

try. The big farmer will be protected, as he will receive an advance of 2s. per bushel. I cannot see anything wrong with the scheme and I take this opportunity to inform the Government that it meets with my approval.

Mr. Doney: Will the farmer get 2s. per bushel at the siding?

Mr. BERRY: That, I understand, is the proposal.

Mr. Doney: That statement has not yet been made.

Mr. BERRY: I heard it privately. If the wheatgrowers are going to quarrel with the scheme, then I suggest we should leave them to their own devices. Scheme after scheme has been brought forward on various occasions, but those schemes have not matured because of the opposition to them. I shall conclude by saying that the slogan of the British Empire ought to be "Organise and win the war." Muddle, and we shall lose it!

On motion by Mr. Kelly, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 4.35 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Wednesday, 19th August, 1942.*

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The SPEAKER took the chair at 2.15 p.m., and read prayers.

### QUESTIONS (4).

#### "HANSARD."

##### *Bound Volumes for Members.*

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Premier: In view of the decision of the Printing Committee that the practice of issuing bound copies of "Hansard" to members of both Houses be discontinued until the end of the war, will he advise: 1, Whether it is proposed to print the index to speeches and subjects as usual? 2, If so, what cost would be involved in the printing and binding of the eighty additional sets of volumes re-

quired to provide each member with a copy as usual? 3, Would it be possible to supply bound volumes to those members requiring them, and if so, what is the proposed charge?

The DEPUTY PREMIER (for the Premier) replied: 1, 2 and 3, This is a matter for the Joint Printing Committee.

### CIVIL DEFENCE.

#### *Requisitioned Premises.*

Mr. McDONALD asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Is he aware that a considerable number of premises have been requisitioned and wholly or partially occupied for Civil Defence purposes by municipal councils and road boards, under the Public Authorities and Corporations Powers Order made by the Premier and that the owners are receiving no rent or compensation? 2, As the Order provides that these owners have no claim against these local authorities, will the Government take steps as soon as possible to ensure that Civil Defence funds are provided to pay fair compensation during the period of occupation, as is done from Defence expenditure in the case of the acquisition of premises for military purposes?

The MINISTER replied: 1, I am aware of two instances in which premises have been so requisitioned. As far as I know the owners are not receiving rent or compensation. 2, This matter has been fully considered by the Civil Defence Council, which is of the opinion that Civil Defence funds should not be used for the purpose of compensating such owners. Where the Council requisitions premises for its own use it pays reasonable rental in every case.

### AGRICULTURE, FARM LABOUR

Mr. BERRY asked the Minister for Agriculture: Is it the intention of the Government to take necessary and immediate steps to appoint a committee for the proper and timely organisation of the manpower essential for the coming wheat harvest?

The MINISTER replied: Consideration is being given to matters relating to essential manpower for all industries.

### WATER SUPPLY, PINGELLY.

Mr. SEWARD asked the Minister for Water Supplies: 1, Is it a fact that instructions have been, or are about to be issued to increase the water rate at Pingelly from

1s. 6d. in the £ to 2s. 6d. in the £? 2, As the rate was reduced to 1s. 6d. in the £1 because the quality of the water supplied was useless for household or gardening purposes, and stock would not drink it, and as no improvement in the quality of the water has taken place, how does he justify any increase in the rate if such is intended? 3, If question No. 1 is answered in the affirmative, is it intended to increase the rate in any other country water schemes and, if so, which are they, and what increases are intended? 4, What amount in water rates has been collected in Pingelly during each of the last three years? 5, What number of disconnections due to the quality of the water supplied have been made during the last three years? 6, Seeing that experiments were in progress with a view to providing Pingelly with a suitable water scheme when war broke out, that fact putting an end to the work for the duration of the war, will he take steps to cancel any instructions that have been or may be given increasing the water rate, pending the resumption and completion of the work? 7, If not, why not?

The MINISTER replied: 1, No. 2 and 3 Answered by No. 1. 4, 1939-40, £657; 1940-41, £436; 1941-42, £570. 5, Twenty-five services have been disconnected for various reasons—mainly to enforce payment of rates. 6 and 7, Answered by No. 1.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

#### *Eighth Day.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**MR. KELLY** (Yilgarn - Coolgardie) [2.19]: I desire to join with other members in expressing pleasure at having read from time to time the bulletins concerning the improvement in the Premier's health. I am sure that his return to this Chamber will be most welcome. I also express my pleasure at the appearance in this House once again of the Minister for Works, and trust that his health will continue to improve.

I was not privileged to be present on previous occasions when the Lieut.-Governor delivered his opening address. I do not know whether I had been bolstered up with the idea that I would hear something very much out of the ordinary, and I do not know whether the Speech to which I listened recently was similar to addresses previously delivered. Certainly, however, I could not

help feeling disappointed at the lack of any assurance as to the introduction of legislation of importance this session. I had quite expected the Speech would give an outline of the legislation that we would be asked to discuss in this House. On reading through the Speech later I found that it contained a certain amount of patting on the back for various Ministers and their departments. I take it that that is the usual procedure, but it seems to have taken precedence over matters that I regard as being far more important at the present stage. I desire to quote the concluding paragraph of the Speech which I consider of great significance. It is as follows:—

It is considered that at this time of great stress prompt decisions in administrative matters of urgency are required rather than a normal legislative programme. It is, therefore, not intended to submit large numbers of Bills for your consideration, and precedence will be given to measures connected with the war situation.

The words in that quotation which strike my mind, and to which little attention has been paid in the past are, "Prompt decisions in administrative matters of urgency." It may be that we in this House are not privileged to know as much of these prompt decisions as we are entitled to, and that frequently the Ministers concerned take the necessary steps. Nevertheless, details of the actions taken do not come to this Chamber, nor do we as private members hear much of the activities of Ministers. Had those prompt decisions been taken more frequently during the past seven or eight months this State would not be labouring under its present political cloud.

I will first refer to what I term the delayed action in our mining industry. We know that action was eventually taken, but it should have been taken much earlier than it was to stop the rot before it had got as far as it did. The next subject to which I pass deals with the liquor laws. In the early stages of this year our liquor laws became the subject of much controversy, and finality was reached only after the State Government had approached the Federal authorities and received their ruling on the position. The matter should have been dealt with by this Parliament without any reference to the Commonwealth Government. My next point concerns the reduction of acreage of our wheat lands. The Minister for Agriculture is, perhaps, on the

one hand to be congratulated on having got for this State the miserable two-thirds of the acreage previously cropped. I do think on the other hand that, with timely intervention, and had Western Australia's case been fought more soundly the benefit to this State might have been far greater, and at least we would have been treated on a basis equal to that of the more fortunate States east of us.

In regard to uniform taxation, there is no doubt in the minds of members in this House that notwithstanding the fact that uniform taxation is a war measure it is also the thin end of the wedge. We are now suffering from this disability, together with many others, at the hands of the Federal pirates. Had the matter been tackled in its earliest stages it might have been not only modified or prevented, but we would not be faced with legislation which, if we are to believe the Press reports of the recent Premiers' Conference, is a foregone conclusion. I refer to the entertainment tax. With all these inroads being made into our Treasury funds we will eventually find ourselves with nothing but the nest. The golden eggs will have been taken. If they have not already been taken then covetous eyes from vested interests in the Eastern States are looking towards Western Australia. Members must regard with the greatest suspicion the Commonwealth Government's attitude towards this State, particularly during the last seven or eight months.

Unless we in this State are capable of handling our own situations as they arise without chasing to Canberra on every little pretext, there will be only a small outlook for Western Australian politics. Many of the disabilities under which this State suffers, because of the inroads made into our revenue, could be saved, and there would certainly be a greater selection of ideas to draw from, if, instead of remaining reticent on moves which appear to be unavoidable, the Ministry were to take Parliament a little more into its confidence. One day per fortnight, at the very least, ought to be set aside not for members to give vent to their feelings, or bring forward their ideas and motions, but to hear a resume of what Ministers are doing in their various departments. So far as the present situation in this State is concerned, we all realise that the war, and its conduct, are of paramount import-

ance. We cannot do a great deal, or we have been led to understand that we cannot do a great deal, but greater efforts should be made to keep the Western Australian Parliament alive.

First in the list of the works that should be thoroughly investigated and put in hand is that hardy annual—the standardisation of railway gauges. At the outset that problem received much publicity and comprehensive investigations were carried out. No previous time in the history of Australia has ever been more opportune for the initiation of that reform. In view of the shortage of materials, the difficulties of manpower and other considerations, the Commonwealth Government would set up a milestone in our nation's development if it were to proceed with concrete proposals for standardising the railway gauges of the Commonwealth. Then again, at no time has the provision of a naval base on this side of Australia been more urgent. Much valuable data has been gathered over the years, particularly when the work at Cockburn Sound was in progress. Because of various factors the Commonwealth did not proceed with the establishment of a naval base there, but surely the time is opportune for a recommencement of operations with a view to the provision of an up-to-date naval base at Cockburn Sound.

From time to time the member for Irwin-Moore has directed the attention of the House to the shipbuilding problem and the necessity to establish that industry in Western Australia. In addition to the efforts made by that hon. member, many hundreds of people in this State are earnest in their desire that shipbuilding should be undertaken locally. The manpower situation would materially affect the position and would exclude the possibility of operations on a large scale. Nevertheless initial steps should be taken, and even though we might turn out ships of much smaller tonnage than has been advocated, the establishment of the industry would in itself prove important to Western Australia in the period of post-war reconstruction.

Dealing next with the mineral resources of the State, we learnt with pleasure from the Minister for Industrial Development that his trip to Canberra in the interests of this State had been successful, particularly with reference to the utilisation of the alunite deposits at Lake Campion. I commend the

Minister upon his efforts and I know he will gain the appreciation of the people generally in that respect. There are many other minerals in Western Australia and, although they are known to exist in reasonable quantities, the deposits I refer to are not being worked or are being opened up only to a limited degree. Instead of waiting for private enterprise to work the various mineral leases the Government should render more assistance, without the necessity for those interested to go cap-in-hand to the Minister concerned and place before him all the particulars indicating why the original prospectors had been unable to carry on. The minerals I have in mind include vermiculite, scheelite, molybdenite and bismuth, in addition to vast quantities of iron-ore. I understand considerable attention has been given to the development of our iron-ore deposits and it is quite possible that attention has also been given to other minerals, but we do not know what has been happening in that respect. Many members could give material assistance to the Minister and his officials regarding matters affecting this phase of our mineral development.

Recently a drive was conducted for the recovery of waste rubber. According to Press reports, the rubber so recovered will be consigned to the Eastern States. At the same time we are given to understand that acute transport difficulties are being experienced. Instead of sending our waste rubber to the Eastern States, the Department of Industrial Development should promptly consider the possibility of establishing a reclamation plant in Western Australia. If that were done the transport difficulty would be relieved. I understand that the establishment of such a plant here would be neither costly nor complicated and that the staff required for the work would not be very extensive. If that is the position, serious consideration should be given at an early date to the establishment of such a plant, which would mean the creation of a new industry that would stand Western Australia in excellent stead for many years to come.

During the course of the debate members have dealt with a variety of subjects and I feel sure that if the Government were to take sufficient heed of their representations our industries, both primary and secondary, would benefit materially. I am safe in saying that during the debate so far little has been said regarding goldmining. Members may have been rather shy in bringing the

subject under notice again, but the time is opportune for us to consider the position in which Western Australia is placed today and the prospects of the goldmining industry. In view of the deliberations that took place in Canberra some months ago, there is ample scope for further inquiries because we have now passed through what might be described as a probationary period extending over the past two months. Through the efforts of a delegation that was despatched from Western Australia the industry, instead of becoming practically extinct, has been given some respite during which, so to speak, we will be able to put our house in order. That is how it appears to me. At that time 4,500 men, including 100 in key positions, were allotted to the industry while the State Government received £100,000 with which to assist the industry in cases where direct hardship was imposed upon companies because of the manpower situation and also for the maintenance of mines where necessary.

At this juncture we should consider what should be the State's next move. We should not wait until the Commonwealth Government takes action and it becomes necessary to send another delegation to endeavour to frustrate the move, of which we may have heard only through the Press or some other channel. If we get down to taintacks at once and discuss the industry in the light of our knowledge as to how vitally it is bound up with the welfare of Western Australia, much good should result. Let me now quote a few figures to show the direct loss the State is suffering from the curtailment of mining. For the months of January to July inclusive of the last three years the production of gold has been as follows:—

1940	..	..	689,924 fine ounces.
1941	..	..	619,357 do.
1942	..	..	522,666 do.

Thus for the first seven months of 1942, compared with the same period of 1941, the decline in production has been 96,691 fine ounces.

Mr. Needham: What was the total value?

Mr. KELLY: The total value of the decline was £1,010,421. For the months of June and July, during which the restriction has been in force, the decline in production has been 24,068 fine ounces, valued at £251,510. Such a heavy direct loss must make us sit up and take notice. Further,

the indirect loss to the State will be about 40 per cent. of the direct loss. The State is losing heavily from the point of view of railway revenue. No one knows better than does the Minister for Railways what an adverse effect this lull in goldmining is having on railway receipts. Unless the House takes decided steps to prevent more men from leaving the industry, it is safe to predict that in the near future a still greater reduction in railway revenue must result.

Because of the vastly decreased number of men in the mining areas, many business people are finding it necessary to close their shops, and those business people have not been assisted by the restriction in the supply of various commodities that in the past they were able to offer for sale. Many of those commodities, too, are obtainable in almost normal quantities in the capital cities of some of the Eastern States. I was recently given some startling figures dealing with trading in Melbourne and Sydney, and I am amazed that we in Western Australia should be victimised to such an extent on the plea that railway transport for such goods is not available. The colossal losses this State has sustained and must sustain in future are mere fleabites compared with the personal loss suffered by hundreds and thousands of workers in the goldfields areas. Since the uncertainty of the future of goldmining became evident, many people have sacrificed their homes and everything dear to them because they feared that, if they hung on much longer, they would lose the lot. Many families have been compelled to leave their homes and sell their goods and chattels, and they have received only a mere fraction of the value of those goods. Thus many people, after spending years on the goldfields, are being forced out. Had we taken timely action and not permitted the Commonwealth Government to make up our minds for us, we would be in a far better position.

Because of the restriction on manpower and the possibility of our receiving less and less fuel and other commodities required in the mining industry, many mines have had to adopt what is known as a salvage policy. Many of them have decided to work a higher grade of ore. Much lower-grade ore is being left in the ground, and if the mines eventually close down, which they must do if they work on reserves without doing fur-

ther development, at least 50 per cent. of them will never be re-opened. It is not difficult to appreciate that if a mine with 18 months of reserve ore is compelled to work that reserve and not carry on development, it must eventually reach the stage of having to close.

Other factors are likely permanently to injure the mining industry if conditions are permitted to become worse. I have predicted that 50 per cent. of the mines will not re-open, and I wish to give some reasons for that opinion. In mines where water has to be contended with, the unwatering of the mines that are forced to close will be an almost impossible task, and I venture to say that a mine with any flow of water similar to that of the Edna May at Westonia will probably never re-open. If there is not the problem of water to contend with, it does not take long for deterioration to occur in the timbering of shafts and levels. After a cessation of operations over several months or years, it would be a very costly business to pick up much of the fallen ground, because in the interim much of the timber will have deteriorated to such a degree that a great quantity of ground will have fallen in.

Again, there is the possibility of shafts creeping. Of this there have been numerous instances on various fields. The mines affected could be good, solid producers of gold for Western Australia were it not for main shafts creeping and the enormous cost of putting in new ones. Then there is the costly position to be faced of reconditioning all levels and surface plant and equipment, and in some instances many hundreds of yards of piping would call for attention, apart from all the other impedimenta required for underground mining. With all those factors needing attention, it is highly doubtful whether our mining industry will survive the heavy blow inflicted upon it by Federal action.

I fully agree that the winning of the war is our paramount task. Possibly that objective should in all circumstances receive our first thought. The goldfields people realise that; otherwise they would not have so quietly accepted the raw deal that has been handed to the industry in general. It cannot be said that goldfields residents are squealing because of the injustice meted out to them by the Commonwealth Government, but they do want to know that we here are

doing our utmost to preserve the gold industry in a reasonable condition; so that after the war goldfields residents may be able to set the wheels of their industry going again as speedily as possible. If there were exploration of every avenue from which manpower could be absorbed into the Army, and if then it is decided that the Army needs those men, the view taken by goldfields residents would be different.

Some instances I have recently had brought under my notice lead me to wonder whether the Army does urgently require the number of men now running around in military service. In a camp not far from Perth 170 men were informed that they would have to shift camp on the following day. The attendant officers in motor cars, along with 15 or 16 other military vehicles carrying equipment, ripped up the existing camp, the 170 men were removed over a distance of 50 miles, and the force was entrenched in the new camp on the following day. Then another officer came at 8 p.m. and said, "There are 180 men of another division here; we will shift back to our old camp tomorrow." Such things are going on all the time. I could instance dozens of them. In my opinion the Army is not in need of additional men if a position of chaos exists. Surely it would not be a heavy task to put an end to the overlapping and the waste of manpower and material now going on. The gold industry is losing right along the line, while we know that the manpower position has not been thoroughly investigated, especially as regards the calling-up of men engaged in that industry. The future of gold is the future of Australia. With all due respect to what members have been saying about Germany and other countries being able to carry on, or supposed to be able to carry on, without the assistance of gold, I maintain—

Mr. Needham: Does the future of Australia depend entirely upon gold?

Mr. KELLY: To a great degree. The hon. member interjecting will recall that during the past 30 years Western Australia's gold-mining industry has pulled the State out of very serious financial difficulties no less than three times.

Mr. Triat: And will continue to do so.

Mr. KELLY: I agree with the member for Mt. Magnet; it will do so. Another consideration is that whilst the future of the gold industry is vital to Australia, the

amount of gold produced by this continent is very small compared with the world's output of gold. It is only about 6 per cent. of the world's production, excluding that of Russia, for which figures are not available. It may be said that Australia's production of gold is miserably small compared with the world's total production. Although our gold industry does not matter two hoots to the rest of the world, it is vitally important to Australia. There does not seem to have been any strong reason given us, up to the present, why the Commonwealth Government should desire to curtail the Western Australian gold industry. There are many other industries in which perhaps ten times the same amount of manpower could have been secured without disturbing the financial and industrial position of this State.

However, Western Australia's gold industry had to go. Why? The Commonwealth Government has not told us why. There is a rumour that America forced the issue with the Commonwealth Government. If that is so, was it because of the difficulty of getting consignments through to America? If such was the case, the difficulty could easily have been overcome by America allowing us the normal quota for gold at the present rate of exchange. That money could have been conserved, and the gold stored in vaults here or elsewhere in Australia, so that post-war purchasing could have been done and the gold industry have rendered material assistance during the post-war reconstruction period. If America did not have much to do with creating the present position where are we to look for the special reason that caused the sacrifice of Western Australia's gold industry? Apparently we must look to our Commonwealth Government. I repeat a remark I made here some time ago, that if it was the Commonwealth Government's sole concern to place restrictions on the gold industry, then the entire business savours of extremely unsound thinking.

Recently I came upon an illustration that I consider well worth quoting by way of bearing out some of my remarks regarding the uses of gold. May I take as an average example a large mine producing 5 dwts. per ton? The operating cost on the mine—or I might say the mines—would be in the neighbourhood of 25s. per ton. Thus in Australian money the value of gold from that mine would be 5s. per dwt., or £5 (Australian) per oz. In America gold is

pegged at 35 dollars per oz. For easy reckoning let us assume that this Commonwealth owes America 3,500 dollars. I ask members to consider the settlement of that debt in America with Australian currency or alternatively with Australian gold. To pay the account in America with the Australian pound worth 3 dollars 20 cents would require £1,094. But to settle the same account by virtue of our having the gold here to balance it, would mean that the debt could be liquidated in New York with gold worth 35 dollars per oz. for 100 ozs. With gold worth £5 per oz. the settlement of the debt would mean that an exchange of only £500 would take place. In short, the difference between Australian currency and Australian gold in the liquidation of the account would be £594, showing a saving of 52 per cent. to this country.

Other illuminating figures, are available but I will not dwell on them. Let me add that if Australian goldmining became extinct, and assuming that the war lasted three years, the pecuniary loss to Australia would be 3,300,000 ozs. of gold. In round figures, 100,000,000 dollars worth of gold would be lost to Australia, and it is quite within the realms of probability that that large loss would never be recovered. Again, are we, as Western Australians, right in allowing this position to continue? Are we justified in gambling to such a huge extent with the future for Australia? I say definitely we are not. For the first four months of 1942 the gold output of this State dropped 56,528 fine ounces; and in America the dollar credit for that quantity of gold would be in the vicinity of 3,000,000 dollars.

I have already intimated the great expenditure that would be required to re-establish our goldmining industry should it be wholly discontinued. Unless Parliament takes every precaution possible, we have no guarantee that greater inroads will not be made into the industry. Before it is too late it behoves the Government, as well as Parliament, to forestall any further inroads into the industry. If the manpower already taken from the industry were such that it constituted a war-winning effort, we would not mind. We would sacrifice the whole State, if that were necessary, to win the war. But we know that is not the position. The loss to Western Australia is practically irreparable; those engaged in the industry are well aware of that fact, even if the Gov-

ernment does not know it. Another point to be considered is that the loss is not confined within the boundaries of this State. It is Australia's loss; and, when all is said and done, Australia should be protected by the Federal authorities safeguarding the interests of Western Australia. We are told the industry might collapse because of the lack of transport facilities. Whilst the industry is under the shadow of extinction because of lack of transport facilities, we read in the Press that recently 12 cement anchorages, each weighing eight tons, arrived in Western Australia. What a ridiculous position! We find that thousands of carcasses of beef and bacon, as well as huge quantities of salt, are being imported into this State. So it goes on!

The Minister for Labour: And horses and drays.

Mr. Patrick: Trucks also.

Mr. KELLY: Yet we are told there is insufficient shipping space to bring to Western Australia material urgently required to keep the mines working; at least, that is the excuse given. It will be the excuse used should the industry become extinct. It will not be Federal intervention that will kill the industry; it will be lack of the various items required to keep the industry alive. Yet we can get here a hundred and one things that are non-essential to the State and that take money out of the pockets of our people who are striving to obtain a livelihood.

All I have said leads up to my next point, which is that I consider the time is opportune for giving serious consideration to the frustration of any other move detrimental to the industry. In my opinion, instead of our being compelled to accept 4,500 men to keep the industry alive, we should have been allowed 7,000 men. That would have given us a chance to hold our own until such time as the industry could again be placed on the huge scale that we knew in the past. I have given the House a number of my own reasons, and I now crave the indulgence of members while I quote one or two other expressions of opinion on our goldmining industry as it is seen through the eyes of the world. The following is an extract from "The West Australian":—

The continued use of gold as valuable to the war effort, more especially to pay for essential imports not covered by Lease-Lend or financial arrangements with Canada, was emphasised by Sir Kingsley Wood, the British

Chancellor of the Exchequer in the House of Commons recently. He said gold was a "very advantageous export."

Commenting in a leading article on the Chancellor's statement the "Financial Times" said: "There is nothing to suggest that gold will not be a product of primary world importance when peace is restored, for the multilateral trade relations envisaged in the Atlantic Charter must call for a universally acceptable currency link. Gold has always supplied the link in the past, and there is every probability that it will be wanted in larger quantities in the future. The fact that the United States holds two-thirds of the world's stock of gold, while the British Empire produces over half the new output, may form the basis of a new world monetary order. That gold is still widely acceptable, in spite of its detractors, is evident from the recent keen demand on the Bombay unofficial market. The price has risen to the equivalent of 216s. 8d. per fine ounce, compared with an unofficial London price of 188s., demonstrating anew the metal's attraction as a store of value. By reason of long usage, as well as its own particular properties, gold remains unrivalled as a common denominator between currencies, and may be destined to play an important part in post-war revival of international trade."

About the same time, the South African Minister for Mines (Mr. Stallard) told an interviewer that gold was the basis of South African war effort. It was, he added, South Africa's economic life-blood and therefore in the first rank of key industries.

Writing in the April issue of the "Chemical Engineering and Mining Review" on the future of goldmining, the editor of the journal states there is much uncertainty and concern as to the future of the goldmining industry in Australia. It is argued by some that gold is of little use at the present time and therefore the resources of the industry in men and machinery should be transferred, practically overnight, to increase the production of base metals. These advocates appear to be quite ignorant of the steps involved in such a change-over.

Existing base metal mines are working close to capacity and have limited power for absorption; other deposits of these metals must be opened up and equipped, which involves a period for examination of old mines likely to be of economic importance, the exploration of those selected and the installation of appropriate plant for mining and ore treatment. The transfer from gold to base metals would be slow and, at best, a limited proportion only of goldmining employees could be diverted to the production of other metals. And, further, much of the machinery in use on goldmines, either from the viewpoint of size and capacity or that of application, would be quite unsuitable to new requirements.

Other serious objections are that a shutdown of industry would depopulate many parts of the country peopled almost solely by those who follow the industry; many

mines could never re-open if completely closed and their asset to the nation would be lost when the demand again comes, as it will, for gold. The most serious objection is that which most closely concerns Western Australia. Goldmining is that State's basic industry; its value approaches that of any two other primary industries; it gives direct employment to 18,000 men and its suspension would undoubtedly mean financial ruin to the State.

Referring to the needs of war, the "Canadian Mining Journal" remarks, "But this will pass, and once again we shall have to lean heavily upon the basic industries of this rich land of ours. Goldmining is one of them, and yet there are men who would lightly discard it and undermine it with fiddling economic theories and blind suggestions without a thought that there will come a tomorrow when goldmining may once more save this country of ours from disaster."

The needs of defence must be served, and in holding the balance of true, effective co-ordination, these words should be remembered. The question needs thorough investigation so that, if such a course is essential from a national aspect, those mines may be closed which are least likely to affect the internal economy of the State.

These are world opinions and they are backed up by scores of others. It would take a day to read all of the opinions that are worth while, yet we are pettifoggling about with the industry and setting wholeheartedly about ruining our State. I draw attention to a few facts regarding some other countries that are producing gold. We read a good deal about South Africa, which we realise is producing per month as much gold as Western Australia has produced in any of its peak years. For the past 12 months South Africa has been increasing its monthly output to the extent of 15,000 ounces per month. Prior to the war, Canada's output was four times as great as Australia's and has been showing a monthly increase, which is to the nation's credit. The same position prevails in the United States of America, Russia, and Japan. We have not figures relating to the last two countries mentioned, but reading between the lines we can perceive that the improvement in the gold yield is very considerable. It is our bounden duty to endeavour by constructive thinking to effect a change in the industry. That can be done only if the task is undertaken seriously and in good time.

**MR. BOYLE (Avon):** The Lieut.-Governor's Speech indicates that there has been a small surplus of £1,768 for the financial year 1941-42. Ours



is the unenviable distinction of having the smallest State surplus in the Commonwealth. Be that as it may, however, it is a surplus. There seems to be a good deal of doubt whether State surpluses are genuine reflexes of the financial position of the States or otherwise. Why it should be so I am at a loss to say. In New South Wales the surplus was £1,800,000 and Mr. Lang was of opinion that it should be close on £4,000,000. In South Australia the surplus was £1,380,000 which was actually more than the Federal grant in aid. Apparently Western Australia is not the Tom Tiddler's ground of the Commonwealth.

The Federal war expenditure allotted to Western Australia for this year is stated to be £6,000,000. We have seven per cent. of the population, yet we are allotted only 13¼ per cent. of the war expenditure, which is certainly an injustice to a State of this size with such natural resources. The Speech states—

Constant attention is being given to all possible avenues of increasing secondary industries.

The "constant attention" by the Government would include the power-alcohol plant promised to Western Australia, which plant I understand is to be erected in the South-West portion of the State. That plant is destined, in my opinion, to be one of the most uneconomic propositions ever contemplated. The four power-alcohol plants proposed—one in New South Wales, one in Victoria, one in South Australia and one in Western Australia—are designed to produce power-alcohol from wheat with the idea of reducing to some extent the surplus wheat in the Commonwealth. Under the most favourable conditions that reduction would not exceed more than 3,000,000 to 4,000,000 bushels in the whole of Australia and the contemplated expenditure would be about £1,350,000.

I understand that in the selected locality only eight men are at work. After about 18 months of contemplation by the committee, eight men are employed, and I think I can say with a good deal of confidence that we shall probably not see the completion of a power-alcohol plant in Western Australia. I am prepared to go further and say that the sugar interests in Australia today will ensure that the power-alcohol plants for wheat in the other States will not operate. In that regard I am speaking advisedly.

There is a tremendous surplus of sugar in Queensland that cannot be exported. During my researches in the Eastern States I found that the powerful combine of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company and the cane growers of Queensland have, shall we say, set up a barrier to the establishment of these plants to produce power-alcohol from wheat, firstly because their establishment would be in direct opposition to the power-alcohol plants that are at present in Queensland, and secondly because it would be an interference with the use of raw sugar in Australia for the production of power-alcohol. We know that we are faced with a shortage of petrol and that the production of power-alcohol is one means of winning the war, since thereby we may be able to supply motive power for our vehicles in Australia.

In South Australia there is a company known as the Tarac Manufacturing Co. at Walkerville. The managing director is Mr. A. J. Allen, one of Australia's outstanding chemists. He is a practical man, and is one of those who gets things done. I brought back to Western Australia the idea that these plants that were being manufactured by that company had been producing power-alcohol of a value of 95 per cent. The Commonwealth plants were designed to produce 99 per cent. power alcohol. On the 4th June, Mr. Allen wrote me as follows:—

I received your letter of the 29th ult in regard to the erection of a power alcohol plant at Fremantle, and the production of butane from alcohol.

I was surprised to read that America is taking on the production of butane from alcohol as I would have thought that they would be able to extract large quantities from their gas wells situated in different parts of the States. In regard to the cost of the proposed Western Australian distillery, it is very excessive for the production. A distillery of that cost should be able to produce three times that amount of alcohol. I regret that I am not able to give you any further figures on alcohol plants, as we have not developed recently along these lines. We have, as a matter of fact gone into production, but are producing our alcohol from raw sugar, which we get from Queensland, and from this source are now producing 50,000 gallons per month, and will probably increase this up to about 75,000 gallons shortly.

It is selling well in South Australia, doing a good job, and meeting with general approval. Of course this is the 95 per cent. alcohol, which will not mix with petrol unless at least 50 per cent. alcohol is used in the mixture. and it was generally considered in the past

that a mixture containing 50 per cent. or more of alcohol would not be satisfactory, but we are now in a position to state that as a result of very careful experiments we find that alcohol can be used with very satisfactory results, up to at least 80 per cent. alcohol and 20 per cent. petrol mixture, provided provision is made on the car or truck to heat the vapours before or after leaving the carburettor.

In fact, so satisfactory are its results that we have obtained in experimental runs 12 per cent. more miles per gallon from this mixture under these conditions than from petrol straight. These experiments are still being conducted but have reached the stage when I can make this definite statement. The alcohol is dearer than petrol, selling at 4s. per gallon in Adelaide, but you will see that it is able to supply a very valuable contribution towards the alleviation of our liquid fuel shortage.

We entirely dropped the production from wheat until we had the production from sugar on a satisfactory basis, and until our vintage operations were concluded, but now that this is over, we are again taking up the production from wheat, and by this means we hope to reduce the cost of the alcohol to the consumer.

I discussed the matter at length with Mr. Allen. He suggested that the sugar interests of Queensland were obstructing the erection of plants for the treatment of wheat in other parts of Australia. South Australia is just as anxious that its surplus wheat should be turned to profitable account for the manufacture of power-alcohol as is Western Australia, but Mr. Allen's company is manufacturing power-alcohol from sugar instead of from wheat. I suppose that Western Australia will probably find that the sugar interests of Australia will wield their irresistible powers in that direction with regard to the production of power-alcohol in this State. The hon. member who gave me some information about power plants may find that his district is using raw sugar from Queensland instead of surplus wheat from our agricultural areas.

Mr. Cardell-Oliver: Is it not cheaper to produce alcohol from sugar than it is from wheat?

Mr. BOYLE: No. Wheat has a higher content of alcohol than has molasses. According to the report of the Power-Alcohol Committee of Inquiry, the recovery of alcohol from molasses is 57 per cent. of 99.7 alcohol. From refined sugar the return is 129 per cent., that is 97 N.T. sugar. The material that is being used in South Australia is raw sugar. The average price of that raw sugar is about £15 per ton, and the price of wheat at 3s. a bushel would work out at less than £6 per ton. Wherever we

can in this State we are erecting holding bins for our wheat. We are told that a power-alcohol plant is to be established in this State. I understand that only eight men are now at work on a project in the South-West involving a total expenditure of £350,000.

Mr. Patrick: I think the member for the district said that only two men were engaged.

Mr. BOYLE: I have later information; the number has been increased to eight. The Commonwealth Government promised that four power-alcohol plants would be erected in Australia at a cost of £1,350,000. That project has been white-anted in Australia by the fact that raw sugar from Queensland is being used for the production of power-alcohol. I doubt whether any effort has been made in South Australia to erect distilleries about which so much fuss has been made, and I doubt if we shall ever see a plant in operation in Western Australia. I am buttressed in that opinion by knowing that powerful sugar interests will be at work. The secretary of the Canegrowers' Council in Queensland, Mr. R. Muir, has been appointed by the Commonwealth Government as chairman of the Power-Alcohol Committee of Australia. His duties are primarily to look after the cane-growers of Queensland. The man who is in charge of the Council of Canegrowers in Queensland has been made chairman of the Commonwealth Power-Alcohol Committee. Mr. Muir is a very vigilant man. I made a statement in the "Adelaide Advertiser," and not long after I received a letter from Mr. Muir questioning that statement on behalf of the Queensland canegrowers. We were told plants were to be erected in Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales for the extraction of power-alcohol from wheat. That is as far as we are likely to get.

The Minister for Industrial Development has had put upon him the task of establishing infant industries in this State. From this side of the House, I wish him well. I think every member of the House would like to see many more successful secondary industries in this State. Walking down the city streets recently I noticed numbers of cement slabs being inlaid in the footpath. This was being done in connection with the undergrounding of the telephone system. The slabs were marked "P.M.G." They had

been brought from Melbourne notwithstanding the tense situation that exists in regard to shipping. Every subscriber to the telephone system today has had laid down an inspection concrete slab manufactured in Victoria and transported to Western Australia.

Mr. Patrick: Is that correct?

Mr. BOYLE: Yes.

The Minister for Labour: Six hundred made-up gas-producers have been imported into this State, a number of them having been brought here by a member of this Parliament.

Mr. BOYLE: I must not reflect upon another member, but I say he has not much sense.

The Minister for Labour: Or patriotism!

Mr. BOYLE: We were told in the weekend Press that 500 tons of flour had been brought over from the Eastern States. It was alleged to be flour of a special quality for biscuit-making. Biscuit manufacturers in this State have paid from 1d. to 2d. a bushel more for wheat grown in my district because of its suitability for biscuit flour. What nonsense to tell us that 500 tons of flour had to be brought from the Eastern States! Every week we are faced with this sort of thing. The Minister has work ahead of him to fight these interests. We are told that 150 men are to be employed on this power-alcohol distillery. That would create another industry within the State, and is a matter for the consideration of the Minister for Industrial Development. As I previously mentioned, he will not get any assistance from the Eastern States in that direction.

Mr. Watts: Let us go to Fremantle and tip the next cargo overboard!

Mr. BOYLE: We really need a Boston tea-party to bring home to the authorities this state of affairs. I did not notice in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech any reference to improving the working conditions of that class of manual workers known as the farming community. It is the State's depressed class. We hear of Gandhi fighting for the depressed classes in India—well, we have a depressed class in this State. I appealed to the Minister for Lands at the beginning of the war to increase the sustenance allowance to the farmer from £6 to £8 for a man and his wife. The reply of the Minister was that he refused to do it as there had been no agitation from the farmers' or-

ganisations, or from the farmers themselves. Subsequently, according to an Agricultural Bank report, the Minister increased the amount of £7 per month, and that is the allowance now paid to thousands of farmers under the control of that authority, plus an allowance of 10s. per child per month up to seven children. That is a total of £3 10s. per month. Evidently the State Government does not believe in encouraging large families in the farming community because children beyond the number of seven are not considered.

In reply to a question I put to the Minister for Lands, he said that the £7 per month allowance was to augment the income of the farmer. Let us examine that position. Under Section 51 of the Agricultural Bank Act, where there has been an Industries Assistance Act advance—in my district it applies to 66 per cent. of farmers, as they are on the Agricultural Bank—there is no augmentation of income because the whole of the proceeds are taken by the Bank. Every £1 of income from wool and wheat, as members on this side of the House well know, is taken by the Agricultural Bank, and it is a criminal offence for any farmer to dispose of any portion of his product in any other way. In my time I have fought for the release of men who had been sent to gaol for having converted their own product to their own use. I previously mentioned in this House the case of a young farmer of Southern Cross. He had three children. He needed spare parts for his farming implements in order to harvest his crop. He sent £20 worth of wheat to Kalgoorlie and was later convicted and sent to gaol for five months. It ruined his life. Later on he told me that he wished to enter the Air Force in Australia, but that he had a criminal record of having converted to his own use £20 worth of his own wheat. It was Mr. Moseley who sat on the Bench in Southern Cross and inflicted the five months' imprisonment. He said at the time that he had great sympathy for the accused, but he sent him to gaol for five months all the same. That man could have been released on bond just as easily. That is the position of the farmer, yet we are told that this allowance is to augment his income.

I had a man working on my farm, and today he is getting £3 14s. a week with overtime doing munitions work in Perth. Such men will never go back to farms. That will

be our next problem. In the report of the Agricultural Bank for 1941, under Item 9, is chronicled without comment the number of properties which came on hand during the year as 275 compared with 237 in the previous year. One would think it was some sort of a horse-race that was going on. Do we realise that from the farming areas of this State through rotten laws, 512 farmers have abandoned their farms? And why should they not do that when they can come into the city and get a job and not be told that they have to live on £7 per month for a man and wife? I know of one case—this is not an Agricultural Bank case, but concerns a private bank—where a man, his wife and six children are given £10 a month on which to live. As the farmer pointed out, each member of the family has 6s. 6d. a week on which to live. Every £1 worth of his proceeds has been taken, not by the bank with which he is associated but the Agricultural Bank which makes an advance under Commonwealth drought relief, that we were told by the Premier from his place in the House would be repayable over seven years. He said that whatever advantage was given to the farmer would be honoured by the Government, and that he would have seven years in which to repay the advance. The Government took the whole of the first year's crop and then turned round and said, "Carry on for another 12 months and we will give you £7 a month." That is only the living side of it. I will refer to the medical side which, to my mind, is a more serious one.

I cannot get this Government to realise that a human element is at stake, and that the only real asset which the State has is the farmer. These 512 farms will probably stand this State up £1,000,000 in debt losses. The major asset has gone. The human element has disappeared; the rest is only ashes in the mouth. The State has lost the farmer and the farm. We are to-day paying  $2\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. for short-term war loans and  $3\frac{1}{4}$  per cent. for long-term loans, and the man who is fighting on the second line, the food line, is paying 5 per cent. I fail to follow the reasoning. One would think in the circumstances that the Government would either reduce the interest rates for the duration of the war or abolish interest altogether if it wants food and the farms maintained in production,

These are different from depression times. I have succeeded in establishing in my district a munitions works. Two farmers are working there and they receive £5 19s. 10d. a week, and proportionate overtime. The extraordinary part of it is that they, and their farms, now have nothing to do with the 30s. a week from the Agricultural Bank. Just imagine the effect on the youth of the farming areas. A good many of them are in the military. They are receiving, as privates, £2 5s. a week, 2s. a day deferred pay, and their keep.

The point I wish to impress on members is that when the farmers' children, boys or girls, reach the age of 16 years they get neither subsistence nor pay. The Agricultural Bank refuses to make any allowance for the farmer's boy or girl working on a farm. Up to 16 years of age it allows 2s. 4d. a week to keep them, but when they attain the age of 16 years it will neither allow the 2s. 4d. a week, nor will it permit wages to be paid if they are to come out of the Agricultural Bank advances. I do not know what to make of it. George Bernard Shaw once said, "The world is a madhouse." Sometimes I am inclined to wonder in which ward I am wandering, especially when I contemplate the conditions that have been existing in the far eastern districts. Next Sunday I will have to journey some 40 miles out towards the eastern limit of my electorate to confer with farmers on the question of whether they can take advantage of Statutory Rule 65 under the provisions of which, if sufficient satisfactory grounds can be advanced, the magistrate can determine what interest rates should be paid and what debt should be borne by the men concerned. That deals with a problem in respect of which the Government, without one hour's hesitation, should be able to come to a conclusion.

I now refer to an important matter affecting the health and safety of all rural dwellers, not merely the farmers. I will demonstrate to the House the utter callousness displayed by financial institutions, Government and private, regarding the health of the rural community. Under Section 51 of the Agricultural Bank Act all farmers who received I.A.B. advances have little say regarding the disposal of their labour and finance. The Associated Banks, not to be outdone, issued what they described as a "stock and station mortgage," which gives the financial institu-

tions absolute control over their clients. Seeing that 90 per cent. of the farmers are indebted either to the Agricultural Bank or an Associated Bank, their lot is by no means happy. The wonder is that only 512 Agricultural Bank clients have gone off their holdings in a period of two years and that not more of them have followed suit. At the request of the 1941 conference of delegates representing country hospitals, I communicated with the Premier and the reply I received from the Minister for Lands was dated the 28th February, 1941. It read as follows:—

The Honourable the Premier has passed to me your recent letter in which you conveyed the following motion carried at the Annual Conference of Country Hospital Boards:—

“That this Conference representing the Hospital Boards of this State draw the attention of the Government to the necessity of provisions being made by interested financial institutions for medical, hospital and dental attention for the primary producer and his family, and that a portion of the settler's produce be definitely a first charge to defray the cost of medical, hospital and dental treatment, and that in every case in the allocation of the proceeds of the settler's produce provision must be made for medical, hospital and dental treatment.”

So far as the Agricultural Bank is concerned, its clients can be classed under the following three headings:—

- (a) Clients who are able to finance their operations without any reference or assistance from the Agricultural Bank.
- (b) Clients who require stock exemptions, or consent to crop liens only, from time to time, to enable them to carry on their farming operations.
- (c) Clients who are dependent upon refunds of interest under Section 53 of the Agricultural Bank Act and/or advances under the Industries Assistance Act for carry-on purposes.

In cases of (a) and (b), the provisions of funds to cover medical, hospital, and dental treatment is for the settler to arrange, and with regard to those settlers referred to subparagraph (c), every consideration is given to their applications for funds to meet such expenditure.

As the Commissioners have many clients in this section, however, who are receiving assistance for carry-on requirements, but have not required advances for medical or dental treatment, they cannot approve of the proposal contained in the concluding section of the resolution, i.e. that in every case in the allocation of the proceeds of the settler's produce, provision be made for medical, hospital and dental treatment.

The effect of that reply amounts to this: Even though the Agricultural Bank will

make every provision for the care of stock on the farm—there is a sheep superintendent who is responsible for the health of the sheep on farms in the wheat belt—the Commissioners are not prepared to make provision for the health of the farmer, his wife and family. On the other hand, the farmer and his wife are required to humiliate themselves and either visit the officials in Perth or call upon the local bank manager to disclose their personal and private ailments. If they approach the local branch manager, he refers the matter to head office for decision. As against that, the horse has a veterinary surgeon provided for him. The sheep have one of the finest stock men in Australia, Mr. C. P. Murray, who travels thousands of miles attending to their health. The Agricultural Bank does not provide a doctor and a medical van to travel round supervising the health of the rural community.

A perusal of the Statistical Register discloses that between the ages of 45 and 54 years, which is the critical period in the life of a woman, respecting 47 out of 150 cases of death from cancer in the case of women and 30 in the case of men—the proportion is one to three for women and one to eight for men—the primary cause of the death rate is lack of attention in the early stages of the disease. Yesterday I met in Perth a lady from the Katanning district. Two years ago she developed cancer in a serious form. Clinical treatment in the Perth Hospital has resulted in the curing of her complaint and that was because it was taken in hand at an early stage. Let members contemplate the spectacle of a farmer's wife going before the manager of the Agricultural Bank in an outback district and discussing her private ailments with him! The Commissioners of the Bank say, “We cannot make any allowance.” Allowance from what? From governmental funds? Not at all! The bank will not make any allowance from the private funds of the farmer concerned. A further letter from the secretary to the Commissioners of the Agricultural Bank under date the 1st May, 1941, included the following:—

The Commissioners have restricted advances from drought relief funds to essentials for the purposes of enabling settlers to carry on their farming operations and have been quite unable to find funds for such charges as hospital board subscriptions, road board rates, water charges, etc.

Mr. Watts: And a large proportion of the fund was never distributed.

Mr. BOYLE: About £120,000 was never distributed, and its responsibilities were never shouldered by the State. Out of £570,000 advanced by the Federal Government to the State for drought relief, £443,000 was distributed, but the amount of £127,000 provided by the State was not distributed. Notwithstanding that fact, the Agricultural Bank cannot find the necessary funds for the payment of a charge such as a hospital board subscription. Members should note that the request was not for payment of fees for medical treatment but merely for an advance from the farmer's private account for his hospital subscription.

Mr. Patrick: The Commissioners say that it is not essential.

Mr. BOYLE: That is so. Next I will quote a letter from Mr. G. M. Cornell, secretary of the Hospitals Association, who wrote to the Associated Banks in the following terms:—

At a conference of Country Hospital Boards held recently the following motion was carried:—

That Conference approach the Associated Banks to make provision for hospital treatment to be included in their clients' reviews.

It is realised that such assistance is at present granted some of your clients, but in other cases it is not. Hospitals serving farming areas are finding extreme difficulty in carrying on and we look for your assistance in this matter. The request is not an unreasonable one. The good health of a client and his family is a condition precedent to the maintenance of his security, and we would like your assurances that wherever a client is "carried on" by your institution, provision for hospital treatment be made in the client's proposals.

The Bank of New South Wales replied on the 30th October as follows:—

Referring to your letter of 6th inst., we note what you say. Whilst not giving any assurances, we realise that it is in our interests to keep good men on their farms.

Regarding assistance to hospitals for carrying on, we can only refer to hospital tax paid by us and found by us for our borrowing customers.

The E.S. & A. Bank replied—

I am in receipt of your letter of the 6th inst., conveying a motion which was recently passed at a conference of Country Hospital Boards.

The question of provision for hospital treatment being provided in clients' proposals is one on which I cannot give an assurance, but each case must be treated and considered separately. This bank, however, is always willing to give sympathetic consideration in cases of necessity.

Who is the judge of cases of necessity? Is the bank manager to be the judge on a medical question, to decide a case of necessity? The National Bank replied—

We acknowledge your letter of the 6th inst., and in reply advise that every application by clients of this bank is sympathetically considered on its merits and such practice will be continued.

There again the bank is going to decide a medical question. The Union Bank replied—

I am in receipt of your letter of the 6th October. When accounts of borrowing customers of this bank are being reviewed, it is an invariable custom that the estimates for the ensuing season include an item "Miscellaneous and Sundry." The allowance is for contingencies such as hospital treatment.

The cold callousness of the remark that the health of the client is included in miscellaneous and sundry items and the allowance for hospital as contingencies! From the Bank of Australasia the following reply was received:—

In reply to your letter of the 6th inst., I advise that the question of the payment by farmers of their obligations for hospital treatment always receives favourable consideration by this bank.

The man who wrote that reply is not altogether devoid of the milk of human kindness. Dr. McKellar Hall, Secretary of the Western Australian Branch of the British Medical Association wrote as follows:—

In reference to your letter of the 26th May forwarded by Dr. A. H. Humphrey of Dalwallinu and further to your interview with the secretary of this association in reference to the medical service for patients in country districts who are not able to pay, this matter was referred to the council of the B.M.A. at its last meeting. I was directed to advise you that my council agrees with your views and trusts that the deputation to the Premier has produced good results.

It did not produce any results, good, bad or indifferent. Whether it will is still in the lap of the gods. As the Minister for Health knows, we have to maintain these country hospitals. In connection with the committee hospital at Kellerberrin, there has been a shortage of £3,759 in five years and there is £4,300 outstanding today on account of patients in that district. No one accepts responsibility for it. That charge falls on the Minister's department and has been met out of the proceeds of the hospital tax. What we are going to do now that we have lost the hospital tax, I do not know.

The Minister for Mines: We have not lost it.

Mr. BOYLE: But we have lost it, because it has been merged by the Commonwealth in the income tax.

Mr. Watts: Then it will have to be taken out of the amount refunded by the Commonwealth.

Mr. BOYLE: That may not be quite as easy as before, seeing that the money will be paid to the Treasury. However, the Treasury has been very sympathetic in its attitude to country hospitals.

The Minister for Mines: I think I will get my share this year.

Mr. BOYLE: I do not intend to deal with the basic wage at any length. The matter has been discussed fairly fully in the Press and elsewhere. I quite agree that the cost of living has increased. There can be no argument about that. I estimate that in country districts the increase has been not less than 20 per cent. Take tea which was 2s. 4d. a lb. and is now 3s. 6d.! Various other items have increased similarly.

What I wish to point out is that the Commonwealth Government, which fell over itself to give the State Government statutory power to grant the cost of living increase in this State, is not in such a hurry where the basic wage of the farmer is concerned. The basic wage of the farmer is embodied in the agreement entered into between the Commonwealth Government and the farmers of Australia, when the wheat-growers were granted what is known as a guaranteed price for wheat and wool. The guaranteed price for wheat was 3s. 10d. a bushel f.o.b. for bagged wheat and 3s. 8d. a bushel for bulk wheat. We in Western Australia do not deal in bagged wheat to any extent, and so we can take the basic price here as 3s. 8d. The responsibility for seeing that that price is paid is entirely a matter for the Commonwealth Government. It may be said that the whole business is in the hands of the Australian Wheat Acquisition Board, which is charged with the duty of acquiring and selling the wheat, but the actual guarantee is laid down as the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government and the Commonwealth Treasurer. This is how the Commonwealth authorities treat their obligations in this regard, but before dealing with that matter let me quote from the third progress report of the Commonwealth Parliament Joint

Committee on Rural Industries to show the high increase in the price of nine items used by wheatgrowers and woolgrowers—

In August, 1939, the wholesale price of super-phosphate was £3 10s. per ton. It is now £5 1s., an increase of 45 per cent. Other increases are—Cornsacks, 31 per cent.; wool-packs, 46 per cent.; power kerosene, 44 per cent.; fuel oil, 87 per cent.; petrol, 65 per cent.; lubricating oil, 31 per cent.; binder twine, 20 per cent; and stocklick, 12 per cent.

The general increase in the cost of living is at least 20 per cent. The wheatgrowers of Australia are owed on the crop of 1939-40 a sum of £1,307,159; on the crop of 1940-41, the drought year, £322,000, and on the 153,000,000 bushel crop of 1941-42, which was harvested eight months ago, £4,500,000.

Mr. President Dwyer, at the annual declaration of the Arbitration Court, refused to increase the basic wage—I am not discussing whether he was right or wrong in adopting that attitude—but the State Government, securing the authority of the Commonwealth, has increased the basic wage by 4s. 6d. in the metropolitan area and 4s. in the South-West Land Division. Has the State Government taken any steps to see that the wheatgrowers are paid the sum of £1,300,000 odd owing for the 1939-40 crop? That was the basic wage for the farmers; that amount is owing to the wheatgrowers of Australia, and I estimate that the proportion owing to our farmers is £800,000. The Commonwealth Government, however, is not worrying about meeting the amount. The wheat was forcibly acquired from the farmers, who had no say in the matter. It was taken from them under the wheat acquisition scheme by Statutory Rule 96. On top of that the farmers are now faced with the possibility of price fixation for beef and mutton.

Much has been said about the so-called vice squad operating in Perth. Why anyone should want to attach such a name to its activities, I cannot imagine. The fact remains that there is in operation in the City of Perth what is known as a vice squad. Surely it could have been termed a special duty squad or something of the kind! Seemingly any reference to vice appeals to a certain section of the public and to a section of the Press. I am in accord with the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe in the indignation he expressed at the reference in the Press to another batch of women being

rounded up. We ourselves pander to this sort of thing by calling it the vice squad. It is a special duty squad, and should be so called. Much has been said here regarding this so-called vice squad, and Mr. Schroeder issued an invitation to members of this Chamber to come to his court and see what goes on there. I availed myself of the opportunity to sit with the special magistrate last Friday morning. The atmosphere of the court was good—no brass buttons or conspicuous officials about. The special Magistrate is rather unorthodox in various ways. I cannot discuss his law; only lawyers can do that; but I understand there is a feeling that his law is not too orthodox. However, I do not speak as a limb of the law. I went to the court as an ordinary citizen, with an open mind, ready either to condemn or to approve. I approved, because the entire atmosphere was one of informality.

Mr. Hughes: Was it known that you were coming?

Mr. BOYLE: Yes. I rang up the magistrate, and possibly to honour my presence I was given a seat on the bench occupied by women police at the back of the court. Certainly I was not treated differently from any other member of the public.

Mr. Hughes: They put up a show.

Mr. BOYLE: No. There appears to be a rankling feeling on the part of the member for East Perth.

Mr. Hughes: You saw the circus!

Mr. BOYLE: I would be conceited indeed if I thought a show was put on for me. I went to the court for information, and I got it. When one realises that under 50 women and girls have been picked up by the special squad, it is plain that there has been exaggeration of the position. In Western Australia there are from 40,000 to 50,000 girls between the ages of 15 and 25 years.

The Minister for Lands: The best generation Western Australia has had.

Mr. BOYLE: I do not doubt it. I have no intention of condemning the girls of those years on the ground that less than one per thousand of them have been picked up by the vice squad. The member for Subiaco adduced extraordinary figures in her speech yesterday. As to those figures I have ascertained the facts from the Commissioner of Public Health, and I shall make reference to them later. Let me take the case of a girl named Joan—that is not

her name—who appeared before Mr. Schroeder. The girl, 16½ years of age, was I suppose one of the finest types of girl that one could possibly see; but she was a walking menace to the soldiers and sailors with us now. I do not blame the girl at all, seeing that she is only 16½ years old. God knows what her antecedents are! She was sent here from a certain institution in England. However, at the age of 16½ she appeared for the second time before the special magistrate. Mr. Schroeder handled that case sympathetically, and I am convinced that a feeling of sympathy permeated the court. The two detectives and two women police vied with each other to show what a fine girl this was outside the particular circumstances of the charge.

Mr. Hughes: You were given a show!

Mr. BOYLE: I was not. Mr. Schroeder dealt with the case as one would like to see such a case dealt with. He disregarded a good many of the forms generally associated with courts. Again, there is this fact, that not one of the girls or women committed to prison by the special magistrate has had a clean bill of health. He has nowhere but prison to send them.

Mr. Needham: A most deplorable fact.

Mr. BOYLE: It is indeed. Things must have become very different with the Commonwealth Government, which up to 1927 allowed Western Australia £15,000 per year for the treatment of venereal disease. That allowance has been discontinued. I now turn to the figures I received from Dr. Atkinson, to whom I am very grateful for supplying me with them. I hope that in quoting those figures I shall not be regarded as reflecting in any way on the member for Subiaco. I think the lady was drawing inferences.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: I made a statement that came from the doctor. That is all.

Mr. BOYLE: I fear that Dr. Atkinson does not agree with the member for Subiaco in that regard.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: It is so.

Mr. BOYLE: The House will realise that these figures deal with the civil population of Western Australia. Army and Navy figures are not available. Under this day's date Dr. Atkinson writes to me as follows:—

Replying to your inquiry, the following figures for venereal disease apply to the civilian population during the last 5½ years.



They do not include the fighting forces or the militia, reliable figures in regard to whom are not yet available.

—	1937.	1938.	1939.	1940.	1941.	1942. (to 31st July)
<b>GONORRHOEA.</b>						
Males ....	688	598	541	402	288	*
Females ....	162	145	134	128	123	*
<b>PRIMARY SYPHILIS.</b>						
Males ....	9	6	8	16	8	*
Females ....	N/A	1	1	4	3	*
<b>SECONDARY SYPHILIS.</b>						
Males ....	11	4	3	3	1	*
Females ....	3	1	4	1	2	*
<b>TERTIARY SYPHILIS.</b> (i.e., Old Cases)						
Males ....	11	12	6	7	3	*
Females ....	5	9	5	5	3	*
Total ....	1,089	774	702	626	431	270

\*Details not available.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver's statement that Dr. Mackenzie stated that 60 per cent. of males are affected with V.D. is incorrect. What Dr. Mackenzie actually stated in a lecture was that probably 60 per cent. of men had at some time in their lives shown evidence of venereal disease. This would include congenital cases.

The Department has no knowledge that one girl infected 40 men, as stated by Mrs. Cardell-Oliver.

It will be noted that a continuous fall has occurred in civilian cases, possibly due to the numbers of men who have gone into the Forces. But until we can obtain the full figures from the Forces we cannot gauge the extent of the increase. These have been asked for.

I was alarmed by the statement of the member for Subiaco.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: That letter does not alter Dr. Mackenzie's statement but only verifies it.

Mr. BOYLE: Dr. Atkinson is a responsible officer. This statement is very different from that made by the member for Subiaco.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Have you read "Hansard"?

The Minister for Mines: When did you receive that statement?

Mr. BOYLE: I had it sent to me by the doctor today.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Why did he not include the Military Forces?

Mr. BOYLE: I am beginning to realise my importance. Mr. Schroeder puts on a show for me and the Commissioner of Public Health sends a specially urgent despatch to me!

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Those figures were given to me a long time ago.

Mr. BOYLE: Evidently those gentlemen are beginning to appreciate my true worth. Now I wish to refer to a case in connection with which I think I shall have the sympathy of members—the case of George Auburn. In 1925 Auburn was convicted—and, I say, properly so—of the murder of a taxi-cab driver named O'Neill. He had a fair trial and the jury found him guilty. He was committed to Fremantle gaol. On account of his youth—he was then 21 years of age—his sentence was imprisonment for the term of his natural life. Authorities inform me, however, that no such punishment is known to our law, and that the sentence was promulgated so that Auburn could not possibly be released from gaol. Members will recall that that was the ostensible reason given. My information is that a capital sentence may be commuted to a life sentence and that a life sentence is indeterminate. It is usually 20 years and that term is reduced, I understand, to 15 years for good conduct. George Auburn has been incarcerated now for 18 years. I knew him as a boy. As a matter of fact, he stayed at my home for about six weeks when he was 14 years of age and his conduct was exemplary in every way. I knew his parents. The family history is good. Whatever impelled him to that action is best known to himself. I had an interview with him—I did not ask him whether or not he was guilty, as that did not concern me, because the jury had found him guilty.

Mr. Hughes: The jury made a recommendation of mercy.

Mr. BOYLE: Yes. As the member for East Perth has indicated, the jury evidently regarded his youth as palliation of his crime. Auburn has been an exemplary prisoner; all the superintendents with whom I have discussed the case have given him an excellent character. He is now capable of undertaking the duties of a radio engineer. Why should we—the Government, and the Parliament which supports it—continue to acquiesce in this man's incarceration when, on the ground of equality of justice, we are releasing positive scoundrels? Take the Caris case! I was in court when Flynn and Walsh were tried and, had I been a member of the jury, I would not have agreed to any recommendation to mercy in that case. These men were committed to

gaol, but one—I shall not mention his name—has already been released and is today at liberty in the Eastern States. Yet Auburn is serving a sentence of imprisonment for the term of his natural life, which sentence, I repeat, has no legal sanction.

Mr. Doney: The term has a plain meaning.

Mr. BOYLE: No. The law does not provide that a person may be sentenced to imprisonment for the term of his natural life. It rests with Cabinet to make recommendations in the proper quarter, so the Government must accept the responsibility for Auburn's continued detention. Yet scoundrels are being released from time to time!

Mr. J. H. Smith: Was not Auburn a scoundrel?

Mr. BOYLE: I would not call him a scoundrel. I knew him as a boy.

Mr. J. H. Smith: It was the most cold-blooded murder ever committed.

Mr. BOYLE: I am not discussing that matter. Justice must have equal application. Criminals have been committed to gaol for life, but have been released after having served such a term as the Government considers expiates their crimes. They may have been released, under regulations, because further imprisonment might have affected their health or mental stability. Whatever Auburn's crime, he has served 18 years' imprisonment, and he is still under 40 years of age. He has been offered employment in the Eastern States which would be of value to our war effort, that is, in the manufacture of radio sets and so on. I do not know why the Government refuses to release him. The Government may have its reasons, but I am not in its confidence.

Mr. Hughes: I do not think Auburn would take advantage of you in the way others have done.

Mr. BOYLE: The Government has the right to review Auburn's case every five years. I appeal to the Government to review the case on the ground that Auburn now has served 18 years' imprisonment. Had he received what is known as an ordinary sentence of life imprisonment, he could have been released after serving 15 years, if his conduct had been good. Therefore, Auburn should have been released three years ago. Auburn should be treated in the same way as other criminals of his type. I am not a maudlin sentimentalist: I believe in punishment for crime, but it should be reformative

as well as punitive. Eighteen years' imprisonment is a sufficient penalty for society to exact from a man, when one takes into consideration that his record in gaol is impeccable. It has been said that life begins at 40; Auburn can therefore begin his life again, as he is under 40. I saw the communication in which he was offered employment in Melbourne. He would work under an assumed name. He would have to drop his name on leaving this State.

Mr. Sampson: You say that his conduct has been exemplary?

Mr. BOYLE: Yes. Throughout his term of imprisonment he has not been guilty of even minor offences. I discussed his case with an official. As the member for East Perth told us, the official mind works in strange ways. This official told me that Auburn's conduct was exemplary; which is an indication that, if he were released, he might not again murder someone. The official who told me this is a humane man. The present superintendent has a more reasonable explanation to offer. He said that Auburn was too good a man to lose; he was too useful. Nevertheless, he would be pleased if Auburn were released.

The Minister for Works: You have been taking a Gallup poll on this, I see.

Mr. BOYLE: No. I have been doing what perhaps men in authority should have done. I have been making inquiries in proper quarters. The Fremantle members are interesting themselves in this case, and I understand from Auburn that they are favourable to him. Even Mr. Speaker has interested himself in the case. Those members have had chances to contact Auburn and I believe they are not at all disposed to see him remain in gaol. I know there will be the usual outcry because I have brought forward this case. Some members of the public will say that Auburn should have been hanged.

Mr. Hughes: I do not think a word would be said.

Mr. BOYLE: I know enough of human nature to say there are people who will contend that Auburn should have been hanged at the time. They will say that he should not be let loose on society, but I am not interested in such views. I am dealing with the case as I see it, and I appeal to the Government to exercise clemency in favour of this man.

**MR. FOX** (South Fremantle): In common with other members I regret the absence of the Premier and hope he will soon be restored to health. I listened attentively to the concluding remarks of the member for Avon and I agree with them. I did not intend to mention the matter in Parliament, but as it has been raised I can state that I and a few others have been active in trying to secure George Auburn's release. He has been in gaol for 18 years. He was quite a boy when he went to prison and as he has served such a long sentence I think justice would be satisfied if he were released, and the Government would be doing a fair thing. Canon Collick, a man who is well-known on the goldfields and throughout Western Australia for his philanthropy has also been very active in endeavouring to obtain Auburn's release. Up to date these efforts have not been successful, but I hope that in the near future the Government will have a change of heart and will release him. I do not know what is the opinion of members of this House. As the member for Avon has introduced the subject I do not think it would be a bad idea if he circulated a petition and found out how many were prepared to sign it.

**Hon. C. G. Latham:** It would be wrong to do that. It is not for us to decide these matters.

**Mr. FOX:** I do not know. I think we should have the courage of our convictions, and if we believe that Auburn should be released I do not see that there is any harm in our saying so. The member for Avon has expressed his opinion and I am willing to express mine. I have asked numbers of people their idea and have found that the consensus of opinion is that, if Auburn has committed a crime, he has purged his offence by the long term he has served in gaol. I hope that before long the Government will reconsider the case and give Auburn a chance to live the rest of his life as a free man, and of being some use to the community.

**Mr. Doney:** Do you not think the Government had sound reasons for acting as it did?

**Mr. FOX:** I do not want to continue the discussion. It is a matter of opinion.

**Mr. Patrick:** Of knowledge, too!

**Mr. FOX:** We should be prepared to show mercy even to the greatest criminal. I remember a remark by the late Thomas

Walker. I happened to be in the House one night many years ago when a debate was taking place concerning the release of a man who had been in gaol for a very serious offence, which I think had been committed in East Perth. The late Frank Wilson was putting up a case against the release, saying that he could not sleep at night with the knowledge that this man was at large. I remember Mr. Walker's remark that he could not dissociate himself from the lowest criminal that bore the shape of man.

**Hon. C. G. Latham:** There were unfortunate results, I think.

**Mr. FOX:** There may have been. But a man who never takes a chance never does anything. We cannot be right all the time. It is the man who acts that gets somewhere. There are many men who commit worse crimes than murder and they are not inside!

**The Minister for Mines:** They do not get caught. That is the only reason.

**Mr. FOX:** That is the trouble. I congratulate the member for North-East Fremantle on the case he submitted against certain of the Air Force personnel. I know he has been very active for the last five or six months in collecting evidence and I consider he has made out an excellent case. The matter should not be allowed to rest there. A copy of his speech should be sent to the Minister for Air and another copy to the Prime Minister, with a request that an inquiry be made into the hon. member's alarming allegations. If his statements are correct—and he is quite satisfied they are—some of those particular individuals are not fit to occupy such high positions.

We are told that everybody must pull his weight in this war. If the allegations are true there are two men in very important positions in this State who are below standard. I have no doubt that if an inquiry were held many other examples of maladministration and bungling would be brought to light. One has only to travel around the country and listen to the men working in important places and holding responsible positions to hear about the maladministration and graft that exist. If there were an inquiry those people would have an opportunity to prove their statements and matters would be cleaned up considerably. The only way in which I consider we can be certain that everybody will pull his weight in this war is to put

all on the same rate of pay as is given to the soldier. There would then be no excess profit for anybody. Until that step is taken we shall not be pulling our full weight. If it were not for the fact that so many people have sons or other relatives serving in the various Forces, or if we did not read our papers and listen to the wireless, we would hardly be aware that there was a war. Many people have not suffered in the slightest degree up to the present and have not been pulling their weight.

Last session we heard a lot about the new order that would be ushered in after the war. I am very much afraid that if it is left to the Governments and to big business throughout the world today we have very little to hope for in that direction. I will give members an instance. In England before the war one per cent. of the people over 25 years of age owned 55 per cent. of the property in private land and five per cent. owned over 80 per cent. At the same time 300,000 people had incomes of more than £1,000 each; 100,000 had incomes of more than £2,000 each; 8,150 had incomes of over £10,000; 300 had incomes of between £50,000 and £100,000; while at the same time 11,800,000 citizens from whom the Fighting Forces were drawn had to exist on £2 5s. per week.

Some years before the war Sir John Boyd Orr drew up a budget indicating the amount of food necessary to keep an adult at a minimum standard of health. He found that families comprising 5,000,000 people were unable to get sufficient food to keep their health up to the minimum standard. He also indicated the food that was necessary to keep an adult in first-class health and pointed out that 20,000,000 people were unable to reach that standard. Accordingly I say that if it is going to be left to the Governments and people in charge of big business to bring about a new order there will have to be a wonderful change of heart before such an end is achieved. I recently noticed a paragraph in the paper which related an incident that happened in the Supreme Court. I will read the extract, which is dated the 24th July, 1942, and is as follows:—

When in the course of a Supreme Court action yesterday, reference was made to the wages of certain lumpers having been £20 a week, Mr. H. P. Downing, K.C. said that a mistake must have been made—the actual

figure surely would not exceed £10. "I am not so sure at all," commented the Chief Justice (Sir John Northmore). "I noticed recently that the contents of an Eastern States worker's fortnightly pay envelope was £52. He was a railway guard, I think." Frank amazement was expressed by Mr. Downing, "What's the world coming to?" he ejaculated. "It's the new order!" observed the Chief Justice.

Counsel is amazed that a worker who is employed 12 hours a day and seven days a week should get £10 a week for his arduous labour. I suppose he often gets £20 or £50 for a few hours work in court in the morning.

Mr. McDonald: He was amazed at the £20 a week.

Mr. FOX: Why should he be? A man works from 8 o'clock in the morning until 11 at night and is back again next morning, and works seven days a week to assist the war effort. I would like to see men like Mr. Downing working 10 or 12 hours a day, out in all weathers. He is on the right side of the fence!

Mr. McDonald: It was the amount of £20.

Mr. Thorn: It was £25

Mr. FOX: If a lumper or railway man were to cease work, the result of his action would be felt all over the country, and he would be charged with holding up the war effort. If gentlemen like Mr. Downing ceased work and shut their offices, nobody would be much the wiser. In fact, the country would be a long way better off. The whole of the legal fraternity does not hold the same views as Mr. Downing. He does not mix with the people in the same way as do some members of this House. The member for Nedlands lived on the gold-fields in the early days, and he knows what the people have to put up with. I am quite sure he knows that any remuneration the workers receive is not sufficient. The member for East Perth has also had a fair experience with workers. The member for West Perth seldom gives offence to members, but we are not going to take, lying down, such remarks from gentlemen like Mr. Downing. He has been on a soft cushion all his life, and he is now slandering other people, or speaking of them in contemptuous terms.

Mr. Sampson: He is amazed that a man should receive £30 per week.

Mr. FOX: I have no hesitation in saying that the rate of pay received by Mr. Downing, and the men about whom he is so contemptuous, is in inverse ratio to the services they render to the community.

Mr. Hughes: Surely you have not adopted an antagonism to high wages in your old age?

Mr. FOX: I know what he would get if I had the job of fixing wages. Some reference has been made to the Deputy Director of Manpower in this State. I have had some experience of the Manpower Office. Mr. Stitfold has a very difficult job which he is carrying out conscientiously and well. In the first place he has to get as many men as he can for the Forces and then he has to decide which men are absolutely essential to industry. He has to make up his mind whether it is better to leave them in industry or place them in the Army. He is not expected to be a walking encyclopaedia on every industry in this State; so he has advisers and is in a position to get all the information he desires. These matters would be dealt with more expeditiously if applications were made for exemption before the men concerned were drafted into the Army. It is a very difficult job to get them out once they are in. Even after the manpower officer has made a recommendation for their release a long time elapses in many cases before the men are discharged. I would like to add my meed of praise to the manpower officer for the admirable and efficient way in which he is doing his job.

Mr. Doney: You can always go to the court finally.

Mr. FOX: That is so. The manpower officer deals with these matters from a commonsense point of view and decides whether it is better to leave the men in industry, especially in primary production, or not. Munition workers are not considered. There are men who endeavour to dodge their responsibilities by attempting to keep out of the military, but I have not myself come across any of those cases. I find that the manpower officer deals fairly with them. I have not had 100 per cent. success with the cases in which I have been interested.

The Minister for Works: He deals very competently with the applications, too.

Mr. Thorn: What are you making such a row about?

The Minister for Works: The officer has been attacked by a member of this House.

Mr. FOX: Quite a lot has been said about the importation of non-essential things from the other side. Very often workers in the Fremantle district inquire in the shops for certain types of clothing. They are told that they are unable to get them because space is not available on the ships to bring them here. The same thing has been said about materials required for munitions making. I wonder how certain individuals got space on a ship last week, or the beginning of the previous week, to bring into this State 264 gas-producers which were landed at Fremantle. It would be interesting to know the names of the firms to whom these gas-producers were sent. I will give them to the House. Atkinson got 21 gas-producers from Adelaide; Dimmitts 27 from Adelaide; Attwoods, 60 from Adelaide; E.M.H. 30 from Adelaide; Sydney Atkinson, 28 from Adelaide; Sydney Atkinson, 30 from Melbourne; and there were 68 consigned to various other persons. I have not taken the trouble to find out who E.M.H. is, but the member for Toodyay might know. He has had a long association with the waterfront and would know as many of the marks as I do. That is a ruthless waste of shipping space.

Mr. Doney: It was a pity they were not used in the Eastern States.

Mr. FOX: It is good business for the importers, now that the Liquid Fuel Control Board is advising those who use petrol in large quantities to install gas-producers in order to conserve petrol stocks. Gas units can be made locally, and another thing—if the raw materials were brought over they would take much less space. I am told that the material for 60 gas-producers could be brought over in the space occupied by one made-up article.

Mr. Thorn: Were these made up?

Mr. FOX: Yes. It is good freight for the shipping company, because those companies are paid by space, not by weight. If the raw material were brought over, and occupied the same space as that taken up by the gas-producers, they would get considerably less money. They usually charge on the freight that yields the highest rate. Mention was made only a few weeks ago of the fact that 500 tons of flour was landed in Western Australia. I heard that it was for the Army, but I am not too sure whether

that is so or not. That was another ruthless waste of shipping space when we are crying out for so many other things in this State.

Mr. Thorn: They will not send material here for our own people to make gas-producers.

Mr. FOX: It would be a good thing if they did.

Mr. Thorn: They reckon they have not got the space. If material were sent over in the space occupied by the made-up gas-producers, how many gas-producers could be manufactured from it here?

Mr. FOX: It would be 60 times 64, or something over 3,000 gas-producers. When the member for Pingelly was speaking, he referred to a new regulation that he said had been promulgated by the Commonwealth Government to provide that all cream should be consigned to the nearest factory.

Mr. Doney: He corrected that statement later on in his remarks.

Mr. FOX: I am glad to hear that, because I would certainly be sorry if any such regulation had been gazetted. I took a note of a statement made by the member for Nelson during his speech, and I have spoken to him about it. My note sets out that the hon. member said that Watson's Butter Factory "did not grade any cream sent to it from the South-West as second-grade." I understood the hon. member's reference to be by way of commendation and not condemnation, but it was viewed in the latter light by others, who took it to indicate that Watson's had not been grading cream fairly.

Mr. J. H. Smith: I did not mean that at all. Because Watson's is grading fairly, people are consigning their butter-fat to the factory.

Mr. FOX: That is so. In other quarters the hon. member's remark was understood in a contrary manner. I hope the House will bear with me while I deal with this matter as it affects the factory in my electorate. What I have to say will not be news to members representing South-West constituencies, and probably they know particulars concerning the dairying industry much better than I do. What knowledge I have has been gained as a result of visits to the factory in question, and from discussions with those interested.

Mr. Marshall: Did you not start life on milk?

Mr. FOX: I cannot say for certain. Statements have been made that Watson's did not grade cream fairly, and it was assumed that the request had come from the manager of the Great Southern Butter Factory for graders to be installed in Watson's factory to check up on the grading of butter-fat.

Mr. Doney: Where did you get all this information?

Mr. FOX: That was the assumption by those interested in the business. The inspectors were there to check the grading, weights, tests, moisture and so forth. Two inspectors have been at the factory for a long time, Mr. Hobbs for eight months and Mr. Williams until he was called up for service in the Army. They were on the premises from Monday morning to Sunday at dinner-time, when the factory shut down for the week. The graders were sent to the factory to ensure that the grading of butter-fat was being done fairly. Watson's pays the highest price in the State for butter-fat, despite the fact that quite a large quantity is received from farmers, many of whom have very little experience in the manufacture of butter. On the other hand, the Sunny West Butter Factory and other factories procure their supplies from the heart of the dairying industry in the South-West. This year Watson's paid 1d. per pound more than did the Great Southern Butter Factory, and just over ¼d. per pound more than did the Bunbury Butter Factory.

Mr. Willmott: The Bunbury Butter Factory pays a bonus at the end of the year.

Mr. FOX: That may be so.

Mr. Doney: Are you quoting comparative figures for other factories?

Mr. FOX: Those I refer to are representative of factories in the South-West. As a result of Watson's higher payments to the growers, approximately £3,000 was added to the returns of the producers who sent their butter-fat to that firm. As members are probably aware, there are three grades of cream—choice, first grade and second grade. The regulations provide that a factory must turn out 50 per cent. choice butter from choice grade cream; and 90 per cent. butter from first grade cream. The margin in price between choice and first grade butter is ½d. per pound. All second grade butter is acquired by the Commonwealth Government at approximately 1s. below the price for choice butter. In

a return published by the Agricultural Department on the 14th August, 1942, it was stated that the Bunbury Butter Factory produced a little more than 50 per cent. of choice butter, while Watson's butter factory turned out a little short of 50 per cent. In 1941, the Sunny West Butter Factory produced over 7,000,000 lbs. of butter, Watson's over 3,000,000 lbs., and the Great Southern Butter Factory 1,500,000 lbs. The Sunny West factory has five subsidiary factories operating in other districts, but Watson's represent the largest unit dealing with butter-fats in Western Australia. The reason why Watson's is able to extend satisfactory treatment to the producers is due to efficient management. The firm has been able to pay producers better prices than are paid by those in control of other factories. It has large selling agencies, and thus is in a better position to provide producers with a fair return.

Mr. Thorn: The firm has always helped the producers. Think of what was done with regard to pigs!

Mr. FOX: Yes, I shall refer to that phase a little later in my remarks. Another factor that assists in keeping down the costs in Watson's Butter Factory is that all requirements, butter boxes and so forth, are delivered practically free at the factory, which is alongside the railway line, and thus the cost of transport is minimised.

Mr. Doney: That applies to most of the butter factories.

Mr. FOX: In Watson's case, the fact that all produce is landed at the siding alongside the factory certainly makes for cheaper operations. Referring now to Watson's Pork and Bacon Factory, I would remind members that the undertaking was launched by the late William Watson in 1898. His sons grew up in the trade and are now managing the factory. They know all there is to learn about bacon, pork and butter production. As a result of this firm's activities, the pig industry is in a more flourishing condition in Western Australia than it is in any other State. Last week the firm shipped away 120 tons of pork. For the year ended the 30th June, 1941, 130,827 pigs were slaughtered, and during the succeeding financial year 125,807 pigs were dealt with. A slight reduction in operations is indicated in those figures, but it can readily be seen what a great help to the pig-breeding industry this firm has been. I have

also been told by farmers with whom I come into contact that the firm has been very helpful to them in many other ways.

Mr. Mann: It has done good work.

Mr. FOX: I do not wish to stress that phase, because I do not desire to appear unduly eulogistic. I wish to confine my remarks to facts indicative of what the firm has done and what assistance it has rendered to those interested in pig-breeding and butter production. I understand that Watson's is the second largest factory of its kind in Australia and it is still expanding. Recently several additions have been made.

Mr. Doney: I do not think that all this gratuitous advertising should be allowed.

Mr. FOX: Nothing is wasted in the factory. In American pork factories, we have been told, the only thing wasted is the squeal.

Mr. Doney: Do they use the squeal at the Fremantle factory?

Mr. FOX: No, that comes from parties interested elsewhere. The butter-milk is fed to pigs, of which about 4,500 are always kept adjacent to the factory. About 200 men are employed; they are paid good wages and disputes have been rare. In fact I cannot remember any industrial trouble there since I have been associated with the trade union movement at Fremantle. I suggest that members of the Country Party should visit the factory. They would receive a warm welcome from the firm.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Why Country Party members?

Mr. FOX: I particularly referred to Country Party members because they represent the farming interests. Of course the member for Nelson also lives in a farming district, and if he and other members similarly situated are not Country Party members, they amount to the same thing.

Mr. Doney: We would not say there was anything wrong about Watson's factory.

Mr. FOX: Still it has been said that the firm has been grading its cream unfairly, and I have made these few observations to show that that has not happened.

Mr. Doney: But you do not know, do you?

Mr. FOX: I do. How does a man know anything except what actually concerns himself? He has to obtain information somewhere. I have been to the factory on various occasions, but I must admit that I cannot say whether the cream has been correctly graded. The member for Williams-Narrogin

could not say so. The Department of Agriculture has had graders at the factory and they are quite satisfied with the work.

Mr. Patrick: Look how Welshpool put it over some members!

Mr. FOX: I have been advised that if the Government wishes to introduce the system of zoning cream, the management of the factory would be quite prepared to assist so long as it is in the interests of the war effort or the country. Members should take the opportunity to inspect the very good work being done by this pioneer of the butter and bacon industry in Western Australia.

A few words now on a burning question—the shortage of firewood in the metropolitan area. The shortage of firewood is not confined to Western Australia. Recently I visited Melbourne, and I found that it was difficult for householders there to procure firewood. Most of the homes, however, are supplied with gas, so perhaps the shortage was not felt as acutely as it is in places where many people have no gas. In the Fremantle district there are many homes to which gas mains have not been extended, and, owing to the shortage of pipes, it would be difficult to get gas laid on. We should take steps to ensure that a large stock of firewood is built up before next winter. In New South Wales, according to a statement in the Press, 100 enemy aliens were put on to the work of cutting firewood. I do not know whether they were released from internment for the purpose.

I fail to see why able-bodied aliens in Western Australia cannot be released and employed on the cutting of firewood. There are many able-bodied men in the internment camps sitting about doing nothing. An adequate guard could be provided so that it would be impossible for them to escape. I doubt whether those who were properly selected would escape if they had the opportunity. They could be paid the ruling rate for their work. If 100 men were thus employed, they could cut  $3\frac{1}{2}$  tons of wood per day; and 20 men would be required to cart it to the railway and put it into trucks so that it could be forwarded to various centres in the metropolitan area. During the summer months large stocks could be built up for next winter, when I feel sure the position will be far more acute than it is at present. The work of cutting firewood is not favourably regarded by Britishers or Australians. Before the war broke out it

was difficult to get them to cut firewood outside the Fremantle district. It is arduous work and is not the best paid of jobs. I suggest that representations again be made to the military authorities with the object of getting the requisite labour from the internment camps. The manpower and military authorities have been approached with a request that men be made available for this work, but those efforts have proved unsuccessful. If the Minister again made representations, he could point out the probable seriousness of the position that will arise next winter, and might be successful in getting the requisite labour to cut wood.

Reference has been made by the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe to a publication issued by the Department of Industrial Development. I understand that the book is being used in the schools. There was an omission in the section dealing with the mining industry, although a reference appeared in one part. I refer to the dreaded disease of miners' phthisis. If the book is being used in the schools, something more should have been said about miners' phthisis in order that young people might have an understanding of what could be expected if they went to work in the industry. Details should have been given of the number of men who have succumbed to miners' phthisis.

Mr. Marshall: You could not get that.

Mr. FOX: I admit the difficulty. The disease might have manifested itself 20 years after a man had left the industry. I have seen men at Fremantle who had left the industry and followed a healthy occupation for 20 years and then they became suddenly afflicted with the disease and, from a weight of 14 or 15 stone, wasted to six or seven stone before finally passing away. I know of no one more able to write a chapter along these lines than the Minister for Mines. He was engaged in the industry for a long time and he knows the dangers associated with it and the risks of remaining too long in it.

When I read of the millions of pounds worth of gold produced by the mines of Western Australia, knowing something of the industry as I do, I never become enthusiastic because I think of the number of lives that have been lost in winning the gold, paying dividends to shareholders, many of whom have never seen the mines. I think of the hundreds of men who have died in the process of



bringing the industry to its present stage. Some members feel concerned about the future of the industry. I can quite understand their concern. Goldmining did much to open up Western Australia. The State would not have advanced as quickly as it has done but for the discovery of gold at Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie. But I suppose the time will come, as it has come in other States, when we shall have to do without goldmining. I believe that if the price of gold had not risen so phenomenally some of the mines on the Golden Mile would not be working today. In fact, the probabilities are that the great majority of them would not. It was the high price of gold that enabled those mines to continue. There was a real slump on the Golden Mile before the price of the metal rose to about £10 per ounce.

Members who have lived in goldfields districts know the number of mining towns which sprang up almost everywhere and enjoyed a brief existence until the mines petered out, whereupon the residents went elsewhere. I know places where there are not more than three or four residents now, with perhaps one or two prospecting about the place, which in their boom days had populations numbering as much as a thousand. Western Australians, too, will have to look to other industries for putting the State on a better basis. We shall be all the better for the change. Victoria's gold industry has petered out. I have been to Ballarat and other Victorian mining districts, and I know that that State is not getting much gold. When the gold of Victoria petered out, the Victorian people turned to agriculture.

Mr. Patrick: There would not be much chance of turning to agriculture around Kalgoorlie!

Mr. FOX: No; but in the South-West there are huge areas of land, much of it close to Perth, where a plentiful supply of water is obtainable not more than 20 or 30 feet from the surface and where vegetables can be grown all the year round—more so than in most parts of Australia. I admit that in the southern parts of Victoria the rainfall is better than ours, and there is no need for irrigation. In the more northerly parts of Victoria, however, resort is had to irrigation.

Recently I read an account of our State Batteries. I would like the Minister for

Mines to have a look at that report. What is stated about the batteries and about the treatment of gold must have been written by a St. George's-terrace miner. Still, on the whole the publication is excellent, and I do not wish to be too critical.

Various members have spoken about the so-called vice squad. In my opinion the enthusiasm of some officers of the squad has outrun their discretion. No doubt it was necessary to do something. As far back as I remember, there have always been in the metropolitan area a few girls roaming the streets who were of no use but constituted a menace to the health of the community. It should be easy to round up those few, and after they have been rounded up certain information concerning them should be made available. I for one would like to know what the home surroundings of those girls are, and whether the girls had in their homes the amenities usually to be found in the house of a worker in constant employment. Further, it should be stated how long the father of such a girl had been unemployed before the outbreak of war. All these things are factors in making girls stray from the path of virtue, and the whole of the information I have indicated should be furnished. I am perfectly convinced that the conditions under which some of these girls lived had an adverse influence on their character.

One has only to look around the district in which one resides to observe the number of girls who are daughters of men in decent jobs and who never go astray. Why is that so? I have had a look around Fremantle and there I know hundreds upon hundreds of girls whose fathers are in decent jobs and who have decent homes; and if such a girl has a young man, she brings him home with her. Those girls do not roam about the streets at night. In some instances the vice squad overdoes its duty. The other night a member of the squad addressed a young girl walking arm in arm with her young man, and told her that she ought to be at home. Anybody ought without interference to be able to walk about the streets, especially in the town where one resides. Another girl, attending a dance, was told by a woman member of the vice squad that she ought to be home. What right had that woman to say such a thing to that girl? No right whatever! No sensible person would take exception to a girl en-

joying herself at a dance. It is quite a common practice in Western Australia, as most members must be aware, for mothers to take their small children to dances. At one time I lived in a goldfields locality where all the married people went to dances at night, and the mothers brought their children to the dance-hall and put them to sleep in an adjoining room. However, it is getting pretty late and I did not intend to speak so long. I hope I have not wearied the House.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Go on!

Mr. FOX: I reserve any further comments I have for a future occasion.

On motion by Mr. McLarty, debate adjourned

*House adjourned at 5.7 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Thursday, 20th August, 1942.*

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2.15 p.m., and read prayers.

### QUESTIONS (5).

#### FISHERIES, SWAN RIVER.

Mr. NORTH asked the Minister for the North-West: 1, Has any action been taken by the Fisheries Department as a result of Mr. Vivian Keane's representations respecting small-mesh nets? 2, Have the local authorities which moved in the direction of having various portions of the Swan River closed to fishing achieved any success as yet? 3, Is the shooting-up of shags favoured by the department as a means of increasing supplies of fish?

The MINISTER replied: 1, The Department at all times considers the need for variation of mesh according to locality, type of fish available, reproduction of species, consumption requirements and the industry as a whole. Due regard is given

to all these factors when size of permissible mesh is being decided for any area as it does to the Swan River, in which Mr. Keane is interested. 2, Closing of any waters to net fishing is considered along with the requirements mentioned in the answer to No. 1. 3, No.

### CIVIL DEFENCE.

#### *Precautions at Schools.*

Mr. NORTH asked the Minister for Mines: Is money available to the Civil Defence Department for the purpose of—1, Reinforcing and roofing school slit trenches? 2, Providing anti-shatter for school windows?

The MINISTER replied: 1 and 2, Mr. Telfer, Under Secretary for Mines and Civil Defence, returned today from an all-Australia Conference. On receipt of his report, all matters affecting policy and expenditure will be further reviewed and determined.

### AGRICULTURE.

#### *Abandoned Farms, Denmark.*

Mr. DONEY asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, The number of abandoned farms in what is known as the Denmark district? 2, The most frequent causes of abandonment? 3, How many of these abandoned farms are of a quality that warrants re-selection? 4, Are any applications or inquiries being received for these farms and are sales resulting; if so, the number of re-selections—if any—per year for the last five years? 5, Having regard to the urgent national need for an increased butter and bacon output, are any attempts being made to render these abandoned holdings especially attractive—financially—to inquirers?

The MINISTER replied: 1, One hundred and twenty-five in the Denmark Agricultural Bank District at the 31st July, 1942. 2, Main causes of recent abandonments are enlistments in the Military Services and general war work. 3, All of the properties. 4, Normal number of inquiries were received and sales effected until early in the present year. Sales: 1937-38, 19; 1938-39, 45; 1939-40, 12; 1940-41, 15; 1941-42, 5. 5, Properties have been written down to an attractive figure and sale terms are liberal. Money has been spent in maintaining these properties and efforts are being made to keep them in production by leasing.