of this weir was gone into. The proposal was to raise the wall of the weir some five feet thereby impounding so many more thousands of millions of gallons of water.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: I think the proposal was for raising the wall more than five feet.

Hon. V. Hamersley: About 30 feet.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I am speaking of the old proposal, that which was brought before the Select Committee. The present position at Mundaring is that 23 feet from the top of the wall represents a stowage capacity of more than half the total capacity of the reservoir. This means that when you get below 23 feet from the top of the weir, you have less than half of the total storage capacity of the reservoir. If we have regard to the tremendous evaporation factor in our dry climate, we can see that by raising the wall any more we are simply going to spread out more bulk of water over the countryside and increase the extent of evaporation. Incidentally, the run-off at Mundaring is very high. It was pointed out at the time of the inquiry that some 8,000,000,000 gallons of water were going to waste every year on the average.

It was suggested that the best way to supplement the Mundaring Weir would be to build further storage reservoirs to impound some of this wasted water. A site was suggested above the present weir, where a 100ft. dam could be erected

to store 20,000,000,000 gallons. That water would have to be pumped into the storage reservoir, but the great factor which should have been given first consideration was the need for the storage of water. It appears to me that this is one question that might well be investigated by Government advisers. The trend of the finances, so far as this scheme is concerned, has been foreseen and referred to in the Auditor General's reports in previous years. I have referred to it because it appears to me to be a question which should be gone into.

There is great need for investigation into the finances. The only way in which it is possible to improve the position of water supply facilities is to sell more water. The more water sold, the cheaper the cost per thousand gallons. It will be found that that objective can only be achieved by increasing the storage capacity, increasing the total amount of water sold and decreasing the price per 1,000 gallons.

There are two matters connected with the Goldfields to which I would refer. The first is in regard to the Mine Workers' Relief Fund. The position of many beneficiaries under that fund is rather peculiar. The arrangement is insisted upon that when a man becomes of pensionable age he is required to apply for the old age pension, and that sum is then supplemented from the fund itself.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Provided he is eligible.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I am referring to eligibles.

Hon. C. B. Williams: There are others who are not eligible.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The man who receives the pension is in this position: Having obtained the old age or invalid pension, he then finds that his income is supplemented by an amount of 12s. 6d. per week, which is the maximum he can receive without his pension being affected. The position of the Mine Workers' Relief Fund is such that that fund can very easily pay more in the way of weekly allowances to these men than it does at present out of its interest earnings alone. The fund has £200,000 odd in hand as a reserve which has been held to meet future claims upon it. When an attempt was made to increase the allowance to the men concerned, it was stated that all that could happen would be to reduce the charge upon the

Commonwealth Government. That is to say, suppose the fund was prepared to give a man an extra 5s. a week, all that would happen would be that the Commonwealth Government would reduce the pension by that amount and the man would be no better off.

An attempt was made to approach the Commonwealth Government to have these men brought under conditions known as the exempt income clause and to have the money they received from this fund regarded as exempt income. There is a section in the Commonwealth Pensions Act which regards certain income as exempt. An attempt was made to have those conditions applied to these men. So far the Commonwealth has not seen its way to do this, although we have had the support of the Minister for Mines in our application. We have been unsuccessful up to the present, as a result of which these men are limited in the payments they receive, because of the fact that the Commonwealth Government will not meet the situation and will not realise that these men cannot be regarded as ordinary pensioners in that they are sick and their earning capacity has been affected, as well as their health by the incapacity imposed upon them as a result of their occupation. It appears to me that the Commonwealth Government might well review its policy on this matter and do something to make things easier for these men, so that they may obtain the necessities and medicines they need in order to live at a reasonable standard compared with the conditions under which they have to live now.

Hon. W. J. Mann: These men have contributed a great deal towards this fund.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Yes. This is a contributory fund towards which the men themselves pay one-third, the employers one-third and the Government one-third. Although it is run more or less as a Government fund, it is a contributory scheme. To that extent it can be compared with other schemes which today are exempt under the Federal Pensions Act. The other matter to which I would refer is a proposal which is coming on with regard to T.B. men. Before anything is done in this direction, I suggest to the Minister for Mines that he should tread very carefully. Those who have known men that have been engaged in the goldmining industry will realise the proposal some years ago was that those who

were found to be incapacitated through this disease were to go to Wooroloo.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Plus silicosis.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Many of the men found that, instead of improving their condition at Wooroloo, they became a great deal worse. There was direct interference with their morale because of their surroundings. Indeed, there grew up amongst the men a horror at the thought of having to go to Wooroloo, although the motive in itself was the best in the world. The fact remains that the men to a large extent came back in a far worse condition and in a more hopeless frame of mind than had been the case before. When an attempt was made to deal with men incapacitated through mining, a sanatorium was first of all established at Coolgardie. Whilst it was established in a dry climate, the men seemed to get along a great deal better than when they went to the damp conditions at Wooroloo. There is a fear amongst the men on the Goldfields that if in consequence of the proposed measure they are compelled to go to Wooroloo for treatment and live under the conditions there, the result may not be as beneficial to their health as is hoped by the Minister. In making this reference I appreciate the motive that is actuating the Minister for Mines. I believe he is convinced that he is acting in the best interests of the men.

Climate plays a big part in the case of men suffering from T.B. Such people are as a rule much healthier and better in a dry climate than in a damp one. Due regard should be given to that and other factors before the men are compelled to go to Wooroloo for treatment. It may be the Government contemplates that the treatment shall be given on the Goldfields. If so, that would be a step in the right direction. I think that if any attempt is made to compel these men to submit to treatment in a damper climate than that to which they are accustomed, the result can only be detrimental and certainly not beneficial to them.

I hope before long we shall see peace restored in our community, and that we shall find our attention fully occupied in improving the general conditions of the whole of our people; and that we shall not find men, as we do today, attempting to overcome and throw off an enemy, but that all men will be united in an endeavour to make the whole of the conditions of our people better and brighter than ever before. That is an ideal

which should inspire all our public activities and public life. I hope before long we shall see these ideals accomplished. If not, we must continue as we have been, working towards the objective of overcoming the enemy, of driving him back, and breaking up that spirit of aggression and oppression which characterises the enemy countries.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: May I preface my remarks with an expression of pleasure and satisfaction that several of our members who have been somewhat seriously indisposed have now come back to their places in the Chamber. I refer particularly to Mr. Baxter, Mr. Thomson, Mr. Piesse and Mr. Seddon. I would also like to express the hope that the improvement that is so manifest in those members will continue, so that before long they will be fully restored to their normal condition of health.

As was pointed out by Mr. Seddon, a great change has come over the world since I last had the privilege of replying to the Address-in-reply debate. Casting our minds back to this time twelve months ago, none will deny the forebodings which then existed by reason of the grim events taking place north of this continent. At that time our Forces in that and other theatres of war were mainly on the defensive, but now the tide has turned and we appear to be on the road to ultimate victory. We must not, however, be under any illusion as to what lies before us. To this stupendous improvement the men and women of Australia, both in the Services and in the factories, have contributed a part that will prove an inspiration to future generations of Australians.

In speaking to the motion members have, as usual, raised quite a number of interesting questions, but I am afraid in some cases they have for the time being completely overlooked the fact that we are still at war, and that peace-time conditions cannot possibly be enjoyed in wartime. For instance, with regard to our railways, it is generally admitted that transport is the lifeblood of a nation. If that is so in peace-time, how much more so is it in war-time, more particularly when war is being waged as we have experienced it during the past two years? Nevertheless, there has been a good deal of criticism of the Railway Department. Its carriages are said to be overcrowded; its rolling stock in a bad state of repair; passengers have to queue up for

sleeping berths; inadequate services are run on certain lines; drinking glasses are not provided for travellers, etc.

The war is mentioned lightly, even sceptically, as being possibly to blame for this state of affairs, and the criticism proceeds as though the railways should be immune from its consequences. Rationing of food, clothing, petrol and tyres, shortages of commodities which we once regarded as indispensable, and inability to secure others which in better times we looked upon as necessities, have come to be accepted as inevitable under existing conditions, with the realisation that the hardships we suffer are in the national interest. The thinking ones in the community do not blame the producer or the manufacturer for his inability to satisfy our individual needs. They blame the war and, as philosophically as they can, make the best of the position.

Just as the war has imposed these hardships upon us, so also is it responsible for the inability of the railways to maintain the standard of travelling comfort to which we were accustomed in pre-war days, and the department's answer to its critics is that it has not the manpower, the rolling-stock, materials or the coal to do more than it is doing to meet the unprecedented demands for passenger transport which war conditions have thrown upon it. Although the railways have been a protected undertaking since April, 1942, more than 1,400 railwaymen are serving with the Fighting Forces. Their withdrawal from an industry in which long and careful training is necessary to reach proficiency has left a serious void which has not nearly been filled by new engagements. The deficiency is only partly reflected in the reduction of the numbers employed from 8,424—excluding construction staff—at June, 1939, to 7,844—excluding staff solely engaged on munition works—at June, 1943, as the replacement staff necessarily has neither the experience nor, in many cases, the physical capacity of those whom they have replaced. On this reduced staff has fallen the task of operating and maintaining the railways through a period in which earnings have soared to record heights, requisites of all kinds are most difficult of procurement, and that most necessary of all requirements, namely coal, is consistently in short supply.

The department has not at any time had a surfeit of staff or rollingstock. The ad-

ministration and the Government would have been blamed for extravagance if it had. Let us examine the facts. During 1938-39—the last complete pre-war financial year—the railways carried 11,415,615 passengers for £513,833. For the year ended the 30th June, 1943, the figures were 17,092,126 passengers for £1,167,220. Even these increases of 50 per cent. in passengers and more than 100 per cent. in revenue do not reveal the whole picture. For instance, suburban coaches, although they have at times to be pressed into longer distance service, are not suited to country travel. An analysis of the position shows—

	1938-38.	1942-43.	Inc.
Suburban passengers ..	10,186,155	14,267,556	40%
Country passengers ..	1,229,460	2,824,570	130%

This huge increase must have imposed a very great strain on an organisation designed to cater for the lower numbers of three years ago. The increase of 130 per cent. in the volume of country passenger traffic, which the department has been called upon to handle, with no more equipment than it had when the war commenced, is the explanation which the department gives in extenuation of its inability to maintain pre-war standards of travelling comfort. Is it any wonder that there is overcrowding when 14 people demand accommodation which previously was availed of by six—for that virtually is what the increase of 130 per cent. really means? Is it any wonder, either, that under such loading conditions the administration is loath to take a coach off traffic for painting or repair—as this would accentuate the congestion—whilst it is at all roadworthy and serviceable?

On account of the coal position and other factors, the department has done what it can to discourage unnecessary travel by withdrawing excursion facilities, curtailing concessions and discontinuing special services which were run in pre-war years. All these, although unpalatable to those who have been deprived of them, have helped to conserve manpower, rollingstock and coal in the interests of the common good, but the effect is, of course, over-shadowed in the abnormal traffic of the times. For the same reason the provision of sleeping berths was greatly curtailed and sleepers were turned into sit-up compartments, thus enabling a much greater number of passen-

gers to be accommodated per train. The result is the queueing up of passengers for the limited number of berths that are available, and the administration—not the war or the abnormal demand for travel—is blamed for any discomfort and inconvenience which are suffered. The only alternative to queueing up would be to open the bookings some weeks or months ahead, which would encourage speculative booking and probably trafficking in tickets, or by providing sleepers for all who are willing to pay for them to the exclusion of less affluent but possibly more considerate people, who are prepared to sit up or stand, if need be, so long as they can get to their destination.

As to the curtailment of the Laverton-Leonora services, mentioned by Mr. W. R. Hall, it is common knowledge that the population of the fields has dwindled, and no-one will deny that the lot of those remaining is an unenviable one. The times, however, are abnormal, and under existing conditions regarding manpower, rollingstock and coal, even the present limited service to those centres cannot be defended if justification has to be established dispassionately and on purely economic grounds.

Mention has been made of absence of drinking glasses on trains. Here again is disclosed a lack of appreciation of the fact that the department, like everyone else, is suffering from the times. Whilst supplies were available, the department placed drinking glasses in the compartments of all country trains, but with glasses disappearing at the rate of many hundreds per month the department simply has not been able to keep up the supply. Indeed, in the existing circumstances, with replacements very difficult of procurement, the department has been compelled of late to curtail its supplies.

Services on branch lines have come in for special criticism because of the speed of travel and of lack of lavatory accommodation in coaches. The first of these disabilities must remain until the passenger traffic on branch lines is much more dense than at present, and it is possible to dispense with mixed trains catering for both passengers and goods, or, alternatively, until light rail units, at present unprocurable, can be obtained to handle passengers separately. The lack of lavatory conveniences in coaches is a genuine grievance but one which cannot be remedied whilst present traffic continues. The abnormal demand for transport

and the necessity to employ every coach that is roadworthy is the department's reply to branch-line travellers to whom it must cause much inconvenience.

Reference has been made to certain work being turned out at Midland Junction and sent all over the Commonwealth, and of locally built engines having been sent as far away as Queensland—the inference being that local requirements were being subordinated to the needs of other railway systems. The Midland Junction workshops have been and are still turning out locomotive parts intended for the Eastern States, but they are also receiving, both from the Eastern States and from outside manufacturers in this State, components for 10 new Garratt locomotives which are being constructed at the Midland Junction workshops as part of the Commonwealth-wide effort to improve the haulage power of Australian railway systems to meet the demands which the war is making upon them. The effort is being directed by the Commissioner of the Western Australian Government Railways (Mr. J. A. Ellis) with the Chief Mechanical Engineer (Mr. F. Mills), and the manufacture of parts for the locomotives has been distributed widely amongst Australian engineering establishments with a view to a maximum output with efficiency in a minimum of time. The whole of the ten engines which are being assembled at Midland Junction will remain in this State and will constitute a valuable and much-needed addition to local engine power.

Most members will have read in "The West Australian," of one day last week, where the Federal Minister, Mr. Scully, made an announcement about the completion of a Garratt engine in another State. The report gives a description of the efficiency of this particular type of locomotive. I am advised by those in a position to give technical advice on such a matter that there is nothing better, of its kind, than that type of engine, more particularly for the narrow gauge railways that we have in this State. I am not allowed to state to this House all that has been done by the Western Australian railways in providing certain requirements in connection with the war effort in distant parts of the Commonwealth, but most members are aware that quite a lot has been done in that direction, and we can be proud of the fact that Western Australia, with all its disabilities, from a transport point of

view has been able to assist in that direction.

The travelling conditions which have brought forth such criticism from members are not peculiar to Western Australia. All over Australia the railways, as evidenced by their financial results, are being called upon to handle unprecedented business, and all systems are feeling the strain. Because of their magnitude and variety, and for security reasons, services rendered by the railways to the Armed Forces and in the national effort cannot be itemised or even broadly outlined. It must be obvious, not only to members but to the public generally, that when we find road traffic has been curtailed to the extent it has been in this State, it must necessarily throw an extraordinary burden on the remaining means of transport. Where long distances have to be covered, as is the case in Western Australia, it is not surprising that the figures I have quoted have placed a strain on the Railway Department, which can take credit for having done what it has.

Hon. T. Moore: It has done a splendid job in the circumstances!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: From these remarks it will be gathered that it has not been possible to maintain our railways as in peace-time. The same applies to public buildings. Mr. Dimmitt and Mr. Gibson referred to this matter. Both members gave me the impression that they were of the opinion that the surpluses for the last three financial years were achieved because no allowance had been made for the maintenance requirements of the State's assets. The facts are that in the financial year ended the 30th June last, money was reserved to meet railway maintenance and maintenance on public buildings, which for various war-caused reasons could not be carried out. The surplus shown for the year ended June, 1943, is the surplus after allowing for these reserves.

Full particulars of the accrued liability for belated maintenance and the amounts reserved to meet it were supplied by the Treasurer in his Budget Speech, when he said that in regard to railways alone an amount of £120,000 had been set aside last year, in addition to which an amount of £116,000, representing the sale of rolling-stock to the Commonwealth, was paid into a special trust account to provide for additional rolling stock when it becomes possible

to provide it. Similarly, in the year 1941-42 an amount of £102,660 was set aside from the sale of rollingstock to the Commonwealth. In all, therefore, we have accumulated the sum of £338,660 to meet maintenance and renewals on the railway system, including replacement of worn-out rollingstock. Provision has also been made for deferred maintenance on Government buildings to the extent of £100,000. It is a matter for regret that this maintenance could not be carried out, because there is no doubt that buildings quickly deteriorate if not given proper attention. In addition to the £100,000 reserved from last year's expenditure we have provided on this year's Estimates a further sum of £40,000 which will be placed in reserve if not spent, so that a fairly substantial contribution has been made towards meeting the liability which is rapidly growing.

Before getting away from the subject of railways I wish to comment on the remark made by Mr. Roche regarding the Kojonup bus service. I was surprised to hear that statement and therefore submitted it to the Railway Department for comment. I have not had much time even to analyse the position for myself, but I have been provided with the following statement from the department:—

It is recognised that the bus now operating this service is of insufficient strength and capacity to handle the increased loading which is at present offering. At the time the bus was put into service it was the best procurable and the traffic was not nearly as heavy as now. Efforts have been made to secure a stronger and more robust chassis on to which a larger body can be built, but so far without success. The enquiry is being actively pursued.

Certain engine parts were sent to the Eastern States for repairs because spares were unobtainable in Australia and had to be manufactured specially in Melbourne—there being no local plant which could undertake the job. The bus is operated and maintained by the railways and there is no division of control as between railways and tramways. It carries a full range of tools, including an efficient hydraulic jack and hand pump, also a spare tyre, and with the latter available the occasions would be rare when the driver would need to mend a puncture on the road, let alone to call in the assistance of passengers in the task.

It would appear, therefore, that the bus service to Kojonup was instituted at a time when extreme difficulty was experienced in obtaining the correct type of vehicle for the particular work, and that, in common with all other transport services, it has had to

cope with very much increased traffic which, of course, could not have been foreseen at the time. The department is dealing with the situation in the most satisfactory way possible. I hope that Mr. Roche, who was severely critical of this particular service, will accept my assurance that the Railway Department is just as anxious as is he, or any other member, to give to the people of that district the best possible service.

Hon. A. Thomson: It has been a great boon to the people living along that road.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Undoubtedly, and that has been proved by the statement I have just made that the traffic offering is much more than these buses can satisfactorily cater for. If the Railway Department was in a position to improve that state of affairs the members for that district could rest assured that it would do so at the earliest moment. Many members referred to the all-important question of education. With some of the observations made I am entirely in agreement; on the other hand I disagree with others, these not being in accordance with the facts as I know them. I would like to spend a few minutes on this subject and give to the House some information which I think members will appreciate although, of course, when another Bill comes forward at a later stage we will have a much better opportunity to discuss the question of education as it applies to this State.

It was stated by Mr. Dimmitt that our methods have definitely lagged behind the educational systems of other States and countries. I interjected that such was not the case, but he qualified his remark by saying he believed that any educationist would agree with his statement, and that anyway he believed it to be true. It is very easy to make statements regarding the relative merits of educational systems and to quote educationists in support of them, but it is not always a straightout comparison. To say that our educational standard lags behind that of other States and other countries is far too wide and vague a statement. It has been the policy of the present and previous Governments to maintain a system of free education from the lowest grades to the University, and in pursuance of this ideal Western Australia, far from lagging behind, has led the other States and many other countries.

Of all the Australian States, ours was the first to institute free secondary educa-

tion and technical education up to the age of 21. Some other States still charge secondary and technical fees, while all others still charge fees for University education, thus confining professional training to the children of parents who can afford to pay. So far as comparisons can be made, our standard will bear contrasting with that of any other State of the Commonwealth. If examinations can be taken as a measure of standards, then the children of the system of free State education in Western Australia will bear any scrutiny. Taking the Junior and Leaving Certificate results of last year, the State average of passes in State and private schools combined was 68 and 69 per cent. respectively. The State High Schools had averages of 85 and 88 per cent. respectively. The Central Schools, which take the Junior Certificate only, reached the high figure of 80 per cent. of passes, while even the isolated students of the Correspondence Classes were five up on the State average. Thus on this criterion the State schools are considerably above the State average.

Young men, graduates of our free State system, have taken their place in the life of the nation and are now holding high and responsible positions. There is no need for me to mention names; quite a number are known to members. In war our young men have shown qualities of courage, resource and initiative that compare favourably with the fighting men of other countries. On the industrial side the same adaptability is shown. Our war factory workers have attained high efficiency in a very short time. All this must be attributed to the general upbringing of the young Australian, and in this brilliant achievement formal education plays an important part.

On official figures this State has reaped more than its fair share of the honours of war. I heard incidentally the other day that six of the graduates of one State High School now in the R.A.A.F. have gained the D.F.C. A graduate of the same school, who received a D.F.M. was a member of the Lancaster crew which recently visited us. I have not the information available for other schools, but I am sure that the product of the State system will bear comparison with that of any other educational system. A few days ago "The West Australian" published the following paragraph:—

More than 700 awards have been won by Australians in the first four years of war, and

166 men from our State have more than upheld the W.A. tradition for bravery by winning 174 decorations.

This may be regarded as a true reflection of the education young men have received in this State in recent years. I think that percentage will be found to be much higher than the percentage of any other State, and far higher when we take into consideration the number who have joined the Forces from this State as compared with the rest of Australia. I do not claim that our system is without deficiencies, but the Government is keen to remedy them as soon as possible and as far as practicable. Hence the mention in the Speech of a Bill providing for the raising of the school leaving age. Of the Australian States, New South Wales alone has as yet raised the age. England is often quoted as a country where the school leaving age has been raised, but that is incorrect. Although it has been legislated for, it is still to be implemented as a post-war measure. It has not been put into operation except in one or two isolated districts.

Yesterday Mr. Roche referred to education in the United States of America, and said that in so many States the school leaving age had been increased to 16 years and in one or two States to 18 years. That statement does not give the whole picture. I should like to give a quotation from the report of The Advisory Committee of Education, 1938, U.S.A., which reads—

It must be borne in mind that there are 127,000 local school jurisdictions, and as three-quarters of the total cost of public education is met through taxation of property chiefly by local jurisdictions, the avenues of education rise and fall with the ability and the willingness of real estate owners to pay taxes. No other social service is dependent so largely on so unsatisfactory a tax base.

As an instance of such inequality, in three States the amount expended per pupil in average daily attendance is less than 30 dollars. In three others, the possible extreme expenditures were above 115 dollars and were thus nearly four times as large. These amounts are average expenditures within the respective States and include expenditures both from State and local funds. They also include Federal grants to the States for vocational education in the public schools, although these grants amount to only about $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of all educational expenditure.

The Americans themselves are not so satisfied with their education, and are perfectly aware that while they may have some of the best educational systems in the world, they have also some of the worst. Under their

decentralised system of school administration they have greater inequalities than exist with us.

In Iowa, for example, the most prosperous school district has been estimated to have 275 times the wealth per child of the poorest district. For a number of States the most able local units could provide 100 dollars or more for every one dollar provided by the less able units.

States differ markedly in the average length of school term they provide. In 1935-36 the average length of school year for public schools was 173 days in all States, the average length of the school year was under 140 days, in nine States it was above 180 days. Naturally these differences correspond closely with the differences in expenditure.

The schools in Western Australia are open for 215 days.

The elementary schools service of some sort is now almost universally available, and in the general programme from the first through to the sixth grades exists a considerable amount of uniformity. When the quality of the elementary school service is considered, however, almost any measure that can be applied will reveal the widest possible variation.

The development of secondary schools has followed the development of elementary schools but has not been carried so far. In consequence secondary schools present a picture of even greater diversity than do elementary schools.

Members will appreciate that there is a very great diversity in the United States of America brought about principally, perhaps, by the method adopted there. Here we have a centralised system of education, whereas in America there are no fewer than 127,000 local school jurisdictions. Though America has a much larger population than we have, there are many directions in which we can point to the United States as being sadly deficient when compared with the system of education in this State.

Our schools giving free tuition are available to all, and many people have wisely retained their children at school, but economic factors often debar a high education to children who have proved themselves capable and worthy of it. To help parents to take fuller advantage of facilities offering, the Government has as liberal a system of scholarships as any other State and has approved of an extension of such scholarships, particularly in technical education, so as to facilitate the passage of non-academic boys into industry.

The statement made by Mr. Cornell that facilities in the rural areas fall short of those in vogue a few years ago is not borne out

by facts, nor is his statement that correspondence courses are not available in certain areas. There has been no restrictive regulation imposed on the rural areas, so that as far as facilities are concerned there has been no decrease. On the contrary, wherever possible, consolidation of schools has been effected to bring the country children to larger centres with the object of giving them better educational facilities which can be more readily supplied to large units than to small. All children who reside outside the compulsory radius can enrol for correspondence tuition; and if they fail to get that tuition, the responsibility is purely that of the parents themselves. Certainly, it is not compulsory; but there is no district denied—Dulvalbin, Lake King, or anywhere else in the State. The area mentioned between Ravensthorpe and Moorine Rock consists of small isolated units, and wherever the requisite number of eight can be guaranteed a teacher will be sent. In some instances a small school has had to be closed on account of accommodation for the teacher not being available. The hon. member will admit that there is a limit to transportation, but wherever possible this is furnished. The department does not always have the support of the parents when consolidation of schools is suggested.

This State, as I have already mentioned, has, in comparison with some other States, a liberal system of scholarships for country children and provision is made for living-away allowance for country children who attain the standard of the Junior certificate. The Government has at all times encouraged consolidation wherever practicable, and at the cessation of hostilities proposes to give greater facilities to meet both rural and technical needs. These additional facilities will take the form of what have been called area schools and technical annexes. There will always be the problem of the very small unit and the isolated child. This is a disability inseparable from isolated settlement.

I regret that the question of town versus country should have been raised. Mr. Wood quoted disabilities at Northam, and referred to the fact that there is no domestic science centre at the High School there, and that children attending have to walk across the town to one of the State schools for domestic science. "Why is this?" the hon. member asks. "Why cannot proper facilities be had in the country?" He then proceeded to ques-

tion the expenditure of £12,000 on the Kent-street school, and said that surely if manpower could be made available for that school it could be made available for the country. I would point out to the hon. member that the domestic science centre at Northam is at the primary school, and the High School students attend there. They are, therefore, not deprived of this instruction any more than children in the metropolitan area and Fremantle who have to travel from their school to a domestic science centre removed from the school they are attending.

Regarding the Kent-street school, it must be emphasised that these additions are progressing intermittently by using labour available between war contracts. This method of utilising labour is not practicable in the country, and therefore Kent-street school should not be cited as evidence that labour is available. At the same time, the Kent-street school is the key to our problem of post-primary accommodation in the metropolitan area. Members must understand that in the existing circumstances there are many factors which determine whether this or that work can be embarked upon by the Government.

The department is aware that, despite the disproportionate cost, the best possible must be given to the rural child, and it is always ready to consider anything that is at all practicable. But surely members would not veto an essential improvement to town education just because the same facility cannot be given to the country child! The policy of free education from the primary stage to the University is still the policy of the Government; and it is an ideal which will be better realised as post-primary and technical sections are more developed. The test of a free University is not that it allows the attendance of youth of the higher-income families to pass beyond the point justified by their native ability, but that it facilitates the passage of students of limited means to receive an education justified by their ability and so add to their greater efficiency as citizens.

In his concluding remarks Mr. E. H. H. Hall doubted the wisdom of releasing male teachers for the Services, and said that the Education Department should have exercised the right to retain a number of its male teachers, and that women teachers were wrestling with the situation; further, that female teaching was neither good for the

boys nor for themselves. Would he suggest that male teachers as a body should have been denied the right to serve their country? I suggest that the department has done everything reasonable in the circumstances. In any case Mr. Hall is unjust to the women teachers, who have done excellent work in post-primary classes; and head teachers of boys' schools have gone out of their way to pay tribute to the excellence of their work and their enthusiasm. The department has every right to be proud of the services rendered by those of its teachers under 35 years of age who have joined the Armed Forces. Had they been prevented by the department from joining the Forces, they would have been exposed to the unjust criticisms which have been levelled at other men similarly circumstanced, who have been debarred from entering the Air, Military and Naval Forces.

Turning now to rural matters, the question of the revaluation of marginal areas was raised. The revaluation is being systematically carried out by the Lands Department. As it deals with the whole of the outer areas, it is a big job; and the rate at which it can be done depends on the staff that can be made available for the purpose. Most of the professional staff of the Lands Department has been engaged for the last two years on work for the Armed Forces, and for the Commonwealth on matters arising out of the war. This has naturally slowed down the work of revaluation, but even so a considerable proportion of the outer area revaluation has already been completed. Up to date 560 leases have been revalued, while 480 still remain to be done. The work is proceeding as quickly as is practicable with the staff available. As the work is being done from the south northwards, the persons in the more northern areas will naturally have to wait longer for the revaluation of their leases.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I was referring to the question of the revaluation of marginal areas. I pointed out that as this revaluation is taking place from the south to the north it will be some considerable time before people who are affected in the northern parts of those areas will have their valuations completed. Mr. E. H. H. Hall asked questions as to whether settlers who are located in the marginal areas are to be prevented from growing wheat. I think the

hon. member is aware that the Commonwealth Wheat Industry Stabilisation Scheme controls the area to be sown for wheat in Western Australia, and that a reduction of one-third of the basic area has been made. This reduction is applied generally throughout the State except in respect of those marginal area settlers whose debts have been assessed and written down on a grazing basis. In such cases the maximum area licensed for wheat for grain for the season 1943-44 is 150 acres. Each settler in the marginal areas, including those situated in the Ajana area, has been advised of the Commissioner's assessment. Mr. Wood complained about the rationing restriction imposed on farm butter supplies. Recently a deputation waited upon the Acting Minister for Agriculture, who was sympathetic, and a request has been made to the Minister for Customs, who controls the rationing scheme, suggesting that consideration should be given to means whereby farmers in wheatbelt areas who possess only a few cows may be enabled to sell their produce as heretofore. A reply has not yet been received from the Minister for Customs. Mr. Wood also referred to the rabbit menace, and said that the only way to deal with the pests was to poison them with strychnine.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Not the only way.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I think that is the way in which the hon. member's remarks read.

Hon. G. B. Wood: I know more about rabbits than to say that is the only way.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. member also said that the Government had done nothing to obtain adequate supplies of strychnine. The policy of the Government has been not to interfere with the distribution and marketing of goods where that work is being carried out satisfactorily by private enterprise, but during this year a situation arose which necessitated the Department of Agriculture taking a definite stand, not only in regard to the method of distribution of strychnine but also to the price which road boards were being asked to pay for this commodity. Since April, approximately 6,000 ozs. of strychnine have been imported and distributed to road boards throughout the State, but unfortunately, as it now appears, no restrictions were placed upon the quantity of strychnine which could be purchased by road boards when supplies were available.

It was found that some boards had purchased sufficient requirements not only for their immediate needs but for considerable future requirements, whilst others were finding it difficult to obtain their immediate requirements.

The Agricultural Department approached the distributors who co-operated in arranging for a more equitable distribution on a quota basis. To safeguard the position the Government has ordered an emergency supply which will be held in reserve and, in addition, adequate quantities of strychnine have been ordered through the usual channels. Strychnine, however, has to be imported from overseas, and there is no guarantee that supplies will be actually available for distribution until shipments arrive at our ports. The Government has taken every reasonable precaution that supplies of this poison shall be available and it has not, as Mr. Wood said, done nothing in the matter.

Hon. G. B. Wood: You are quite sure I said that?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I think the hon. member said something to that effect.

Hon. G. B. Wood: I must look it up!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: In the course of his remarks, Mr. Cornell stated that the officers of the Agricultural Department advised farmers that 40 lbs. of superphosphate was adequate for the growing of wheat. This apparently is supported by Mr. Baxter, who by interjection indicated that the experts needed practice and should not be guided by theory. At no time have the officers of that department made such a statement. Officers, however, have advised farmers that the best method of utilising the small supply of superphosphate which was available last year, was to concentrate the growing of wheat on those portions of the farm which were most suitable for this purpose, and on old land that had been well fertilised in the past with superphosphate.

Under these conditions, owing to the residual value of superphosphate, facts indicate that a crop approaching 90 per cent. of its normal yield on such land would be obtained during a normal season for one year after the normal application of superphosphate had been used. It was pointed out that this advice was founded on facts. Furthermore, although it was stated that very few farmers would accept this advice, apparently, from the area which has been

sown, the majority of farmers did accept it. That the advice was sound is also indicated by the estimated yield of wheat for the coming harvest. During the coming season, owing to the further reduction in the quantity of superphosphate available for wheat, and owing to the department not having any facts regarding the effect of wheat land being short supplied for more than one year, farmers have been advised that once the allocation of superphosphate has been made to them it may be used in whatever way they think most profitable.

Last year it was feared that if farmers used the normal amount on their wheat area, the fact that they did not crop such a large area as they were licensed to crop would have an effect on their license for the coming year. Now they have been advised that once the allocation has been made, they may use the superphosphate as they think proper. The principle of the earlier advice, however, still stands—that the reduction of area with a view to maintaining the normal application of superphosphate per acre must inevitably result in a far greater reduction in the gross yield of wheat than if a lesser application of superphosphate per acre were applied over a larger crop.

During the debate, reference has been made to the development of the State's secondary industries. Members have not been so critical of the Government's efforts in this direction as in previous years, and appear to recognise in the existing circumstances the difficulties which confront the Administration in giving effect to its policy of fostering the establishment of these industries. One member went so far as to say that the Government has, as far as possible, done an excellent job in this connection. A few queries have been raised, however, and to these I desire to reply. Mr. Bolton can rest assured that the Government has done its utmost to obtain the best possible advice and to retain the services of capable experts in establishing new industries. The best expert advice obtainable in Australia has been secured in respect to the charcoal iron industry, and leading American authorities have been consulted in respect to the process selected for the recovery of by-products of wood distillation.

The Vulcan Copper and Supply Co. of Cincinnati, Ohio, U.S.A., has been responsible for the development of the process on

a commercial scale, and the company supplies and guarantees the operation of its plant. This company has been approached to supply plans and details for the construction of a plant in Western Australia, and has been asked if it would be prepared to send a representative to this State to supervise construction. Mr. Bolton also mentioned the matter of advances to assist secondary industries, and urged the utmost caution in giving such assistance. The figures quoted by him under the heading "Assistance to Industries Account" refer to ancient history.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Bad history, too!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It may be, but I think it indicates that even in those days a very definite attempt was made to secure the establishment of industries that would be beneficial to this State. The expenditure quoted is largely represented by such items as assistance to the Avon Butter and Bacon Factory, the W.A. Meat Export Co., Ltd., pearling, banana-growing, the W.A. Manganese Co., North-West Meatworks, Albany Freezing Works and the Calyx Porcelain Works. Those particular concerns cover the great part of the expenditure to which the hon. member referred. In recent history we have an entirely different picture. Since January, 1940, £51,480 has been advanced to various industries through the Department of Industrial Development, of which £23,076 was repaid by the 31st July, 1943, and since that date further repayments have been made. Advances in recent years have been amply justified and have resulted in the starting of many industries that could not have been established without State assistance. Members can rest assured that the utmost care and caution are exercised in respect to the granting of financial assistance, and that applications are thoroughly investigated by officers of both the Department of Industrial Development and the Treasury before approval is given.

Attention was drawn during the debate to the reduction in contracts for munition production and its effect on Western Australian factories. The Government is well aware of this and is doing everything possible in this connection. Representations have been made to the Board of Area Management in an endeavour to obtain additional orders for Western Australia. The

Area Controller recently visited the Eastern States for the purpose of securing additional orders and I am pleased to advise that he was successful in obtaining sufficient work to occupy some of our workshops for several months ahead. One can imagine that a real disability could arise in that, if the orders were to cease, some of the concerns would have to close down entirely. Being aware of the position, the Government is using every endeavour to avoid such circumstances arising.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: That is why I mentioned the matter.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I think that when raising the question Mr. Bolton said he had personal knowledge of such matters.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: I have.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: In the circumstances, I inform him that the Government also has knowledge in that respect and is prepared to do everything possible to avoid the difficulties that Mr. Bolton mentioned. It is anticipated that the fabrication of the blast furnace and wood distillation plant by local factories will assist in some measure to bridge the gap caused by the reduction in munitions production. Every effort is being made to obtain sufficient work to enable local factories to maintain continuity of production, and that attitude will not be relaxed. Mr. Tuckey referred to the shipping problems as between Western Australia and the Eastern States, and said that he thought the Shipping Priorities Committee was still functioning unsatisfactorily. This was rather a contrast to the statement made by Dr. Hislop, who referred to the committee in commendable terms.

In the course of his remarks Mr. Tuckey mentioned a specific instance of delay. He said that last year he complained regarding gas-producers, but this year he wished to refer to an order for 1,500 dozen water bags which had been placed in the Eastern States, the firm concerned being unable to arrange shipment; this in face of the fact that bags were needed in the country and in the North-West where last year unguaranteed bags were forwarded. I am afraid I must differ from the hon. member in his opinion of the committee. The gas producers complained of were shipped to this State in July, 1942. The committee was appointed in August of that year and therefore it had no responsibility in the matter.

Hon. A. Thomson: We did not want the gas-producers here; we make better ones ourselves.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Hear, hear!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The committee was set up for the purpose of preventing abuses in the use of shipping space. It has done a good job and it is now generally agreed that available shipping space is being used to the best possible advantage. Space is not now being allotted to goods that can be manufactured in this State. The committee has looked after the interests of this State very efficiently, and from the information supplied to me I think it has been most successful in many respects. The committee has never received a request to sponsor shipping space for water bags. It has, however, on several occasions successfully arranged shipping space for canvas for the purpose of manufacturing water bags locally. In accordance with the policy of the committee, the shipment of made-up water bags would not be sponsored because of the extra space occupied by made-up bags, as compared with the raw material.

The defective water bags referred to by Mr. Tuckey was manufactured in December, 1940, from the best material available at the time. The bags proved to be most unsatisfactory and, following representations by the Department of Industrial Development, the use of this material for water bags was discontinued. The Chamber of Manufactures and the Chamber of Commerce are represented on the Shipping Priorities Committee. The Shipping Control Board has co-operated to the fullest extent with the committee. State liaison officers are functioning in Melbourne and Sydney, and their duties include attention to all matters relating to the shipment of cargoes to Western Australia. The many letters of appreciation received from Western Australian business houses regarding the assistance rendered by the State Shipping Priorities Committee and the liaison officers provide ample evidence of the effectiveness of the organisation, and do not indicate that it is functioning unsatisfactorily.

When dealing with electricity supplies, Mr. Tuckey said—

The Government continues to haul coal from Collie to supply the Perth Power Station, whereas costs alone should govern a decision with regard to the sites for electricity power stations.

The point raised by the hon. member has recently been re-examined by the Electricity Advisory Committee, with the result that the committee is unanimously of the opinion that a central power house at Collie to generate electricity for the metropolitan area would not be an economic proposition. The position at Yallourn, I am told, is entirely different from that which applies between Collie and Perth.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Were you told why?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. The extensions referred to by Mr. Tuckey as having been provided in Victoria can be readily understood when we consider the population of that State with its smaller relative distances compared with the position in this State. Mr. Tuckey referred to the number of small electricity concerns which have developed throughout the State, but this is a phase which every community must go through. One cannot expect the country towns to go without the facilities provided by electricity until the whole State has developed to a stage where complete distribution is feasible. Every city and town in Australia has gone through practically the same procedure—first, the installation of a small direct current generating plant; then a gradual increase until the distance becomes too great for transmission by direct current; then the scrapping of the plant and conversion to alternating current.

It may be mentioned that in Melbourne and Sydney there are still quite a number of factories equipped with, and running, the old direct current plant and gradually converting to alternating current as the plant wears out. Mr. Tuckey recognised this position, if I read his remarks aright, and agreed that whatever might be done would be only a beginning, to be expanded as future developments warrant. He recognised, too, that to attempt too big a scheme in the initial stages might so load it with charges as to render it a non-paying proposition for many years to come, thereby retarding the provision of similar unit facilities in other areas. The question of electric power in the South-West is under active consideration at the moment by the Electricity Advisory Committee, but I am not in a position to give the House any information as to how far the investigation has proceeded.

Turning now to mining matters, the question was raised as to whether any attention had been given by the Government to the possibilities of copper and lead mines in the Northampton district, in order that, if possible, they might be exploited for war purposes. It must be pointed out that the National Security Regulations enable the Commonwealth Government to control the supply of minerals of strategic value for purposes associated with the war effort. The Commonwealth's procedure, through the States, has been to concentrate manpower and machinery on those deposits that can supply the greatest quantity in the shortest time.

Fortunately for Western Australia, we have many extensive mineral deposits containing high values and thus have been able to secure the opening up and exploiting of our tantalite, beryl, mica, asbestos, antimony, scheelite, wolfram and pyrite deposits. Queensland has bigger lead and copper deposits and thus the concentration for these minerals has been in that State. While Northampton was a large producer of lead and copper years ago, many of its mines were worked out, while others would require considerable and lengthy work in unwatering, rehabilitating and investigating. Thus as Queensland was actually producing lead in large quantities and was able almost immediately to produce copper, this State has been requested by the authorities to concentrate its energies on the other mineral deposits mentioned.

Regarding the criticism by Mr. E. H. H. Hall concerning the delay in making an announcement in connection with the phosphate deposits at Dandarragan, I am informed by the Mines Department that these deposits were examined by a departmental geologist in 1940, and his report was to the effect that they were of a low grade, covered by a considerable over-burden and with certain chemical difficulties in their make-up. At that time they were an uneconomic proposition and consequently it was not practicable to develop them. With Japan's entry into the war, however, they were re-examined recently by the same officer in collaboration with two officials of the British Phosphate Commission. The previous report was confirmed, but the Commission decided to make certain laboratory investigations into the chemical constitution and treatment of the material. Upon the results obtained will depend whether the Com-

mission will be able to open up the deposits. As I said when replying to the question asked this afternoon, we have this week been advised that the report may be expected within a few days.

Members have shown commendable interest in the recent report issued by the honorary Royal Commission on Youth Delinquency, of which Sir Hal Colebatch was chairman. During the debate Sir Hal referred to the work of the Commission and to the recommendations made by it; other members have done likewise and have quoted extensively from some of the evidence that was obtained. The Commission's recommendations are receiving the careful consideration of the Government, and effect has been given to the one referring to the temporary provision for youthful delinquents at the Roe-street lock-up. The erection of the superstructure to the building is well advanced. Suitable conveniences, including bathroom and exercise yards will be installed, and the building will be capable of accommodating six boys.

Regarding the recommendation of the Commission on the publication of reports of cases in the Children's Court—a matter referred to by Sir Hal during the course of his remarks—the Press publicity given to these proceedings is less than previously. The volume of such publicity is controlled, in the first instance by the special magistrate and, in the second instance, by the newspapers themselves. We have no statutory authority to prevent publication, but I understand we have had a great deal of co-operation in that connection.

When dealing with the problem of youthful delinquency Sir Hal Colebatch asked what the Government intended to do as regards Barton's Mill. I think he said he hoped the Government would persist in the use of that prison. I have very little to add on this subject to what I have said previously. In my opinion, Barton's Mill has fully justified itself as an experiment, and it has also given us the opportunity to examine our penal system. The Government acknowledges that the Fremantle Gaol is a relic of the past and I am hopeful that we shall never use it again as we did formerly. At present it is, of course, necessary that we should provide suitable accommodation for prisoners whom it is not advisable to send to an establishment such as Barton's Mill. In conjunction with the mili-

tary authorities, we are using portion of the Fremantle Gaol at present for that class of prisoner. As members are aware, the Barton's Mill site was an experiment which was forced upon the Government. At very short notice a place had to be found where we could detain about 180 prisoners. On account of the limited time at our disposal, the Barton's Mill site was selected, mainly because it had previously carried a population of approximately 200 people, and there were certain buildings—cottages and huts—on the site which could be utilised for the purpose. It was never thought that the site would be suitable for a permanent gaol.

However, as a result of our experience there and our desire to continue this type of detention, we are having the site examined by a special committee in order to determine whether it is really the most suitable site. If the committee considers it is not, then the members of that body will recommend what in their opinion is the best locality for the establishment of a new prison. The matter is one which requires careful consideration, and I cannot go further than that at present. Those of us who have given any thought at all to the question of gaol administration will realise that there are many difficulties associated with control of that type that are not apparent to the public. Some phases of the administration cannot be given much publicity, but I am distinctly hopeful that as a result of our experiences we shall be able to say in the near future that we have secured a suitable site, whether it be at Barton's Mill or at some other place, where we can erect an up-to-date prison.

Many matters appertaining to the medical profession and to public health generally were dealt with by Dr. Hislop in an interesting manner. His remarks, summed up, may be described as a recommendation for a survey of hospital and medical conditions throughout the State, which, in the existing circumstances, would indeed be difficult to carry out. He also criticised the present administration and complained of the lack of co-ordination between various activities in the field of public health.

Some of his statements, however, cannot be substantiated by the facts. For instance, he said that unofficially he had heard that economies were to be effected in hospital administration. No such move towards any variation in the policy of recent years has

been made with regard to finance. Subsidies are being maintained at full standard rates, although the great majority of hospitals are in a better financial position today than they have ever been before.

Referring to the appointment of a health inspector at Wagin, it is a little surprising to hear the hon. member claiming that health inspectors, already too few, should be zoned to cover two or three extensive districts in a State such as Western Australia, with its wide spaces and great distances, especially when the National Health and Medical Research Council has stated that, particularly in wartime, health staffs should be maintained at their highest level for the reason that the health of the civil community is a measure of the health of the military community in occupied areas, and vice versa. Under the Health Act inspectors have a multiplicity of duties to perform, and I am informed that where more than one district can be adequately dealt with by one inspector, the local authorities concerned, who have to find the money for his salary, are not dilatory in making representations to that effect.

The case of Wagin is no exception, but the Commissioner of Public Health is the final arbiter under the Act. The full-time officer of the Wagin local health authority has been accepted for one of the Services, with the result that sanitary supervision and meat inspection have ceased in that area for some time past. The local health authority is certainly saving money by this officer's absence, but the Commissioner of Public Health, regarding health as the primary consideration, has required the local authority temporarily to replace this officer if a substitute can be found. I believe the Commissioner of Public Health is visiting Wagin this week to discuss the position locally.

Certain local authorities were commended by Dr. Hislop for urging compulsory immunisation. There can be no question that immunisation has produced excellent results and, so far as the public health authorities are concerned, compulsory immunisation would be a good thing. It is a very different matter, however, to make it compulsory by legislation, which would also involve the provision of penalties for those who did not conform. I am doubtful whether the public is prepared at the present time for a measure of that kind. Probably a great deal of education has yet to be given with

respect to the advantages of compulsory immunisation. In regard to improvisations which have taken place at one or more of our country hospitals, I am informed that these have been the only way out of a difficulty at a particular time, and that invariably they were recommended by the local medical authority and were proceeded with on his advice. In those circumstances, I do not think there is cause for complaint. I think the town to which the hon. member referred is Collie. My information is that the local medical authority there is quite in agreement with all that was done.

The question of the establishment at Wooroloo of a farm colony was also mentioned by Dr. Hislop, who favoured the proposal. He believes it to be a good one and thinks the Government is of the same opinion. But then he suggested the Government should accept complete responsibility for the establishment of the colony. In this particular matter, the doctor at Wooroloo and a committee, which he has been able to get from people interested in this subject, have, from very small beginnings, reached the stage where they can embark on a scheme meeting with the approval of the medical profession generally. I think the scheme is recognised as being perhaps, if not the only way at any rate the best way to deal with T.B. patients. The idea behind it is that occupational therapy is the best method by which to deal with the patients in an institution of this kind. The committee that Dr. Henzell, who is in charge of the work at Wooroloo, has been able to gather around him has entered into the proposal with the utmost enthusiasm. The Government is most appreciative of the work that has been done, but I am given to understand that Dr. Henzell and his friends prefer to work as a committee. The Government, however, has agreed to assist them in several ways, not only to the extent of providing £1,000 towards the appeal that has been made for £10,000, but also by the purchase of a farm costing something like £2,500 to be used for this purpose. There are two or three houses on this farm which can be utilised in connection with the scheme and, in addition, it has an orchard, together with a certain acreage under grasses. It will create splendid opportunities for Dr. Henzell and his co-workers to endeavour to make a success of their scheme, and I have no doubt that they

will do so. The Government is prepared to give whole-hearted support to the idea.

I come now to the half-caste problem which was referred to by more than one member. Mr. Thomson indulged in rather unfair comment on the question, and was supported to some extent by Mr. Tuckey. He charged the Government with not making a determined effort to educate half-castes, and said that their illiteracy was evidence of Government neglect. He further went on to say that some half-castes were receiving between £7 and £8 per month by way of child endowment, besides rations, and that this was causing indolence. Nothing, he suggested, was being done to compel them to work. Doubtless the degree of illiteracy is greater than it should be, but among native children it is now receding appreciably in view of departmental policy of insistence on native children attending school. It is admitted, of course, that we cannot regain the lost ground insofar as adult natives are concerned, but every possible action is being taken to remedy the matter. It is not fair to blame this Government for the illiteracy which does obtain among the native and half-caste population.

Upwards of 600 native children are attending school in the South-West, 500 are being educated at missions and 300 at State native institutions—a total of approximately 1,400 children. That is a big improvement on the position of a few years ago. Beneficial results will be noticeable in consequence of this policy in the course of a few years. The Department of Native Affairs receives a considerable quantity of correspondence from native persons each day, many of whom are in the Great Southern district, and the correspondence indicates that they are mostly able to read and write. As a race, however, they are nomads, and, generally speaking, show no inclination to improve their living habits unless pressure is exercised on them to do so. It is interesting to note that upwards of 5,500 natives are employed throughout of the State. This is a remarkably satisfactory figure since it indicates that at least one in every three natives—man, woman and child, exclusive of those beyond the confines of civilisation—is employed at some time during the year. There again a big change has taken place.

The re-establishment of the Carrolup native settlement is meeting with excellent results. All able-bodied natives are required to

work, and if they fail to do so they are removed to settlements under warrants for disciplinary correction, which makes for more industrious habits. There is no rationing nowadays for able-bodied natives, as was implied by Mr. Thomson. A certain amount of rationing is still going on for aged and infirm natives. We cannot get away from that. The parents are receiving child endowment, but they do not also receive Government rations. Where a native family attempts to live on the child endowment money, steps are taken to correct this and, if necessary, to remove the family to a settlement. As a further safeguard it is intended in the near future to inaugurate a system of supervision in connection with the payment of child endowment moneys to native persons.

About 50 per cent. of the native parents spend their child endowment money wisely, but there is some laxity and carelessness with the remaining 50 per cent. It is proposed to discontinue direct cash payments shortly and to issue orders on local storekeepers for the supply of goods instead, up to the value of the child endowment payments. When this system is inaugurated, it will have a beneficial effect on the living habits of the natives, and doubtless they will exercise every possible effort to live according to better standards in order to secure the resumption of the cash payment of child endowment moneys. Substantial evidence of the sympathetic attitude of the present Government to the native question is the fact that the annual expenditure has now reached £52,000. If Mr. Thomson will furnish some specific particulars of the whereabouts of the alleged loitering natives the matter will be investigated and suitable action taken.

In the course of his remarks Mr. Parker saw fit to criticise the fact that the Civil Defence Council is continuing the present A.R.P. restrictions as they apply to the boarding-up of windows, etc., and said that he trusted the whole of the air-raid precautions regulations would be entirely and completely revised. I would point out that the precautions referred to by Mr. Parker were most desirable and proper at the time they were instituted, when the danger of Japanese air and sea attack was very real. Many of the bunds and shelters are constructed of brick, and it would be manifestly unwise to remove them while any possibility of attack remains, as manpower and mat-

erials would not be available to reconstruct them.

The Civil Defence Council reviews the position at very frequent intervals in collaboration with the military authorities, and, as soon as further relaxation is considered to be safe, action will be taken accordingly. Members know that to date there have been certain relaxations in different areas, but the Civil Defence Council acts on the advice of the defence authorities, and, while we are pleased to feel that we are now safe from invasion, and possibly even from an air attack, nevertheless we cannot afford to be too easy in matters of this kind. We know of places where it was thought that things could not happen, but they did. The Civil Defence Council is adopting the right policy in acting on the advice of the defence authorities in these matters.

The question of queueing up of passengers for trolley buses was mentioned by Mr. Parker. This subject, I think, has received undue prominence and publicity. It is admitted, of course, that at peak periods there is congestion, but this applies not only to trolley buses but to all other means of transport at peak periods.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: I mentioned buses generally, not trolley buses.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: They leave from the same place. It must be perfectly obvious that there is something more in this question than the mere queueing up of passengers, and it is futile for Mr. Parker to suggest that the police are incapable of performing this duty.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: I quite agree.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There is no difficulty in queueing up passengers by the police. On many occasions it has been shown that the public in this State is just as orderly as are people in other parts of the Commonwealth, and that whenever a queue is necessary the people here are prepared to fall into line. But there are problems related to the question which have been, and are being, dealt with by the department concerned. There are several factors on the traffic side which affect this position, and which sooner or later will be straightened out. In the meantime I understand that a debate on this subject is taking place in the Legislative Assembly, where it has been suggested that a committee should be formed to go into the question to ascertain whether

some improvement could be effected. There is no need for me to go into that subject at great length.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Will you instruct a policeman to be on duty in the Terrace at peak periods?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: One of the difficulties, as the hon. members knows, is that vehicles leaving for a particular destination do not pull up at exactly the same place every time.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Could he not move up and down?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We have a policeman moving up and down at peak periods.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: I directly contradict you there, because he is only on the corner.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The reports I have received from the Police Department are to the effect that very little obstruction takes place on the footpath but that at times it is necessary to supervise the crowd entering one or other of the vehicles. I think I have covered the more important points raised during the debate. As usual I shall supply members with any other information for which they have asked.

In conclusion may I state that while the tide of war has turned in our favour, there is no room for complacency of any kind. The months ahead for our Fighting Forces will be hard and tough in bitter struggles and fierce fighting. Our thoughts, therefore, go out to those who, on land, sea and in the air are carrying the fight to our enemies at the peril of their lives. Likewise, too, our thoughts are of those who have suffered the loss of loved ones. Their constancy and courage should be an example to us all. Let us hope that in the months ahead we shall not only be carried far along the road to victory, but also far along the road of understanding and planning for that order of society which should be the fruits of brave endeavour and sacrifices made by the democratic peoples of the world.

Question put and passed; the Address adopted.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, resolved: That the Address be presented to His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor by the President and such members as may desire to accompany him.

RESOLUTION—DAYLIGHT SAVING.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had concurred in the Council's resolution.

BILLS (5)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Financial Emergency Act Amendment.
 - 2, Public Service Appeal Board Act Amendment.
 - 3, Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act Amendment.
 - 4, Main Roads Act (Funds Appropriation).
 - 5, Industries Assistance Act Continuance.
- Received from the Assembly.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 5 p.m. tomorrow.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 8.39 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 8th September, 1943.

	PAGE
Questions: Agricultural Bank, as to Denmark district	376
Fuel pipes, Albany, as to rental and wharfage	377
Nestle's factory, Waroona, as to shortage of coal	377
Bills: Town Planning and Development Act Amendment, 1R.	377
Bulk Handling Act Amendment, 1R.	377
Financial Emergency Act Amendment, 3R.	377
Public Service Appeal Board Act Amendment, 3R.	377
Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act Amendment, 3R.	377
Main Roads Act (Funds Appropriation), 3R.	377
Industries Assistance Act Continuance, 3R.	377
Papers: Agricultural Bank, as to case of Craig Holden Whitwell	387
Motions: Post-war reconstruction, to inquire by Royal Commission	377
Motor tyres, as to proposed acquisition scheme Commonwealth and State relationships, as to post-war financial reform	394
Electricity Act, to disallow cinematograph regulation	396
Standing Orders, amendment, as to time limit for speeches, etc., point of order	397
Road services, as to control of passenger traffic	400
Agricultural Bank, case of A. J. Addis, to inquire by Select Committee	409

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

QUESTIONS (3).

AGRICULTURAL BANK.

As to Denmark District.

Mr. HILL asked the Minister for Lands: 1, What is the number of Agricultural Bank