

outstanding value to the war economy. Then there is the matter of a power scheme for the South-West, but that also can stand over. I support the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

On motion by Hon. G. B. Wood, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.11 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 29th August, 1944.

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

ELECTORAL—SWEARING-IN OF MEMBER.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am prepared to swear in the member for Victoria Park, who was returned at the last general election.

Mr. Raphael took and subscribed the oath and signed the roll.

QUESTIONS (3).

ICE.

As to Supplies at Dalkeith.

Hon. N. KEENAN asked the Minister for Health:

(1) Is he aware that mothers living in Dalkeith, having babies and young children to look after, cannot obtain ice for keeping

milk and food in good condition during hot weather owing, it is alleged, to manpower shortage?

(2) In view of the grave risk to health arising will he make representations to the proper authority to remedy the position?

(3) If no remedy by supplying manpower is practicable, will he take steps to have the district zoned so as to make existing supply cover the greatest possible area?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The Minister is only aware of the alleged position by a complaint of a resident, through the member for Nedlands.

(2) Inquiries from the authorities controlling the issue of petrol and tyres indicate that shortages in those lines are at the root of it.

(3) Inquiries are being made into the position.

WHEAT.

As to Supplies to Pig Producers.

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Is he aware whether it is the intention of the Australian Wheat Board to continue next season the supply of wheat at cheap rates to bacon and pig producers?

(2) If not, will he make enquiries immediately in order that these producers may budget accordingly regarding next year's production?

(3) Does he not consider, however, that the proper course for the Commonwealth Government to adopt if the supply of wheat at cheap rates to such producers is to be maintained, would be for the Commonwealth Government to pay to the Wheat Board in the interests of those dependent on wheat-growing, the difference between the price charged to such bacon and pig producers and the actual market value of wheat from time to time?

(4) Will he, in the interests of wheat-growers generally, make urgent representations along these lines to the Federal Ministers responsible?

(5) If not, why not?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST replied:

(1) Advice has not been received yet.

(2) Yes. However, the aspect of security has been stressed already as a factor for increased production.

(3) The Minister for Commerce and Agriculture (Hon. W. J. Scully) had assured growers in Perth recently that the Government would "make good to the Wheat Board the difference between the average price realised and the price realised for wheat sold for stock feed."

(4) and (5) The best interests of wheat growers in this State will continue to be pressed when discussing any Commonwealth policy for the wheat industry.

FOODSTUFFS.

As to Emergency Stocks.

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) Referring to the information supplied to members approximately two years ago in connection with emergency food stocks in Western Australia, does he consider that in the present state of the war situation it is necessary to maintain these reserve stocks in country districts?

(2) If he does consider it necessary, will he state why they should be continued?

(3) If not, have representations been made to the Federal authorities for the release of these stocks for distribution among the civilian population?

(4) If such representations have not been made, will he make them as early as possible?

(5) Is he aware that the holding of emergency food reserves has been discontinued in other States?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) As a special safeguard against interstate transport difficulties and at the request of the Director of Civil Supplies.

(3) See answer to question No. 1.

(4) See answer to question No. 2.

(5) In Victoria the reserves have been released entirely. New South Wales and Tasmania are retaining certain basic items. South Australia is discontinuing the scheme by zones, commencing with the metropolitan area. The Commonwealth Government considers it essential to maintain the scheme in its entirety in Queensland and Western Australia.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Eleventh Day—Amendment—Conclusion.

Debate resumed from the 24th August on the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply, to which Mr. Seward had moved an amendment as follows:—

That the following words be added to the Address-in-reply: "but regrets that this House has not already been placed in possession of complete details of any post-war housing plans that have been agreed upon between the Commonwealth and State Governments, specifying the types of houses to be erected, together with the estimated cost and rental of each type—

(a) in the metropolitan area;

(b) in country towns;

(c) on farms;

together with the priority allotted to each class."

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (on amendment) [4.36]: As members will recall, this amendment to the Address-in-reply was moved by the member for Pingelly on Thursday last. By its wording the amendment asks the House to express regret that complete details of any housing plans made between the Commonwealth and the State Governments had not so far been placed before the House. On that particular day representatives of the Commonwealth and the States were in conference at Canberra discussing wartime housing plans and plans for works to be carried out in the various States during the current financial year. On the next day, Friday, the representatives were discussing in conference at Canberra the question of post-war housing plans and on that very same day the representatives arrived at an agreement regarding post-war housing, the details of which were published in last Saturday's "West Australian" in rather extensive form.

Therefore this amendment actually asks the House to express regret that certain information had not been placed before it when, in fact, the information could not possibly have been placed before it because the information required did not exist. No plans had in fact been finalised as between the States and the Commonwealth and plans were not finalised until the day after the member for Pingelly had moved his amendment. Consequently it is clear that the hon. member moved an amendment which in the circumstances was not justified and which, if the House had carried it,

could not have been met until such time as the conference of the Commonwealth and State representatives at Canberra had concluded its deliberations and arrived at its decisions. I take it for granted that every member has read with considerable interest the newspaper report of the discussions at Canberra and particularly the decisions arrived at by the conference. I do not propose this afternoon to discuss the whole of these details, but rather to refer briefly to what I consider to be the main points of the agreement. The first is—

Each State is to act as principal in respect of Government-sponsored housing within its boundaries, and each State may nominate any authority or any number of authorities to act for it within the State.

That means that the State Government of Western Australia will be able to appoint the Workers' Homes Board so to act, or it would be able to appoint any other authority existing within the State or, if circumstances warranted its being done, it could set up a new authority or any number of new authorities to carry out or to assist in carrying out this post-war housing plan. The second main point is—

A rebate of rent is to be allowed on the basis of family income.

That means that the economic rent will not necessarily be charged to every family to whom one of these houses is made available, when it is constructed. Where the income of a particular family is below the basic wage standard, provision will be made to rebate a certain amount of the economic rent to the family concerned. To the extent that the family income is below the basic wage standard, so will a rent lower than the economic rent be charged. I think members will agree that that is a step in the right direction, and one which will benefit, particularly, the large families where the income is on the low side. The next point is—

The rent rebate is to consist of the difference between the economic rent and one-fifth of the family income equal to the basic wage.

The final point is—

The rate of interest chargeable into rent, or into the purchase price where any house is sold, is not to exceed the cost of the money, plus a percentage not exceeding 1 per cent. to meet the operating expenses of the scheme.

It is certain, of course, that losses will be incurred in connection with a housing scheme of this description. That is clear

because of the fact that in many instances families will occupy these houses at something below the economic rent. In each such case the Government will be involved in some loss, and it has been decided by the representatives of all the Governments of Australia that any losses incurred will be borne in the proportion of three-fifths by the Commonwealth and two-fifths by the State concerned.

I am not in possession of the other detailed information which the member for Pingelly specifically refers to in his amendment. It will, no doubt, be in the possession of the Premier himself, and when he returns to the State he will bring it with him, and will, no doubt, make it available to members next week. The member for Pingelly, for instance, refers in the amendment to the question of the type of houses, the cost of the houses, and the priorities to be granted in respect of houses to be erected in the metropolitan area, in country districts and also on farms in country districts. I think it probable that the State Government in each State will have the major responsibility in making decisions in connection with these points. That, in my opinion, would be the right procedure. It might be that the Commonwealth would want to be consulted in regard to the maximum amount to be expended on any one house, irrespective of whether it was being erected in the metropolitan area, in country towns or on farms in the country. But apart from that consideration, I think it likely that the State Government would be the authority to make decisions regarding most of the other detailed points as set out in the amendment. Therefore, not much is to be gained by discussing these two points this afternoon when we would be compelled to engage more or less in guesswork. If we wait until the return of the Premier he will be able to make available to us reliable information, and tell us just what we require to know in connection with these different points.

Mr. Doney: Have you any information in respect to the costs, compared with what they were before the war?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. The only comparison I could give to the hon. member would be one of present-day costs, under wartime conditions, with those under peacetime conditions as they existed prior to the war. But this amendment does not deal with the building of houses in wartime

under wartime conditions. It is related directly and absolutely to post-war housing. It is not possible for anyone, with any degree of certainty, to make a comparison between what the costs are likely to be after the war and those that existed before the war. Any of us could, with some degree of safety, make a rough estimate of what building costs are likely to be in the first year, or in the first two or three years after the war. It is practically certain that they will not be reduced very much in the first year; they will not be reduced very much in the first two or three years after the war. So we might arrive at a rough comparison, of early post-war housing costs with pre-war housing costs by using the present-day figures as the basis for early post-war building costs. In view of the fact that the Premier is also the Minister controlling housing in this State, I feel that the member for Pingelly did not, in moving the amendment now before the House, show him all the consideration that might be expected. I feel that more especially because it was generally known that the Premier was going to Canberra for the purpose of discussing, amongst other things, the question of post-war housing.

Mr. Seward: What about the plans we were promised?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, but if the hon. member reads his own amendment very carefully he will see that it asks for complete details of post-war housing plans as agreed upon between the Commonwealth and the State. As I pointed out earlier, these plans were not agreed upon until Friday of last week, the day after the hon. member moved his amendment.

Mr. Seward: The Lieut.-Governor's Speech stated that they were.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: As far as I remember it, the Speech of His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor states that the State Government had developed plans for housing in the post-war period. The amendment of the member for Pingelly does not deal with that question at all. His amendment clearly asks for complete information; complete details of post-war housing plans as agreed upon between the Commonwealth and the State Governments. I point out to him that the plans were only finally considered and decided upon at a conference of all State representatives and

the Commonwealth at Canberra on Friday of last week, so obviously it was impossible for the Government to make this information available to the House before today. I have presented some information and more of it was given in "The West Australian" on Saturday last, and no doubt every member has carefully read what was published then. Now that the question has been ventilated to some extent and the matter has been completely considered and decisions have been arrived at in Canberra since the amendment was moved, I suggest to the hon. member that his main purpose has been served and that he might favourably consider the question of withdrawing the amendment without further debate.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth—on amendment): I would like to make a few comments on the amendment. I was rather surprised to find that the matter of post-war housing is apparently not more advanced than it is. I think it is getting on for two years since the Commonwealth Commission or Parliamentary Committee visited the various States of Australia and collected evidence about post-war housing. Since then many conferences have been held between representatives of the several States and the Commonwealth, and I was under the impression, without having specific evidence, that by this time the provisional plans for a post-war housing programme were practically complete and that the only question outstanding might possibly be the one relating to the division of responsibility for finance. I, and I daresay other members, feel rather perturbed that after five years of war the authorities are just meeting now to arrive at plans for an activity of such importance for absorbing returned men as is the programme of housing.

The Minister for Works: Plans have to be well advanced to permit of decisions being made.

Mr. McDONALD: I would have thought that long ago the Commonwealth and States would have agreed upon practically all the details. However, I am concerned not only with that aspect but with other aspects as well. I would like to know how far other plans involved in the post-war period have advanced. Some of those plans involve Commonwealth and State responsibility;

others involve State responsibility. For instance, there is the educational programme. We were told last year that there was a committee dealing with technical education for the post-war period.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order in discussing technical education under this amendment.

MR. McDONALD: I do not wish to go beyond the terms of the amendment, but there are various other aspects of post-war programmes which I imagine at this stage should be developed to the extent of being put into force upon the signature of the responsible Minister being given and not in the embryo stage to the extent of requiring conferences and decisions, except perhaps to settle comparatively minor details. I recall a statement recently made by the Premier of South Australia dealing with the South Australian housing programme. It seems that some months ago the Government of South Australia had arrived at a very advanced stage in connection with its programme for housing and for other post-war projects to be put into force in that State.

The matter raised by the member for Pingelly is of very great importance, because I feel that in connection with housing and other post-war projects members of this House by now want to be given specific details. I see no reason why all those various projects and the plans made in relation to them should not be laid on the Table of the House for the information of members and of the people at large, and for suggestions by all who are interested and who are able to make constructive contributions as to the best method of carrying those projects into effect. I suggest to the Minister that our confidence would be greatly enhanced if those plans and all the various aspects of post-war work were laid on the Table and thus brought before Parliament at the earliest possible moment. I welcome the motive behind the amendment in that it aims at restoring to members of this Chamber the position they ought to occupy, namely, that of consultants in connection with the vitally important measures that will be involved in this State in the post-war period.

MR. CROSS (Canning—on amendment): I do not know what useful purpose would have been served even if we had been in-

formed of the plans of the Commonwealth and the State two years ago because, even if plans had been completed, they could not be advanced any further until the termination of the war for the simple reason that neither men nor material would be available. For very good reasons, also, it might not pay the State to be too far advanced with its plans. I have been reading a book from the Parliamentary Library describing the discoveries and developments which are taking place and which might revolutionise the whole problem of housing throughout the world. Since the war broke out, many discoveries have been made and these are by no means unexplored discoveries. A new method has been discovered of dealing with plywood by which it can be increased to about ten times the tensile strength of steel, and the Allies have long since discarded the use of steel and aluminium for the construction of planes in favour of this plywood. In addition, a tremendous advance has been made in the use of plastic, and it is proposed to manufacture a large number of houses in prefabricated form both from plywood and plastic.

MR. PERKINS: What is the name of the book to which you refer?

MR. CROSS: It was the annual issue of the "Scientific American." Recently I was speaking to a Perth man who is largely interested in building, and he said his firm felt very wary about making many preparations at the present time on account of the discoveries made during the war. The Norwegian Government has offered to build a quarter of a million prefabricated houses for Britain. Incidentally, a number had been built, and, being of plastic, could be erected in a few hours. He said, moreover, that they were pretty good. He had been in Sydney and he told me that I would be able to see those houses in the newsreel here. I did see them. The hon. member who interjected has not seen them. I daresay members of the Government service are taking notice of the advances and discoveries that are being made. It is generally known that the State and the Commonwealth have been collecting information as to the number of houses required and the quantities of materials. Thus to lay down details now would be premature.

Last week the member for Pingelly contended that houses could be built cheaper on farms, and he quoted figures. Speaking

from memory, I think the hon. member's assertion was that houses could be built at a cost of hundreds of pounds cheaper in the country than in the city. However, when one builds a four-roomed or five-roomed brick house, much depends on whether the contractor complies with the specification. Everybody knows that a house can be built with rooms the size of this Chamber, but some builders, in erecting such houses, might embrace only three standards. A decent builder, on the other hand, would put in a much larger number. I have seen houses built around the metropolitan area—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! There is nothing in the motion about what the hon. member has seen in the past.

Mr. CROSS: What we have seen in the past we do not want to see repeated in the future—ramshackle buildings, and with very little lime in the sand used. I would rather see houses, particularly brick houses, contain a little more cement, because they will be all the better for that factor. The houses referred to by the member for Pingelly would not be built more cheaply if the correct wages were paid and the proper material were put into them.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I must ask the hon. member to confine himself to post-war housing.

Mr. CROSS: I want to see the same standard maintained as has existed here in the past. We have men who understand the business of building, and we have architects and draftsmen. There are numerous blue prints in existence; and when it is decided to go on with the business there will be no question of long-distance plans. Once the labour and materials are available, the scheme will be in its stride before long. It would be well to await the Premier's return, when he will inform us of what has been agreed upon by the Commonwealth and State departments. Even the member for Pingelly should be satisfied then if the work is to be undertaken by the State.

MR. WATTS (Katanning—on amendment): I know of no reason why the Premier could not have informed us before he went away what proposals he intended to submit to the Commonwealth Government. Apparently we should not have heard of those proposals at all up to the present, but for the amendment moved by the member for

Pingelly. A few moments ago the member for West Perth told us that members of this Chamber expected to take their right place as consultants of the Government in matters of this kind. Therefore I hold that prior to the departure of the Premier was the right time to tell us of what was contemplated. The member for Canning or some other member, or perhaps even I myself, might have made suggestions to the Premier worthy of consideration both by the hon. gentleman and the Canberra authorities in this highly difficult matter. That, I take it, is the ground work and the reason for the amendment moved by the member for Pingelly, which I consider to be thoroughly justified.

I observe that there is reference to the post-war building of 10,000 homes under the scheme, which apparently is now reaching some kind of fruition. I venture to suggest that that number of homes will be entirely inadequate for the post-war period; and there is no suggestion that anything more than that number is contemplated. I admit the task will be one of some magnitude, but the number proposed will not be anything like sufficient for the needs of this State after five years of practical cessation of home building, and in view of the numerous changes which have taken place and the obvious desire of many people to set up homes after the war.

The Minister for Mines: Schools are wanted at the same time.

Mr. WATTS: No doubt. Hospitals are wanted also, but I had better stick to the question of post-war housing, which is the question before the Chair. I have here a report of evidence given by the Council of Land and Estate Agents of Western Australia last November. I have read the greater part of that evidence, and I am struck with the extremely sympathetic consideration given by these people who are experienced in house and land transactions in the metropolitan area to the problem of post-war houses. They have not approached it from the angle of too much conservatism. They have gone into all the economic questions and disabilities which face a great many of our population, and they have suggested methods by which those defects can be rectified. Some of their suggestions come quite close to Mr. Curtin's ideas, as mentioned by the Minister for Mines some time ago. The agents, having gone into the ques-

tion of requirements in the way of houses, assess the number for the metropolitan area alone at 14,000. On page 10 of the report I hold in my hand it is stated—

The above estimate of 14,000 new structures is based on conditions prevailing in pre-war years, plus a reasonable allowance for improved conditions, particularly the regular employment of potential home seekers in the past few years. No allowance is made for that obvious duty of the nation to ensure adequate living conditions to members of the Forces returned from war service, nor for the necessity of providing adequate housing facilities to those persons whose economic condition has previously prevented them from owning a home.

So the house and land agents of the metropolitan area give these figures after careful inquiry and consideration. We have another 52 per cent. of our population outside the metropolitan area, and we have to face the question of homes for them. There are numerous provincial towns where housing conditions have in recent years become very difficult. We have 25 and 50 houses enumerated by country localities as the minimum requirement that would meet the situation. If we could arrive at the sum total of all those country towns, we should probably find that as many houses as are mentioned in the suggestions contained in this report, namely 14,000, would be required in rural areas. This would leave the proposed 14,000 at the very least, as reasonably computed by the house and land agents, an extra number over and above that figure. Thus we have a gigantic problem requiring the attention and consideration of everyone who has the interests of our people and of this State at heart at all. Returning to the question of the types of houses and the question whether plans are sufficiently advanced to enable details of these houses to be made known prior to the Premier's departure, I find that on the 2nd August the member for Pingelly put certain questions to the Premier and received certain answers, as follows:—

Mr. Seward asked the Premier:

(1) Will he consider laying upon the Table of the House copies of the plans and specifications of each type of house that it is proposed to erect under the housing scheme recently adopted by the Commonwealth Government, together with the cost of each type of house?

(2) If not, why not?

The Premier replied:

(1) There will be many types of houses built, because variations in designs will arise as a result of experience as the scheme progresses, and as material and manpower become

more freely available. In addition, different types of houses will be built in different centres. It would be impracticable, therefore, to lay on the Table of the House copies of all plans and specifications of each type of house proposed to be erected. Plans of one representative house to be erected in the metropolitan area and one in the country will be laid on the Table.

(2) Answered by (1).

The Minister for Works: That is the wartime proposal.

Mr. WATTS: It does not refer to wartime housing. As far as the language used in the answer is concerned, no distinction can be drawn in that answer from that aspect. A wartime housing scheme would not yield much experience in regard to peacetime housing requirements.

The Minister for Works: The Commonwealth scheme refers to wartime housing.

Mr. WATTS: The Minister is entitled to his opinion, and I am entitled to mine. For the life of me I do not know why the plans in question were not laid upon the Table here. Whether they refer to peacetime housing, as I believe they do, or not, is a matter of small concern to me. The fact is that the plans are not here. They should have been here when promised by the hon. gentleman. No doubt the Premier overlooked the matter, but there are others who could have attended to it since he left.

I turn now to another matter which is of considerable importance, the cost of the houses to be built in the post-war period. The member for Canning mentioned one aspect of building which might receive some consideration. I too have read information referring to prefabricated homes. Whether these would be suitable for the climatic and other conditions existing in Western Australia, I am not prepared to answer. but the houses are certainly worthy of consideration if they will provide suitable and durable homes at less expense than those erected by some other means. But before I would subscribe to that for one moment I would have to be satisfied that they will be suitable for Western Australian conditions and are durable. Those two questions I thought the Housing Commission would have answered but up to the present, so far as I can ascertain, it has not dealt with that aspect of the matter.

The Minister for Works: Has Duncan Raine been to see you?

Mr. WATTS: I was thinking of a reference made in the Swedish-Australian Chamber of Commerce Journal to prefabricated houses, which it is stated are being erected in Sweden and are made of timber. The question that I cannot answer is whether Western Australian timbers would be suitable for treatment to enable these houses to be made from them. If Western Australian timbers would respond to such treatment we might easily have an allied industry that would be of immense value to Western Australia's industrial development. But not being sufficiently versed, by any means, in that kind of question, I am not offering any opinion. I have simply stated the fact, which is closely allied to the statement made by the member for Canning that these things are under consideration elsewhere, and might be of value in Western Australia and should be investigated at the earliest possible moment.

The Minister for Works: They are being investigated.

Mr. WATTS: That is one more point elucidated this afternoon. I am glad the Minister has told us that. The question of costs is exercising our minds a good deal. We all agree with the proposal for making it possible for anyone to have the benefit of a decent home. I think we all agree also that there may be some obligation on the State and on the Commonwealth in respect of financing any loss that may accrue. But I think we should all equally agree that, subject to decent and durable homes being erected, that loss should be minimised as much as possible, because we cannot face unlimited expenditure for no return at all. That is what it would amount to if we simply wasted money in post-war housing expenditure. My attention has been drawn to the position in New Zealand where this question of rental houses—houses erected by the State and rented to tenants—has apparently produced quite a considerable amount of discussion. I find in a New Zealand newspaper the following—

Notification to cease work on State rental houses until the Cabinet has approved of the cost and final contracts have been issued has been received by builders in Auckland from the Housing Construction Department. It is understood that contracts in hand are to be completed, but that no new contracts will be given until something has been done to reduce the cost. The advice was received about a fortnight ago and, following urgent repre-

sentation, the Commissioner of Works, Mr. J. Fletcher, visited Auckland and addressed a large meeting of builders.

Further on the report states—

It is no secret in building circles that the Government is seriously concerned over the rising cost of State housing and it is believed that the Commissioner of Works was called upon recently to prepare a schedule for submission to the Cabinet showing the increases since 1939. It is estimated that the cost of State housing had risen from 22s. a foot in 1939 to nearer 32s. a foot at present.

I think we are faced with a very similar position in Western Australia. When the Premier gave us some figures a few weeks ago in reply to a question from me, he was good enough to compare the houses which are now being erected—and which therefore give us a fair idea of what we may expect if we are not very careful—with houses built before the war, and we find that the increased cost in respect of an ordinary four or five-roomed house ran to upwards of—

Mr. SPEAKER: I draw attention to the fact that what is being done and what was done previously have nothing to do with the amendment.

Mr. WATTS: That is quite so. But I fear we shall find that the cost will be considerably more in future than it ought to be because of the increased cost of building. That gives rise to the question: Have any arrangements been made with the Commonwealth or has the Commonwealth been asked to abolish the sales tax on all items that appertain to housing schemes? If not, or if it will not do so, the position is ridiculous. A substantial sum of money will be added to the cost of each house and there will be a burden on the occupier, to some extent, and a possible burden to the State and the Commonwealth itself if an unnecessary charge is made for purely revenue purposes. I am given to understand that £40 or £50 is by no means all the amount by which the sales tax increases the price of a house at the present time. Part of a post-war housing scheme should be to ensure that no sales tax is charged on building materials required to relieve the housing shortage when houses are being built by State or private enterprise.

Mr. Withers: You will require to have price-fixing to stop profiteering.

Mr. WATTS: That would be quite all right. I would have no objection to any

reasonable proposal that the Minister might bring before us in this connection. I have said that before. I realise that he has problems in that regard but that is outside the scope of this discussion.

The Minister for Works: Will you give me the same assurance on behalf of your colleagues in the Legislative Council?

Mr. WATTS: I will. The last item to which I wish to refer is the position in the post-war period of those who have contracts with the Government in regard to pre-war homes. That, I submit, constitutes part of the post-war housing problem. I find from the newspaper reports that we are going to be charged one per cent. above the rate which the housing authority expends—or an amount not exceeding one per cent.—for operating purposes. That seems to be a very reasonable proposition.

Assuming that the rate does not reach one per cent.—I think there is a reasonable chance of its being less—it seems to me quite possible that we shall be able to let out these houses at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. There is going to be a very great difference in regard to houses that have been built, and by no means paid for—and which will have to be paid for in the post-war period at rates of interest much greater—and we shall find under the housing scheme that Mr. Jones in Brown street will have a house built under this scheme for which he has to pay a rent of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. and Mr. Smith next door with a house built under some other scheme at a higher rate of interest. Why should a post-war housing scheme provide for an anomaly of that nature? I contend that this is another matter which the State Government should undertake to bring before the Commonwealth authorities at the earliest possible opportunity in order that there may be an equal measure of justice to all parties concerned.

MR. NORTH (Claremont—on amendment): I desire to add some words to the amendment with a view to assisting its passage because I noticed that when the Acting Premier was speaking he was rather hostile to the amendment as printed. I move—

That the amendment be amended by inserting after the word "regrets" the words "in view of the amazing war developments since the session opened."

Amendment on amendment put and negatived.

MR. LESLIE (Mt. Marshall—on amendment): I listened with some interest to the Minister for Works on this matter and was rather astonished to hear him suggest that we were acting only on guess-work, in discussing the amendment. It is a lamentable confession to make that the Premier may have gone to Canberra without any plans at all in connection with post-war housing. On the other hand, if he did have any plans, surely he could have submitted them to this House in order that we might have known what were the Government's intentions in that regard. Then, if the Commonwealth Government decided that our plans were not in conformity with its ideas, he could have returned and said, "I was obliged to modify these proposals." We are concerned at the fact that while these suggested plans are being discussed we, as representatives of the people, and consequently the people themselves, are being kept in the dark as to what is actually going on. I should like to read to the House a letter I have received from the Wyalkatchem Road Board.

Mr. SPEAKER: Dealing with post-war housing?

Mr. LESLIE: Illustrating how the people in country districts are concerned in the plans for housing and that they should be submitted to the people for their judgment, the letter states—

With extensive housing schemes in prospect, my board feels very strongly that a firm stand should be made against this idea that a less desirable form of construction is good enough for rural areas. The wooden house affords no mitigation of the extremes of temperature which are experienced in the inland areas to a far greater extent than in the cities which, in Australia, are all on the seaboard.

That is evidence that the people in the country areas—and, I suggest, in other parts of the State—are concerned as to what this Government's plans are in connection with post-war housing. They view the future with some misgivings. The reason the road board contacted me, and I submitted a copy of that letter to the Premier, was that the Premier had announced that in regard to post-war housing there was to be a difference in construction between country and city dwellings.

The Minister for Works: With a higher cost for the country houses.

Mr. LESLIE: People in the country wish to have no less a standard of comfort than those in the city. They consider they are

quite entitled to that. The Wyalkatchem Road Board points out that country districts are entitled to the same consideration at least—and even more consideration because of climatic conditions—as that given to metropolitan areas along the seaboard where trying conditions due to our climate can be readily met by available conveniences.

Mr. Needham: Who is objecting to that?

Mr. LESLIE: We are objecting to the fact that it seems evident that failure to place plans before this House means that something may be done to which we shall have strong objection.

Mr. Needham: That applies all round.

The Minister for Works: The scheme has not yet been undertaken.

Mr. LESLIE: That is a sorry confession to make!

The Minister for Works: It will not be undertaken until after the war.

Mr. LESLIE: We suggest that plans for a scheme of house construction should be at least in course of preparation. We should be assured of that by the Government.

Mr. Needham: That applies all round.

Mr. LESLIE: We suggest that the representatives of the people in this House are entitled to consideration and to be informed as to what the plans really are.

Mr. Marshall: To hear you talk, one would think this is a democracy!

Mr. LESLIE: There is still some semblance of democracy left, at least on the Opposition side of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. LESLIE: People in the rural areas are concerned regarding the likelihood of a continuance of the differentiation that has been apparent in the past. I refer to the persistence with the idea that anything is good enough for country districts, so long as there can be a saving of cost. We, who represent the rural areas, are concerned about the absence of plans at this stage, before anything definite is undertaken. When the plan is put into operation it will be too late, as we know to our cost, to bring about any alteration with a view to setting up more desirable conditions. I support the amendment because I regret that plans in connection with the post-war housing scheme have not been tabled.

MR. McLARTY (Murray-Wellington—on amendment): The member for Pingelly is to be commended for moving the amendment to the Address-in-reply. There is no

doubt we are ill-prepared with regard to post-war housing problems. It is common knowledge that there is a tremendous shortage of building materials in this State. At any rate, adequate supplies are not available. Let members consider the position of the various brick kilns. They are closed down.

The Minister for Works: Why?

Mr. McLARTY: A sufficient supply of labour is not available to keep them open.

The Minister for Works: Where is that labour?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I will ask the member for Murray-Wellington to confine himself to the amendment.

Mr. McLARTY: To cope with the housing problem, efforts should be made to ensure that sufficient skilled labour is available to assist in the work of building houses.

The Minister for Mines: The skilled labourers are in the Army.

Mr. McLARTY: I think they are. We have reached a stage in the war when we should ask the authorities to release those skilled men from the Army. I am aware that the State Brickworks are operating at full pressure, but, nevertheless, there is no surplus of bricks available. The same applies to the timber industry. In order to provide for post-war requirements, we should know what land is available, not only in the metropolitan area but in country districts, for use in connection with the erection of homes. If there is a rush to procure land, there will certainly be muddling with regard to the erection of houses. Another problem that will affect us in the post-war period will be the shortage of skilled labour, very little of which is available now. Furthermore, I believe that not only in Western Australia but throughout the Commonwealth there will be a tremendous demand for skilled labour as soon as hostilities cease.

I am convinced that definite plans should be formulated whereby at least an appreciable proportion of our skilled artisans will be kept within Western Australia. The Leader of the Opposition said that 14,000 new houses would be required in the metropolitan area. I do not think there is any correct estimate of the number of houses that will have to be erected in this State. True, the Commonwealth Housing Commission paid a visit to Western Australia and the local authorities have been asked to ob-

tain certain information to indicate the number of houses that will be required in their respective districts. All that is very incomplete. Many small towns have not furnished any estimates at all; yet houses will be required there in the post-war period. In the aggregate the dwellings required there will represent a large number. The member for Pingelly spoke about those who were prepared to build their own houses and he referred to cement brick structures. I think consideration should be given to such persons. The type of house mentioned was especially suitable for the country areas, particularly the bungalow type. We should know how many people are prepared to build houses for themselves and how many of such houses are required. I think, generally speaking, we are very ill-prepared in connection with the housing problem.

The Minister for Works: We are not.

Mr. McLARTY: I disagree with the Minister. I think we are ill-prepared in that respect, and the member for Pingelly was fully justified in moving the amendment to the Address-in-reply.

MR. J. HEGNEY (Middle Swan—on amendment): I would not have risen to participate in the debate had it not been for the concluding words of the member for Murray-Wellington, who said we are ill-prepared respecting post-war housing matters. If that is so, the remarkable fact is that all Governments, State and Commonwealth, are in the same position. The member for Murray-Wellington should know that representatives of those Governments have just met in Canberra to discuss this very question of housing. Country Party-Nationalist Governments functioning in Victoria and South Australia have submitted their plans to the Canberra conference. The hon. member suggests that this State is behind the times, but we are in the same position as are the other States. The amendment suggests that we must be told what has been agreed upon as between the Commonwealth and the States.

The Minister for Works: The hon. member wants complete details of the plans agreed upon.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: Yes. The Deputy Premier very ably dealt with that point. In my opinion, the amendment under discussion has no merit whatever. When we deal with the question of post-war housing

schemes, we must realise that the whole situation is bound up with the war and its requirements. Any such scheme is inevitably affected by the supplies of skilled labour and materials for the work. In that connection, we must bow to the requirements of those in charge of military operations. While the war has taken a favourable turn in Europe, it must be realised that Australia is still involved in a very serious struggle with Japan. I have no doubt the Commonwealth and State Governments have made a reasonable advance in an effort to deal adequately with the important problem of post-war housing; but there are other issues involved. I understand that at least 150 carpenters are engaged in ship-building operations. Are they to be withdrawn so as to participate in house-building? If that were done, I am afraid it would be the end of the ship-building operations, about which the member for Irwin-Moore debated so ably some time back.

I really think some of the men might be withdrawn for the purpose of assisting in the erection of homes, but the whole question depends upon the supply of manpower and of materials. The position is very difficult. From the point of view of obtaining fuller information, we could very well wait until the Premier returns and informs the House of the various aspects of the problems that were discussed at the recent Canberra conference. I have been informed by prominent Government officials that when the Commonwealth Housing Commission visited Western Australia, full information was supplied regarding the position in this State. No doubt as the scheme proceeds we will gain from our experience. As to any suggestion of deplorable inactivity on the part of the Government, the member for Pingelly must realise that other Governments are concerned in the problem, which is not confined to this State. The subject was discussed at the recent conference, and no doubt much information was made available. The Leader of the Opposition suggested that the Premier should have submitted the whole matter to the House before he went to Canberra so as to be furnished with an expression of opinion by members of this Chamber. I cannot see much in that argument because any such housing scheme must depend upon the amount of money available, the number of homes that can be erected with the money

so provided, the quantities of material available, and the number of men that can take part in the work of construction.

While there is urgent need for a great many new houses, the Prime Minister has declared on many occasions that consideration of defence requirements must always be paramount. That must apply equally to matters affecting the rural areas which are interested in the release of more men for agricultural production. It is very hard to deal with such a question and to know exactly when the time is ripe for the release of men from the Army. We are still engaged in a vital struggle, and first things must come first. From the point of view of the release of manpower for food production and erection of houses, the Prime Minister will doubtless make a declaration in due course.

HON. H. MILLINGTON (Mt. Hawthorn—on amendment): The member for Pingelly certainly displayed a commendable thirst for knowledge regarding the subject he dealt with, but in view of what the Minister for Works has said, he was all too precipitate when he asserted that the State Government had been lax with regard to making inquiries respecting post-war housing matters to such a degree as to provide grounds for moving an amendment to the Address-in-reply. Early in the piece, before any other State Government or the Commonwealth Government had moved in connection with the problem, the Western Australian Government had taken action. A very competent committee was set up comprising departmental officers and some outside representatives, including builders. A report was also submitted to the Government. There is still something left to do before all the details are available. Although the Commonwealth and State Governments may agree as to the types of houses to be built—the types will, of course, have a distinct bearing upon the rents that will have to be charged—I remind the House that it is not either for the Commonwealth or the State Government to approve of the type of building permitted, because that is a matter for the local authority. After the scheme is arrived at in Canberra it does not follow that the type of house approved will be the type approved by the local authority.

Mr. Seward: We are told that the standard must be up to that of Victoria; why?

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: There are certain building by-laws and certain standards insisted on by local authorities. The local authority is the authority with respect to the type of house that is built. The local authority administers the building by-laws. If the proposal agreed upon by the Commonwealth and State Governments does not conform to those by-laws, either the law will have to be amended or the State or the Commonwealth will have to take power to over-ride the local authority; alternatively the local authority will have to agree to modify its building by-laws. Certainly, although it is possible to arrive at the type of house to be built or an estimate of the cost—the cost will be influenced by the height of the walls, the materials used in certain districts, etc.—everything will depend upon the permission of the local authority.

It is not possible to decide definitely as to the type of house or the rent to be charged until the third authority, the local authority, is consulted and comes into the picture. It is evident that the Commonwealth and the States have reached a position where they have agreed upon a certain scheme, but I do not think it follows that there will be a uniform type of house. There seems to be some fear that an inferior house will be built in the country, or that certain conditions are going to be imposed, and that all buildings erected during the post-war period will be subject to the supervision of the Commonwealth or the State. I point out that private enterprise will still be busy at work during the post-war period. It may be that permission will have to be given to private enterprise in respect to the materials used, but all the buildings that go up will not be erected under the supervision of either Commonwealth or State authorities.

Mr. Doney: Unless financial help is required.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: I do not know whether there has been a discussion on the question of the extent to which all these concessions that are to be given in the post-war period may not be completely out of step with existing conditions. The concessions will certainly give a very considerable advantage to those who build under the proposed scheme. I do not know whether private builders will be given any concessions. The Leader of the Opposition spoke of the remission of sales tax. In

South Australia, where the Government builds for rental purposes only, an advantage is gained by the remission of the sales tax. That could not be done under the post-war scheme unless the State or the Commonwealth Government built the houses for themselves. If people build their own houses there would be no prospect of their obtaining a remission of the sales tax. Whether the State erects the buildings the remission can be given and there would be a consequent advantage to those concerned. I think in South Australia the remission represents about £40 on a building, which means that the property can be let at so much less.

There is much to be said for the South Australian scheme, but I do not wish to deal with that now. In this State we were in advance of the other States and the Commonwealth. A full report has been placed before the Commonwealth Government. We were ready to discuss our scheme. There is no prospect of finalising it until it is agreed to by the Commonwealth and the States, and also discussed with the local authority in regard to the type of house. I cannot vote for the amendment, but I certainly commend the member for Pinnelly for his thirst for knowledge. I think all the knowledge requisite concerning the subject will be forthcoming as soon as the Premier returns, and I also think a very close examination will be made of the scheme by all those interested.

Amendment put and negatived.

MR. W. HEGNEY (Pilbara): I desire to congratulate members of the Ministry upon their re-election, and the member for North Fremantle upon his promotion to Cabinet rank. I also offer my congratulations to you, Mr. Speaker, upon your election to your high office, and to the new members who were elected at the last general election, and the member for Swan who was elected more recently. Furthermore, I congratulate the Leader of the Opposition and the leader of the National Party. The present indications are that they will hold their present positions for many years to come. I desire to touch upon one or two matters of importance to the Pilbara district. I feel that Ministers concerned will as soon as practicable give concrete replies to members' requests concerning urgent works in their districts. The first point I wish to stress is in connection

with hospital accommodation, and I was pleased to note on a recent visit to the district that the Public Works Department had commenced operations in connection with the erection of new nurses' quarters.

The Minister for Mines: To which hospital are you referring?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: To that of Marble Bar. When the position is such that the work can be carried out, I think a new hospital should be built at Marble Bar, because of the great importance of that place as a mining and pastoral centre. The position from the military point of view is such that I think the Port Hedland hospital will shortly be handed over to the State Health Department. That will prove of great benefit to the local people. In support of the remarks of the member for Roebourne, I point out to the Minister for Works how essential it is that a vigorous policy in connection with road construction should be undertaken throughout the North-West.

Through the activities and efforts of North-West members generally some years ago the Commonwealth Government was induced to put the main Meekatharra-Marble Bar road into a reasonable condition in view of the great defence activities in that area. I understand that for some hundreds of miles in the Northern Territory a bitumen road has been laid down. The road to which I particularly referred is the main artery for the North-West. I see no reason why, as part of the State road construction programme, a permanent road should not be established and permanent concrete crossings constructed on it. The Commissioner for Main Roads was in the area some time ago, and the departmental engineers have frequently traversed it. I hope some definite indication will shortly be submitted by the Minister for Works as to the policy to be adopted in regard to road construction in the North-West.

Another matter that calls for serious attention in the post-war period is that of water supplies. The actual position in the Port Hedland district is that the local scheme, from which the water is not fit for drinking, is in bad condition owing to the corrosion of the pipes. For some time past the Public Works Department has endeavoured to obtain the requisite pipes so that the main may be put right and relaid throughout the town. I understand that the

pipes will be in Port Hedland by the middle of September. I hope that is so and that the Minister for the North-West will give the necessary co-operation to see that this work is carried out. The supply of drinking water is drawn from a spot some 20 miles north of Port Hedland and brought in by railway trucks. The people have to pay 3s. 6d. per hundred gallons for it. I am not criticising the department, because I know it is doing all it can to alleviate the position. This, however, is an indication of the problems that affect certain north-west towns, and that is why it has been brought forward.

So far as mining is concerned—it has of course suffered as a result of the war—I am pleased to note that good results are now being obtained from the Pilbara mineral field. Men are now engaged in the district winning tantalite, antimony, asbestos and beryl. In the southern portion of my electorate large deposits of ferric-oxide have been found. This has been classed by the Commonwealth Government as a strategic mineral. A good many men are working on these deposits. Incidentally, a request has been submitted to the Public Works Department for the construction of a road into the ranges for the benefit of those concerned. The only point I wish to make in regard to goldmining is that the district is an ideal one for men who desire to engage after the war in prospecting.

I believe that gold will maintain its position after the war and that the Government prospecting scheme, which was inaugurated some years ago, could with advantage be extended to this particular field. I have no doubt that numbers of responsible men, men of good judgment and ability, will be glad to take part in the scheme, and would give the Government the best that was in them. I am sure there would be no lead-swinging in connection with their operations. I trust that something will be done in this direction. In furtherance of the wishes of miners in the district I urge upon the Minister for Mines to give serious consideration to the appointment of a workmen's inspector. There are sufficient men working at Wodgina, Strelley, Blue Spec and Marble Bar in the Roebourne district to warrant the appointment of an inspector to be stationed in the district.

I regret to say that, so far as the pastoral industry is concerned, the Pilbara district has been the driest of all the pastoral areas in the State. In normal times the pastoralists there regard as their rainy season the months from November to April, but the rain has been conspicuous by its absence for a considerable time, with resulting losses of stock. Owing to the dry season, dingoes have been prevalent. One sheep station between Nullagine and Roy Hill has lost many sheep owing to the depredations of dingoes; while two out of every three sheep shorn on the station since June last were dog-marked. That is not an isolated instance. Other sheepowners in the district have been troubled by the dogs, which have inflicted great losses upon the flocks. Cattle owners have not been able to bring their cattle down to the railhead at Meekatharra on account of the lack of feed. Altogether, the pastoralists are experiencing an exceedingly lean time. Nevertheless, they still exhibit the pioneer spirit; they are optimists and are looking forward to the time when good seasons will return. I know that the State Government and particularly the Minister for Lands are awake to the financial hardships of our pastoralists; anything that can be done to alleviate their position will be greatly appreciated. I am aware that the voluntary scheme, which has been in operation for some time, has worked to the benefit of many pastoralists, but if the present drought continues it may be necessary for the Commonwealth Government to co-operate with the State Government in this matter.

I have no great criticism to offer either of the Commonwealth or the State Government for their treatment of my electorate. I am one who believes in criticising where criticism is warranted, but the general condition of the people in the electorate could have been very much worse. The Emergency Reserve Stocks Committee has done everything possible to ensure that supplies of foodstuffs, which are not available in Perth, are sent to the North-West, for the obvious reason that the people there cannot obtain the substitutes which are available in the metropolitan area. When dried fruit is released for civilians, the North-West district is given preference. That is understandable, because the residents there cannot obtain supplies of fresh fruit which is available to the people of the metropolis from 6s. to 7s. per

case. Should fresh fruit be sent to the North-West, the cost of it to the residents there is about four times its cost in the district where it is produced.

When the rationing scheme was first introduced, the members for the four North-West constituencies interviewed the Rationing Commission and urged upon it the advisability of not imposing the rationing scheme north of the 26th parallel of latitude. However, this was not done and the same ration of tea and sugar was given to the people in the North as elsewhere, of course owing to the circumstances prevailing at the time. I am pleased to state now that as the result of further representations made to the Rationing Commission some time ago and in view of the improvement in the position generally, the Commonwealth Government, through that commission, has increased the ration of tea and sugar by 50 per cent. to the residents north of the 26th parallel of latitude.

Another question upon which I wish to touch, because it is uppermost in the minds of the workers in my electorate, is that of the taxation of district allowances. Workers in those areas receive an industry allowance of 15s. and a district allowance of 15s. Other awards or agreements provide for a district allowance of 30s. Members of the Police Force, as well as public servants, both Commonwealth and State, receive district allowances. These are paid for special reasons which I do not propose to discuss at the moment because members are conversant with them. But the point is that the district allowances are subject to taxation; they must be included as income in a person's return. Not only are they subject to taxation, but they increase the aggregate income of the worker, with the result that the rate of the tax is far more severe than would otherwise be the case. Strong reasons can be advanced to the Commonwealth Government to ease this position.

I draw attention to the fact that members of the Military Forces stationed in the North, after serving for some 10 or 12 months, have their passage paid to the south so that they may recuperate during their leave. In the district which I represent, and further north and south, there are men who, with their wives and children, should be enabled to proceed to Perth, or at least Geraldton, every two years for recuperative purposes.

Even in normal times it would cost a man with a wife and two children at least £50 for fares alone to proceed to Perth for medical attention. As a matter of fact, some of the residents travel from Marble Bar by truck to Meekatharra. This occupies four days. They then spend two nights on the train journeying to Perth, and one must bear in mind that the return journey occupies the same time. Liberal concessions should be granted to people living in these outback districts and I consider some relief should be afforded them from the incidence of taxation.

Many of these people are forced to travel to Perth for dental treatment. I hope the time is not far distant when the Minister for Health will give favourable consideration either to the appointment of a travelling dentist or to the stationing of a dentist in some convenient North-West town. Such a dentist would be a great draw to the people.

The Minister for Mines: Hear, hear!

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I wish to make brief reference to a suggestion made during the course of this debate by one or two members, the member for Murray-Wellington and other speakers on the Opposition side. They suggested the appointment of committees to advise Ministers on certain matters. I am one who believes in majority rule. The members on the Government side of the House have selected the Ministry after exhaustive ballots and I congratulate each member of the Cabinet on his appointment. The appointments were made in no different way from that obtaining elsewhere. In theory the appointment of such committees to advise Ministers sounds all right, but in practice I do not think the scheme would work.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: It does in other countries.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: Just imagine a committee of the member for Bunbury and the member for Albany advising the Minister for Works on harbour facilities, or a committee of the member for Murray-Wellington and the member for Canning advising the Minister for Lands upon the acquisition of a certain property for closer settlement! It is rightly said that in a multitude of counsellors there is wisdom; but it is also rightly said that too many cooks spoil the broth. In the final analysis, of whom would the Minister take notice? If I were acting in a responsible position I would either do

the job myself or get out. Since I have been a member of this House I have on many occasions discussed various matters affecting my electorate, as well as matters of policy, with Ministers. I have put forward arguments and advanced my reasons why certain things should be done, and there is nothing to prevent any other member of the House from adopting such a course. If there is any substance in what a member puts forward I have no doubt a Minister would support it. But committees of members from both sides of the House formed to advise a Minister on a point of policy, or upon administration, would not get us anywhere.

I wish now to deal with another matter, and I shall say a word in favour of those civil servants whom some members of Parliament and many of the public regard as bureaucrats. I believe in speaking of things as I find them. Before being elected to Parliament, I had much to do with civil servants and since being a member have had much more to do with civil servants, both Commonwealth and State. On every occasion I have always been treated by them with the utmost consideration and courtesy. I have interviewed the Manpower Department, the Pensions Department, the Postmaster General's Department, the Department of Supply and Shipping, the Rationing Department, the Emergency Stocks Committee, the Customs Department, and the Taxation Department, and have always received the greatest courtesy. I have had many discussions with officers in the Mines Department, the various branches of the Works Department, the Medical and Health Department, the Naval authorities and the Railway Department. These are the main departments with which I have had business and I can say sincerely that the officers have always been courteous and helpful to me. Of course, I always had something reasonable to place before them. I do not know what has been the experience of other members, but that has been my experience. I have received the courtesy and civility which cost nothing. I think it appropriate to express this word of appreciation, just as I think it right to voice my condemnation should that be necessary.

Mr. Watts: We are all in the same boat.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I desire to make brief reference to the result of the Referendum,

not for the purpose of holding any post-mortem but merely to state that it is pleasing indeed to know that the people of Western Australia passed a very different verdict on the 19th August from that which they passed on the 8th April, 1933, when by an almost two to one majority they voted in favour of secession from the Commonwealth. On the present occasion, the majority of the people showed that they were broadminded enough to look at the problem from the Australian standpoint rather than allow their vision to be obscured by the rabbit-proof fence at Burracoppin. I think it will be agreed that it is a great pity to find so much lack of knowledge amongst so many of the people concerning the set-up of the Commonwealth and State Governments. I have spoken to quite a number of men and women on this matter. Some of them have passed the Leaving examination and have actually been to the University. It was astounding, therefore, to find the ignorance displayed about the main provisions of the Commonwealth and State Constitutions.

Our education has been improved upon for some years, yet men and women of middle age—and this applied irrespective of party political beliefs—actually asked on one occasion whether what was being held was a municipal election or a Legislative Council election, and why the names of certain candidates were not on the "How to Vote" cards. To say the least of it, that is a reflection on our educational system and the time has arrived when due regard should be paid to the introduction into the schools of simple lessons on how the Parliaments of the States and Commonwealth are constituted, and what are the rights and obligations of adult citizens, so that when the future voters of this State come to take their part in the government of the country they will be able to exercise an intelligent decision no matter what may be their beliefs and opinions. I hope the time is not far distant when it will be an absolute insult for any enthusiast from any party to offer an elector a "How to Vote" card. At present there are numbers of people who look for "How to Vote" cards. True, they generally know whether they want to vote Labour or anti-Labour, but, so far as preferential voting is concerned, they disclose a deplorable ignorance of the position.

Quite a number who, I should say, have had a reasonable education, still ask where they should put the numerals. My experience in regard to the last campaign prompts me to suggest that the Minister for Education and his executive officers might give consideration to the question of introducing into schools those lessons to which I referred, because if we are going to exist and to continue as a democracy we must have an enlightened democracy, and the people of this country should be able to exercise their rights intelligently, which they will not be able to do unless they know the basic principles of the government of the country. I believe, and have said in this Chamber previously, that at the earliest possible moment after the war a convention of representatives of the States and the Commonwealth should be held. I would not confine representation to political parties. I would include such organisations as the Australian Labour Party, recognised employers' organisations, institutions like the Australian Natives' Association, and other bodies.

The more comprehensive and the wider the representation the more hope would we have of achieving some definite understanding between the Commonwealth and the State on the relationship between the two authorities, and the powers that each should exercise. I think that will be generally agreed, and I hope the time is not far distant when such a convention will be held and the misunderstanding and duplication between the States and Commonwealth will be removed. It will be admitted that the Commonwealth must have certain power, for a period after the war in any event, to deal with the problem of employment and unemployment and with the control, from a Commonwealth point of view, of prices of building materials, foodstuffs, and other commodities. In this regard the people will have to be protected from exploiters who will make their appearance if the present restrictions and controls are removed overnight.

I am in somewhat of a quandary and I think we should have some light thrown on the position relating to the alteration of the name of one of our political parties. We have a new party in this House. From the 1st August, I believe, there has been a party known as the Country and Democratic League. The members now sitting as

the official Opposition were known as the Country Party. For some reason, from the 1st August, they have been known as the Country and Democratic League. I understood from their ideas and expressions over the years that they constituted a democratic party, but now we find that they have tacked the words "and Democratic" to their official name. It was noticed that they waited until the November election was over, and then for reasons best known to themselves added that very fine word to their designation. In their objectives is one in which they decline to coalesce with any other party.

The history of this party, federally and otherwise, demonstrates that when there was an opportunity to keep Labour out of office this refusal to coalesce was thrown overboard, and I have no doubt that if the time comes again—which is unlikely for many years—that the Opposition parties combined have a majority over the Labour Party, this decision not to coalesce will be forgotten. They have a long way to go in this connection before they catch up on the National Party. My first knowledge of the National Party goes back to the days when they were known as the Whigs and the Tories. Since then we find the National Party known as the Liberals, the Anti-Socialists and eventually, in the Federal sphere, the United Australia Party—and I believe that party has changed its name now to the Liberal Nationalist Party. In Western Australia it is known as the National Party. I propose to concentrate for the moment on the Country Party, more particularly in view of the recent unwarranted criticism of the Premier. I have here a newspaper extract of the report of the Primary Producers' Association's conference. The report states—

Following its exclusion yesterday from further connection with the Primary Producers' Association, the political section of the association which sponsors and includes the members of the Country Party formed itself into a new political organisation with a new constitution and a new name.

That sounds familiar. The report continues—

Opening the conference, the retiring president (Mr. P. D. Ferguson) reviewed the results of the Federal and State elections and expressed the opinion that the failure of so many non-Labour candidates was due largely to: *Discord in the ranks of the non-Labour parties;*

the domestic quarrel in the W.A. National Party in connection with endorsements for the Senate team; and the dramatic refusal on the hustings of Mr. Menzies to support the taxation proposals of the then Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Fadden). "The political section is vitally interested in the proposed amalgamation of existing producers' organisations, which is being canvassed by members of both bodies, and which it is devoutly to be hoped will be brought about," Mr. Ferguson continued, "but the future of the Country Party as the political mouthpiece of the rural residents of the State should not be overlooked. Should the Country Party, by any action of members of existing organisations in the interests of amalgamation, become a weakened and emaciated body, incapable of discharging the particular function for which it was created, namely, to look after the legislative interests of country people, the last state of these people will be worse than the first."

The president of the association is reported as follows:—

There is a tide in the affairs of political parties which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune.

Mr. Needham: Is that original?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: The report continues:

It is felt by your executive that there never was a time more opportune than the present for the launching of a bigger and wider political movement in this State. Many thousands of electors not supporters of the Labour Party are looking to this organisation for a lead in the direction I have indicated.

The first resolution carried by delegates was as follows:—

After August 1st, 1944, this political party shall be known as the Country and Democratic League of Western Australia.

One of its objects is that it shall not coalesce with any other political party in the formation of a government. I now turn to the left wing of the primary producers. The organisation known as the Wheat and Woolgrowers' Union has something to say. This body recently held its conference. The general president of that union, I should say, is a broadminded farmer. He mentioned the resolution of the P.P.A. to amalgamate with the Wheat and Woolgrowers' Union. The newspaper report of the conference is as follows:—

The chairman (Mr. J. Watson) briefly reminded delegates that there was a desire for closer unity of farmers throughout the State which had been demonstrated by spontaneous meetings in various parts of the country. Better organisation was demanded by all such meetings, he said, and most of them favoured amalgamation of the union with the wheat and wool sections of the P.P.A. On the other

hand the P.P.A. itself favoured the formation of all primary producers into one organisation. The association claimed to have been generous because it had given away its political section. "Actually it has dispensed with a corpse and it is glad to have got rid of it," he added. "The amalgamation question must be given a clear and unambiguous answer."

The position we find is that the Wheat and Woolgrowers' Union, which is the official organisation of the wheatgrowers of this State, has the idea that the Country Party—it is now the Country and Democratic League—is now a corpse and that the Primary Producers' Association is glad to be rid of it. The chief spokesman for this corpse is making an unbridled attack on the Premier, and says that he has lost interest in the affairs of the State. I would like to read this recent extract from "The West Australian"—

The Premier has made it quite clear that he has lost all interest in his job and is content, whatever the verdict, to remain a "Yec" man to Canberra. The present Government obviously does not want to carry out its obligations to this State, and many people are wondering if it would not be better to grant Canberra greater powers.

As a matter of fact, I received a letter quite recently from a friend of mine in the wheatbelt. He says:—

Dear Bill: The great majority of people are, I think, satisfied the Premier is doing a good job, and the Avon by-election result indicates this.

The Government is anxious to fulfil its obligations to the State, and many people are wondering how it is that the Country Party lost only two seats at the elections.

The reason that I have referred to this particularly is that the Premier has demonstrated political honesty in regard to his activities in connection with the Referendum. In November, 1942, he went to the conference convened by the Attorney General and the Prime Minister. As a result of that convention unanimous agreement was arrived at in regard to certain proposals which eventually found their way into this Chamber. They were subsequently dealt with in another place and eventually the Bill, as amended by the other place, was passed here. However, the Commonwealth Government could not see eye to eye with the multiplicity of proposals referred to it by the State Parliaments in the form of Acts. The Commonwealth Government, therefore, decided to take a Referendum.

The Premier, I remind members, demonstrated political honesty rather than politi-

cal hypocrisy. He stood four square to the agreement arrived at during the course of the Canberra convention. As a member of this Chamber and a citizen of the Commonwealth I express my appreciation of the Premier's action in adopting the attitude he did. I hope that the matter of the alteration of the name of the Country Party will in due course be explained by the persons responsible. I have no doubt that, as far as refusing to coalesce with any other body is concerned, it will not hesitate to do as it has done in the past in combining to slash wages and cut down the working conditions of the people of this country. I come now to a subject which I know is very contentious. It is referred to in His Excellency's Speech.

I am pleased to note that efforts will be made this session to liberalise the franchise of the Legislative Council, and I understand that the amendments will be in the direction of providing for the adult franchise and the abolition of plural voting. Previously in this Chamber I have referred to the question of altering the Council franchise, and I think we should focus the attention of the people on the lack of democratic principle that dominates the constitution of the Council. It is supposed to be a House of review and we are often reminded that it is not a party Chamber. I speak subject to correction, but believe I am right in saying that certain members of another place have been members of the executive of the National Party. Consequently when it is given out that the Council is a non-party Chamber and only a House of review, it is stretching the truth a little too far. It is actually a restricted party House, and only one-third of the people entitled to vote for the Assembly are entitled to vote for the Council. Men who have seen service oversea and in New Guinea, even those who come back maimed and are entitled to a vote for the Assembly are not entitled to a vote for the Council.

Timber workers rearing large families in the South-West, because they pay less than about 8s. a week for rent, are deemed unfit to have a vote for the Legislative Council. According to the Speech all that will be sought is some radical amendment of the franchise. A report of the political conference of the Primary Producers' Association published in "The Primary Producer" in August, 1941, stated that "the Legislative Council should be abolished as it is unde-

mocratic, totally unnecessary, and such action would prove an economic saving." Some time ago the Wheatgrowers' Union Conference—I am not referring to the latest conference—decided practically unanimously in favour of the abolition of the Legislative Council. Perhaps the present conference re-affirmed that resolution.

The Legislative Council is in the position of being able to reject any measure dealing with its own Constitution. Constitutionally it is the captain of its soul, but, although its head remains unbowed under the ineffective bludgeonings that have been directed against it, there is such a thing as carrying privilege too far, and the time has arrived when more than one-third of the people entitled to vote for this House should have a say in the election of the Council. When the Minister introduces the Bill in this Chamber, I hope it will receive a speedy passage and that it will be given favourable consideration in another place. That, however, remains to be seen.

The Minister for Mines: You are optimistic.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I propose to deal briefly with a matter of concern to thousands of men of this State whom steps will be taken to assist on their return to peacetime occupations. It is pleasing to note that there is co-operation between the State and the Commonwealth. The Speech makes reference to co-operation in the matter of the State placing at the disposal of the Commonwealth facilities for technical education. Some thousands of service personnel have already been trained and many thousands more will require to be trained for the purposes of peace. The machinery is in operation and provision is made that returned men in certain categories will be entitled to be trained under the scheme. The categories briefly are—

Men or women who—

Have been prevented by wartime incapacity from returning to their pre-war occupations;

Enlisted on or before their 21st birthday;

Require a short refresher course;

Want to complete a full-time course which was interrupted by war service or was contemplated before enlistment;

Displayed conspicuous ability during service;

Were self-employed before enlistment and are unable to resume their former job, or who have vocational skill now in over-supply.

Already a number is being trained in the Technical School and committees will be set up representative of unions and employers in particular industries, with an independent chairman, to assess periodically the ability or degree of proficiency of the trainee. I am glad that the unions covering the skilled trades have demonstrated their willingness to co-operate in every possible way in the training of ex-service men, and they are anxious that in the process of training these men should receive at the hands of employers that degree of tuition and attention necessary to turn them out as competent and skilled tradesmen. While they are being trained reasonable allowances will be paid to them to enable them to carry on until they are able to earn 100 per cent. tradesmen's wages. One of the main categories of workers involved will be the young men who joined the various branches of the service at the age of 18 years. Members will realise that numbers of these young men had had no experience in any branch of industry, and it is the duty of the country to see that they are given a reasonable chance on discharge to rehabilitate themselves in civil life. After the 1914-18 war the number who went through a training course in Australia was 15,350 including 1,425 in Western Australia. Under the professional scheme 1,424 were trained in Australia, including 61 in Western Australia.

I wish briefly to touch on the question of rural reconstruction, and commend the report of the Rural Reconstruction Commission, of which the Minister for Lands is chairman, to every member who has not read it. It is the result of very close consideration of the whole problem. One of the keynotes of the report is that the Commonwealth and State Governments should avoid the pitfalls and grievous mistakes made in connection with land settlement after the 1914-18 war. It deals with the allocation of suitable blocks of land and the selection of the right types of prospective settler, not necessarily those who have never been on the land before. All the circumstances should be taken into account. If the Commonwealth and States follow out largely the recommendations of the Commission I believe that the scheme of settling suitable returned men on the land will meet with a large measure of success.

As regards housing, I hope everything possible will be done.

I am of opinion that in the post-war years the responsible authorities must give consideration to the question of housing in country towns, and also for primary producers. Undoubtedly in past years the conditions of primary producers have not been what they ought to be. Certainly if we are to progress as we should in Western Australia, we must adopt a policy of affording every encouragement not only to keeping on the land men who are now there but also to inducing young people to follow rural employment. Oliver Goldsmith wrote—

Princes and Lords may flourish and may fade;
A breath can make them, as a breath has made;
But a bold peasantry, its country's pride,
When once destroyed can never be supplied.

Those lines convey a great deal to this State of Western Australia. Anything this State Government and the Commonwealth Government can do to ensure that the primary producers are given reasonable opportunities and guaranteed reasonable prices for their products, will be for the good of this country as a whole.

It may be a matter of some interest to members representing rural constituencies to know that some time ago an enthusiastic representative of the National Service Office, which looks after the employment of boys, was instrumental in initiating a scheme for the training of lads on farms. Up to the time of my inquiries about 16 boys had been placed with certain farmers, and agreements—if they can be called agreements rather than the basis of agreements—arrived at whereby selected lads are to be placed with approved farmers and go through a three-years course. They are to be paid 30s. a week to start with, and will receive progressive six-monthly increases. They will be required to pass the Junior or some other appropriate test, and furthermore to take correspondence courses with approved technical colleges. From what I have been able to gather, there is no doubt that numerous farmers are willing to accept boys for training. If the scheme develops, it will assuredly work for the benefit and progress of Western Australia as a whole.

My concluding remarks will deal with the question of education generally. I would like the Minister at the earliest possible

moment to let this House know when it will be practicable to implement the Act raising the school-leaving age to 15 years. Incidentally may I express the hope that the time is not far distant when we shall pass an amending measure providing for a minimum of 16 years' schooling. Certainly the Act already on the Statute-book should be proclaimed as speedily as possible. There is the question of accommodation and equipment to be dealt with by the Government, and I trust that some definite announcement in that regard will be made shortly. Further, I should like some information regarding what is proposed as to future activities of the State agricultural colleges under the joint jurisdiction of the Education and Agricultural Departments. I would be glad to learn whether it is thought that there will be sufficient agricultural instructors and sufficient other teachers available in the early post-war period for the training of the ex-servicemen to whom I have referred and also to allow of the effective tuition of the added number of children who will be attending schools by virtue of the proclamation of the Act which I have mentioned.

I trust that as time goes on the war position will improve still further, and that very soon after the war in Europe is over there will be a declaration of peace throughout the universe, and that, in spite of all our differences of opinion in this as in every other Australian Chamber, we shall do our utmost to further the best interests of our country, in an endeavour to make Australia even a better place than it was before the war. In this connection may I quote in conclusion an extract from a speech by one of the most famous of Englishmen, John Bright. He said—

I believe there is no permanent greatness in a nation except it is based on morality. I do not care for military renown; I care for the condition of the people among whom I live; crowns, coronets, mitres, military displays, wide colonies and a huge empire are in my view all "trifles light as air" and not worth considering unless with them you can have a fair share of comfort, contentment and happiness among the great body of the people. Palaces, stately halls and great mansions do not make a nation. The nation, in every country, dwells in the cottage.

MR. HOLMAN (Forrest): First of all I wish to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your continued occupancy of the Chair, and also to congratulate the member for North-East Fremantle on his elevation to Minis-

terial rank. I believe that in the member for North-East Fremantle we have an excellent Minister whose previous experience should augur well for the progress of education in Western Australia. I desire likewise to offer my congratulations to new members elected to the Chamber. In fact, I almost feel as if I, too, were a new member, having been absent for the past three years on active service. I also desire to offer to Ministers and members of my party thanks for the manner in which they assisted my electorate during my absence. Incidentally, I should also acknowledge the goodwill of both of the parties sitting in Opposition during that period. We find that the war outlook is now very much brighter. Indeed, the successes of the Allies have been spectacular. With these successes we find ourselves getting much closer to the post-war period. We have heard a great deal as to post-war housing this evening, and that of course is only one phase of post-war reconstruction.

We should acknowledge the invaluable services that have been rendered to this country by the Fighting Forces. I am sure that every member of this House, as well as every member of the Western Australian public, fully realises the value of the services rendered by the men and women who have come to aid this State and the Commonwealth in general. For that reason it should not be difficult to extend to the men and women of the Fighting Forces a due meed of gratitude in the service we can render to them, as legislators for the post-war period. This State has the highest enlistment figures and because of that fact will probably have the greatest job, in proportion, of all the States with respect to the rehabilitation of its servicemen and servicewomen. We read recently in "The West Australian" newspaper an acknowledgment by the Prime Minister to this effect. He suggested we should explore further avenues for the expenditure of, I think, some £10,000,000 extra in the provision of employment for these men and women and submit plans for proposed public works and other schemes to absorb them in the demobilisation period. Whilst we are planning for the post-war period we must not forget the work immediately before us. Men and women are being discharged from the Services and, judging by expressions of opinion, they are not being treated as they

ought to be. I will cite one particular case to which publicity has been given—I say one case, but there are others. This ex-soldier was a miner and desired to better himself. He therefore applied under the rehabilitation scheme for training in a certain trade, but the authorities referred the matter back saying that the occupational background of the soldier did not warrant his taking the course applied for. He was consequently thrown back on to the mining industry for employment. That is not the spirit which should animate those responsible for the rehabilitation of our soldiers in civil life.

A few weeks ago while I was in my electorate, two discharged soldiers at one of the mill centres interviewed me and asked what I could do for them. They are miners. Unlike the other ex-soldier of whom I spoke, they wished to return to their former calling, but nevertheless they were placed in the timber industry. It seems odd that these discharged men should have to accept employment they do not desire while the other soldier was not given the opportunity to acquire a trade which he wished to follow. Many servicemen of course have taken advantage of the educational facilities provided by the Army and have been successful. One member of the 2/28th Battalion, who was a prospector on his enlistment at 19 years of age, is now a qualified accountant and auditor. He secured top marks for the State. That is the other side of the picture. We should see that this rehabilitation scheme is carried out in its entirety and that every ex-serviceman is given the greatest opportunity possible not only to secure employment but to better himself.

I was indeed sorry to note from the Press that at the recent Premiers' Conference a disagreement had arisen between the States and the Commonwealth with respect to soldier land settlement and that the matter had been deferred. The point that strikes me is that servicemen are now being discharged and have in their possession their deferred pay. They must do something in order to live in the meantime and the longer the authorities procrastinate the greater will be the tendency for their deferred pay to disappear. I will cite the case of an ex-service officer who wished to take up a holding in Denmark. Because there was no soldier land settlement scheme in operation he applied to the Agricultural Bank for assistance, but the bank consid-

ered that he had not sufficient capital to enable him to take up the holding. He was therefore knocked back, to use the vernacular, simply because he had not enough capital. In every other respect he was fully qualified to take up the holding. It is cases such as this that make me regret the scheme has had to be deferred.

We should take the soldier land settlement scheme very seriously. Probably that is one of the reasons why it has been deferred. We do not want to make the same mistakes that were made after the 1914-18 war. I recently made a tour of the South-West with the Federal Minister for Commerce and Agriculture, Mr. Scully. We were met by various representative bodies in the district, one of which was very much concerned about the trials and tribulations of the soldiers who were settled on the land in that district after the previous war. The members of that organisation wished to spare our present servicemen that unfortunate experience. It is unthinkable that we should settle men on the land and then hang a burden of debt around their neck. I was pleased to hear my colleague, the member for Nelson, stress this matter in his maiden speech. Something that must be decided upon now is that each settler should have a sufficient equity in his holding when he takes it up and not many years afterwards. This matter was discussed during the recent Premiers' Conference.

Obviously allied to this is the matter of closer settlement. This particular phase was mentioned in a speech I made in this Chamber five years ago. I then pointed out that there were large holdings in the South-West which should be split up so as to provide closer settlement. There are large holdings that are not being utilised by the people that have control of them.

Mr. Doney: What class of land is that?

Mr. HOLMAN: It is real, first-class land in the South-West, some in the irrigation areas. I was pleased to hear the views of Mr. Scully on this matter when he stated at Busselton:—

Many areas held by large companies are lying idle and are strangling the development of rich districts and towns. These companies cannot continue to hold these areas if they are required for national purposes. For a proper scheme of soldiers' settlements, many of these large areas will have to be resumed for closer settlement. I will not stand for the treatment which the soldiers received after the last war, particularly when such settlement schemes as

were carried out frequently did not give them one chance in a hundred of success.

This is a field that would materially assist in the rehabilitation of our soldier settlers. No doubt that field has been explored by our own Minister for Lands. I sincerely hope so because the Government expends a tremendous amount of money in the betterment of such areas. If such land as I have mentioned is not utilised to its fullest extent the Government should take it over and see that it is utilised and so justify the expenditure of the taxpayers' money. When considering closer settlement in the South-West and soldier settlement schemes we must seriously think of the proposed South-West power scheme. This is undoubtedly an added incentive to the Electricity Advisory Committee to bring forward a report recommending the scheme.

At this juncture I would pay a tribute to the local governing bodies and other associations and to various individuals in the South-West and elsewhere for the trouble they have gone to in connection with this very commendable scheme and for the evidence they have submitted to the Advisory Committee. We want to see this scheme carried into effect and not postponed any longer. Wrapped up in that project is the future of the whole of the South-West. We can visualise the expansion of secondary industries in that particular area and the better living conditions and essential comforts for the people that such a scheme would produce. It is no use speaking or thinking of sending our people into the South-West unless we are going to treat them as human beings. In the metropolitan area, if the lights go off for about half an hour there is panic, but most people in the South-West have to live under archaic conditions in respect of lighting. In this enlightened age we should not talk of how much a scheme would cost, but of how much it would benefit the State and what good it would do to the inhabitants of that particular area which is producing so much for the State.

The South-West at present is developed only about 10 per cent. and we must take that into consideration. I am sorry to bore members by mentioning the Federal Minister for Commerce and Agriculture so much, but I was very pleased to be with him and to be able to show him our great South-West. He was astounded at the

possibilities of that part of the country. He publicly stated that it was equal to if not better than the north coast of New South Wales, which, I believe, is the most fertile part of that State. He said also that it was equal to any other land he had seen in the whole of Australia. I venture to say that if he had finished what was in his mind he would have said, "and the least developed." Strangely enough, only because we have been going through a period of war, we have a certain amount of development taking place down there. The dehydration not only of apples, but also of potatoes and cabbages and the production of apple juice from fruit in the Donnybrook district, have been of great assistance to the Fighting Forces. Very little of the dehydrated fruit and the fruit juice is being used by the civilian population. The dehydrated fruit is used by the Forces and the apple juice is exported for the Allied Services.

Mr. Hill: Where do the apples come from?

Mr. HOLMAN: Donnybrook.

Mr. Hill: And quite a lot from the Kalgan.

Mr. HOLMAN: That shows the further possibilities of the dehydration plant at Donnybrook.

Mr. Hill: How about one down our end?

Mr. HOLMAN: I am not robbing the people there of any praise, either. I believe four plants are in existence and all are doing a magnificent job. There is room for more. I believe that next year practically all the crops could be treated by that factory. We must think of the transition period when we will no longer have the market of the Fighting Services and when that product will have to be put on the market for civilians.

The Minister for Mines: That is when we will have a look in.

Mr. HOLMAN: That will be the testing time of new secondary industries. The experimental period of secondary industries in the South-West has shown very clearly that if secondary industries are to be developed they must be very closely allied to our primary industries. We can cite flax which is a comparatively new primary industry. Investigations have already been made into the possibilities of opening up a flax weaving industry because of the good quality of the flax produced

in this State. That is another possible secondary industry. First we have the fruit, and then the flax, and we already have the industries dependent on the dairy industry. As a result I say that before opening up any new secondary industries we should look closely into these, because Western Australia is first and foremost a primary industry State.

I listened to the member for Pilbara when he was advocating the tutoring of lads for farm work. That is a good idea. We should make them land-minded, if possible, but while doing that we should give to them the best possible conditions. His remarks brought to my mind a school which I visited whilst with the A.I.F. in Palestine. It is a girls' agricultural college. This may be a good thought for the Minister for Agriculture to bear in mind. I had the opportunity to visit this college which is something different from what we have here. Our agricultural colleges deal mainly with boys. The only institution I know of that has anything to do with the tutoring of girls is the Fairbridge Farm School, which does a very fine job. As a result of my visit to this school in Palestine—it was a Jewish school—I was amazed at the possibilities of educating girls to be land-minded. Such young ladies would probably become very good wives and useful help-mates to farmer-husbands.

The extent of the area dealt with by this particular college is only 100 acres, and 135 girls ranging from 15 to 20 years of age are educated there. They do all the work on the farm with the exception of the heavy manual work. I saw only one male in the precincts of the college. The girls do everything from the actual farming to the cooking. They even make their shoes and boots—not mend them, but make them! It is not uncommon when walking around the buildings to hear someone whistling and, on looking up, to see not a lad setting bricks on an outhouse, but one of these girls. I am not advocating hard work for ladies, but this is an eye-opener as to what can be done in the land education of our womenfolk. Dairy farmers, wheat farmers and settlers in other branches of the primary industries have taken unto themselves wives. Their choice of a wife has not always been a girl who has been dairy-trained, or raised on some other type of farm, but is frequently someone from the

city. That girl is taken into a totally different environment.

Even a farm girl who marries a farmer has not the same advantage that these girls have who are educated at this agricultural college. During her first year each girl has to go through every course, whether it be on the farm, in the vegetable garden, looking after the cows, in the kitchen, in the boot-making shop, or in any other phase of the college activity. But after the first year she is allowed to make her choice, and then become a specialist in the particular branch that she chooses. As a result, there are specialists in dairy farming and in orcharding, because a quarter of the acreage is under citrus growth, and marvellous growth too. Others become specialists in domestic science, or whatever other subject they might choose. In addition, each girl has a grip of every section. Nothing is done haphazardly. Everything is treated scientifically.

One girl was sent from the college to a university where she took an agricultural degree. She, in turn, passed on that knowledge to other girls. Every inch of the soil is scientifically tested before being utilised. The results achieved are indeed marvellous. The dairy farm is an object lesson to dairy farmers. The cows are a mixture of Friesian and Syrian, and are hand-fed, because of the small acreage. Cut citrus fruits are mixed in the feed, and the cows are milked three times a day. I commend consideration of this college to the Minister for Agriculture. It is a new method by which we could probably educate the younger people of our State to assist in the expansion of our primary industries. The farm is self-supporting. Members can imagine 100 acres supporting 135 girls and the staff.

Mr. J. Hegney: Did they get good production from milking the cows three times a day?

Mr. HOLMAN: Yes.

Mr. McLarty: We do not want that introduced here. Twice is enough.

Mr. HOLMAN: Our timber industry has experienced a flourishing period throughout this war as distinct from the last. I give due credit to the co-operation that has existed between the State and the Commonwealth Governments in this respect. I also wish to thank the Minister for Industrial Development for the experiments that have been carried out in connection with the by-products of the timber industry. That is a

point I brought out in my maiden speech in this House. There were so many hundred by-products that could be exploited and we were then only dealing with about three or four. Since then we have gone a step further, but there are still great possibilities that have not been exploited and, I presume to say, have not even been thought of in connection with post-war development. I hope this matter will be attended to.

Mr. Doney: What are the ones that have not been thought of?

Mr. HOLMAN: An American publication issued a list, but unfortunately I have not brought it with me. The programme of building wooden ships has been a great success and has materially assisted the timber industry. I congratulate the Government on having got the Commonwealth to agree to its undertaking this great national work. As distinct from the building of wooden ships at Fremantle, I should like to mention that there is a company exploiting the possibility of shipbuilding at Busselton. This company is doing a remarkably fine job in that it has proved how we can exploit our timber in this direction.

A few years ago a number of local workmen got together with the idea of doing something along these lines. They eventually formed what is known as the Busselton Shipbuilding and Engineering Co., the capital of which has been solely subscribed by the workers. The Director of Public Works, Mr. Dumas, has been of great assistance, as have also the Chief Secretary and Senator Fraser. We visited their plant. They are making life-boats for large ships and their work would be a credit to any shipbuilding yard. One difficulty they encounter is in respect to timber. The timber for the planking or outer shell of the boats comes from the Eastern States and, because of that, is very expensive. It would seem that we might well, through the Industrial Research Committee, seek ways and means of utilising our own timber. These men are experimenting with local woods. For some parts they have even used the old peppermint tree and Warren cedar which, I believe, are standing up to the job quite well. The building of houses on a large scale could quite easily be undertaken by this co-operative concern.

Another thing made possible by the war is the utilisation of jarrah for making butter-boxes. Our jarrah fruit-cases have proved

successful and now we have jarrah being used for butter-boxes. The Dairy Products Marketing Board, at the end of 1942, declared that jarrah was very satisfactory for this purpose, provided that it was first sprayed. It caused no taint to the butter.

I have thought that it should be possible to include timber-workers in the land settlement scheme. Every now and then a timber mill closes down and the town or centre becomes dead. During the occupancy of the district by the mill workers, something should be done by the department to enable them to take up small holdings and develop them. In the past it has been the policy of the Forests Department not to be too free in making land available for workers in timber centres. That is a wrong policy. Because a person is employed in a timber mill, it does not follow that he should have to remain there all his life. He should be given the same opportunity as anyone else to make himself independent and to take up a holding and improve it while he is employed at the mill. Some timber workers have taken up land on their own initiative and are amongst the most successful farmers and orchardists in the South-West. We should encourage rather than hinder timber workers who have a desire to take up land, and I would go so far as to say that an official of the Agricultural Department should be employed to go amongst them, instruct them, and aid them in becoming good settlers. Recently mills on Nanga Brook and other centres have closed down, and I imagine there is plenty of good land in the vicinity that could have been settled in this way. Probably a lot of it will be reserved for reforestation, but, while this is necessary, we should not neglect the other side of development.

The dairying industry, thanks to the policy of Commonwealth subsidies, is at last on a fairly sound footing, but we have experienced bad seasons and because of that the dairy farmers have not reaped the full benefit that should have accrued to them from the subsidies. One of the biggest problems after the war will be to get these farmers back to a basis of cheap and efficient production so that primary producers in this State will be able to compete with those in other States and countries. With that in mind we must think in terms not of a subsidy for the war period but of

some method of stabilising the dairying industry, and thus enabling the dairy farmers to plan ahead. Their association, I believe, has asked that the industry be given some guarantee in the post-war period. In England, as a matter of fact, the British Government has already agreed to guarantee the present price for milk over another period of four years. In our country we should give to the milk producers some idea of how they will be situated in the future, so that they may be enabled to plan ahead. We must remember that because of the lack of material and of manpower during the war period many dairy farms have fallen into disrepair, and that when labour and materials become available after the war a great deal of extra expense will be thrown on the dairy farmers. If they have no stability ahead of them, it will be a hard decision for them whether they should proceed to carry out these repairs and improvements that ought to have been done, but could not be done, during the war period.

The superphosphate question likewise affects the dairy farmer seriously. That question has been debated at length here on the Address-in-reply. The South-West cannot do without superphosphate. Because of lack of superphosphate the pasture value of land in the South-West has in some measure depreciated. All the leeway will have to be made up when superphosphate becomes available. I was indeed pleased to read the announcement that next year there will be an increase of 50 per cent. in the quantity of that fertiliser to be made available to Western Australian farmers. Throughout the industry it is generally thought that the Metropolitan Milk Act should be made a permanent measure, although certain amendments are desirable. Those amendments are being placed before the Minister concerned by the representatives of the industry.

Turning now to post-war activities, I believe that one of the first projects that will be proceeded with will be in my electorate—continuation of the construction of the Stirling Dam. I have no concrete evidence to say that this will prove to be the case, but in my opinion our progressive Government will adopt that view. The construction of the dam was hindered by the outbreak of war. The dam serves the Harvey

irrigation scheme, and will vastly increase the possibilities of further settlement in the area. One thing I do wish to urge is that, when the work is resumed suitable housing facilities will be provided for the workers on the construction.

Much has been said this evening as to housing for the metropolitan area and country districts, and with all that I certainly am in complete accord; but there is another question, which I now bring forward, as to housing of workers engaged on the construction of public works. As late as the outbreak of the war, when the construction of the Stirling Dam was stopped as a consequence, there was the sad spectacle of the workers and their wives and kiddies being housed under canvas. We do not wish to revert to such a position. At that time it was not considered possible to provide houses; but within a few months of the outbreak of war huts were springing up like mushrooms all over the State, in military camps for the housing of our Forces. Those huts were needed, of course; but it is also a matter of necessity that workers on construction jobs should see huts springing up like mushrooms on the scene of their labours. The matter should receive serious consideration when public works construction is resumed.

As regards the housing scheme, country areas should have their fair share of the proposed buildings. I am also concerned as to the number of houses to be built in the post-war period. With other members representing country electorates I regret that many smaller centres did not have an opportunity to give evidence as to the need for additional housing accommodation in the country. Various small centres are in urgent need of improved homes. Another matter that strikes me is the poor housing accommodation for some of our timber workers. Notwithstanding that there are ample supplies of timber available for the erection of suitable homes these workers are still living in ramshackle houses.

Mr. Cross: Is that private enterprise?

Mr. HOLMAN: Yes. Conditions at the railway mill, Banksiadale, are entirely different. There the residents are provided with electric light and enjoy a reasonable degree of comfort. On most timber mills the idea seems to be that the mill will, sooner or later, be removed. It does not matter whether "later" means 20 or 30

years; the thought is always present that the mill will sooner or later be removed. The employees are therefore forced to live in ramshackle houses, although admittedly at a very low rental. They should, however, enjoy the comfort that every person should be entitled to in this enlightened year of 1944. I sincerely hope that the matter will be taken into consideration in the post-war housing scheme, as well as the other matters to which I referred. People engaged in the dairying and fruitgrowing industries, as well as our farmers, should be provided with better housing accommodation.

(Mr. J. Hegney took the Chair.)

Our fisheries are dealt with in the Speech, where the following appears:—

The fisheries research programme initiated in 1941 has been steadily pursued, and valuable information relative to many phases of the fishing industry has been obtained.

Here I would like to pay a tribute to the honorary work performed by the various fish and game societies, which are doing a marvellous work in stocking our South-West streams with trout. They have met with great success and I hope they will continue their good work. They are doing more than merely stocking the streams with fish; they are building up an asset for the State which will be invaluable in years to come. We have only to think of the immense value that trout fishing has been to the tourist traffic of Tasmania to enable us to visualise what it will mean to our South-West district. I believe that we can make our South-West district indeed a tourists' paradise.

Mr. North: You are anticipating my motion. This is very good stuff.

Mr. HOLMAN: The South-West is indeed a tourists' paradise. The scenery is delightful, the giants of the forest in the karri and jarrah portions of the district are most impressive, and we should feel proud to take a tourist from any part of the world for a trip through that country. We can also exploit the coastline of the South-West, where we have beautiful stretches of beaches. I have no desire to steal the thunder of the member for Claremont in speaking of the South-West district.

The Minister for Mines: Great minds think alike!

Mr. North: Go for your life!

Mr. HOLMAN: We have the Mandurah area which is the natural outlet for the workers in the timber mills at Dwellingup and the surrounding district. We have a beach at Harvey, which is the natural outlet for Harvey as well as for Brunswick and the timber mills in the Hoffman and Mornington areas and further east again. Why should not the people of those districts enjoy the same beach amenities as do the people of the metropolitan area? They cannot do so at present because there is little or no transport available. For that reason I was pleased to hear of the suggestion by the member for Claremont. The proposal of the member for South Fremantle for a railway to Mandurah is also to be commended, because it would enable the timber workers to enjoy holidays which at present they cannot enjoy owing to the lack of transport facilities.

I would go further and suggest that the Government should seriously consider the building of huts on those beaches, so that the workers and their families in these out-back areas might spend their holidays in comfort. This is no scheme. A similar one was initiated on Rottnest Island, which is—or was until the war—under the control of the State Gardens Board. That scheme proved to be a great success and I have no doubt a similar scheme for the South-West would prove equally successful. I must not fail to comment on the education of country children. As I have said, I am pleased that the member for North-East Fremantle has been appointed Minister for Education. I believe he will go a long way not only in fostering but in improving our educational facilities. He has travelled extensively in the country since he took over this portfolio, and consequently has gained firsthand information about the educational disabilities suffered in country centres.

Mr. Thorn: You will probably get that high school for Pinjarra now.

Mr. HOLMAN: I am very hopeful that we will.

Mr. McLarty: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thorn: You have worked hard for it!

Mr. HOLMAN: It will not be before time because, as I stated before another body, the nearest high school is 50 miles on either side. Going back to my electorate, one could possibly add another 50 miles so that the nearest high school is 100 miles on

either side. I do not see why children in the timber areas should be denied the right to high school education and for that reason I hope a high school will be established at Pinjarra.

Mr. McLarty: I think the new Minister is very sympathetic.

Mr. HOLMAN: The position in regard to country schools is very serious. In my own electorate schools have been closed down on account of migration from the district. In some instances this has been brought about by men joining the Services and in others through works being closed down or their operations restricted. Migration from the area has led to a fewer number of children and the consequent closing down of schools. One school is now closed because of the illness of the two previous teachers. The lack of teachers is something which at present is beyond the Education Department.

Mr. McLarty: Why?

Mr. HOLMAN: I presume because of the policy adopted in the past. It is something that should not occur again. I am pleased to notice that the teachers at their annual conference have made certain proposals which I hope will be carried into effect.

Mr. Thorn: That will not rectify the shortage of teachers, will it?

Mr. HOLMAN: They have asked that teachers over the age of 35 should be released from the Services. I think the department has that in hand and it is high time the request was granted. We have seen others released from the Services because the industries in which they were previously engaged demanded their return. If the education of the children is not of the first priority, nothing else is. In the country districts there has been the alternative of correspondence lessons. Up to a stage they are very beneficial but it is not always possible for the parents of country children to give the supervision that is necessary. In some instances the parents unfortunately have not had a good education themselves, and in others ideas have changed since they went to school. In a great number of cases the mothers have not time to teach the children. On account of lack of manpower, particularly on dairy farms, mothers have to go to the dairy and assist their husbands. They are up very early in the morning and working till late at night, and it is ridiculous to ask them to

supervise correspondence lessons. The value of the correspondence classes has thus deteriorated. Finally I wish to congratulate the Government on its success at the last election and on having been in a position to carry on as it has done over a number of years. I sincerely hope that the policy which was advocated by the Government—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I cannot hear the hon. member.

Mr. HOLMAN: —and so overwhelmingly endorsed by the general public of Western Australia will be continued, and will go a long way towards assisting in the development of this State and the ultimate prosperity of all its citizens now and in the post-war period.

MR. WILMOTT (Sussex): I would like to congratulate the Speaker on his re-appointment to that high office. I also congratulate the member for North-East Fremantle on his appointment to the Ministry. I feel sure that he will do a good job as Minister for Education. I have already had the pleasure of placing a few cases before him which he received quite well and in connection with which he has endeavoured to do a decent job. I congratulate new members of this House and feel sure they will play their part in trying to make Western Australia a better State. Dealing with post-war work so far as the South-West is concerned, land settlement must be our main consideration. It has been mentioned that the Commonwealth Rural Reconstruction Commission, of which our Minister for Lands is chairman, has been doing a good job. That is so, but I fail to see how a number of our soldiers are going to be settled when they return, because nothing has been done to bring land in the South-West into production. The same thing will occur as in connection with group settlement after the last war.

I have mentioned before that the Government should have utilised the services of prisoners of war to clear the land ready for our soldiers when they return. There are a few prisoners of war on different farms in the South-West and they have been quite helpful. It would have been far better, however, if those prisoners had been placed under guards who knew everything about clearing the land in the South-West. Then, when our boys returned, the land would have been

ready for them. I impress upon the Minister for Lands and the Government generally that those views should be looked into immediately to see whether something can be done along the lines suggested. The area I suggest should be first settled in the South-West is that large extent of land between Alexander Bridge and Millhampton on the Brockman highway between Karridale and Nannup. It is all good agricultural land, carrying very little jarrah. As I have said before in this Chamber, our Agricultural Department and our Forests Department should work in close co-operation because our timber industry is just as essential as the dairying industry. The land I have mentioned carries very little good jarrah. There are some small patches, and on these, spot-mills could be erected and the jarrah milled and used for timber purposes. Our jarrah is a great asset, and it is being used to a large extent during the war period. It certainly will be used to a greater extent in the post-war period. That is the reason why I suggest that the Agricultural Department, the Lands Department and the Forests Department should work in close co-operation. By doing so, our jarrah timber will not be destroyed, but will be put to good use.

In talking about our land settlement, I might say that our dairy farmers at present are having a more prosperous period than they have experienced for some time, but they are suffering a great deal from lack of labour. I know many instances where the old parents are endeavouring to carry on these farms against the time when their sons return. I have spent a lot of time with the manpower authorities endeavouring to get some of these sons released. In numbers of cases these boys would be doing a far more essential job by producing from the land instead of being in the particular branch of the Services to which they are attached. This Government should endeavour to approach the Commonwealth authorities to see if we cannot get further releases from the Army. I agree that we must keep the Army up to a certain standard, but I know of many cases, and I expect other members do too, where boys would be doing a far better job and rendering a far more essential service if they produced goods that are required not only by our own nation and Army but also by our Allies. The other matter from the dairying point of view, which has al-

ready been mentioned by the member for Forrest, is the shortage of super. I asked the Government to do all in its power to arrange for further production of super to enable our South-West to produce to its full capacity. Super is more essential in the South-West country than it probably is in the wheat-belt.

I am going to touch on education because it is one of the most important subjects to be dealt with by any Government. The boys and girls of today are the men and women of tomorrow. The better the education we give our children today, the better people will this country have in future years. While I am on the subject of education, I might ask the Minister to do his best, at an early date, to have an area school established. I understand that a site has at last been selected, and I hope that something will be done. I have always agitated for more agricultural schools, but I think an area school is a step in the right direction. I have just had experience of agricultural schools. I have a son attending the Denmark Agricultural School, and he has recently been home on holidays at the end of his first term. I am quite pleased with the progress he is making. I feel sure that it would be far better if we had more agricultural schools throughout the South-West. My boy has to go all the way to Denmark. I know of two or three boys from my area who go to that school. The South-West is large enough to have an agricultural school situated somewhere within its borders. I do not say it should be in the Sussex electorate, but it should be somewhere in the South-West. The pupils would then get more experience of farming on the actual South-West land.

I ask the Minister for Education to do all he can to further the project of an area school at Margaret River because, as he already knows, we have endeavoured to get a transport service in the Karridale-Augusta area, but unfortunately arrangements could not be made, although the Minister sent an inspector of schools into that area. I accompanied him on his inspection. Preparations were made for a bus service but, owing to the distances and the few children to be picked up at the different centres, no tender was accepted. I am glad to know that a teacher has now been sent to Augusta, and a school opened there. But at the Karridale timber mill there are still

children who are getting no education. The nearest school to Karridale is about seven or eight miles distant. Transport is not available for the children to attend that school. If an area school could be erected at Margaret River, I feel sure that transport could be arranged for these children. As I have said previously, education is one of the most important things that any Government can deal with in connection with the welfare of our growing generation.

Much has been said about housing matters this evening, and I shall touch on the subject very briefly. The problem arises throughout the South-West. The Busselton local authorities applied for an allotment of six new houses under the Commonwealth Housing Scheme, but so far no reply has been received. I interviewed the officials of the Workers' Homes Board about it, and to date they have not been able to give me any definite information as to what will happen. When the Federal Minister for Agriculture was in Busselton just before the Referendum was taken he told the local authorities that the Commonwealth Government was prepared to advance money in connection with the housing scheme, but that the local authorities would be responsible for any losses incurred. When we appreciate that the rent to be charged must not be more than one-fifth of the earnings of the tenant and also bear in mind the estimated cost of the houses, I cannot see that the local authorities will be able to participate in the scheme, because there are bound to be losses. The cheapest of the houses is to cost about £900. That applies to a four-roomed house, but such a dwelling is of little use to anyone with a family. Those having larger families must have larger houses, but though they may require the larger accommodation for their families, they do not receive higher wages than those with smaller families.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Mr. Cross: A lot will depend upon the interest charged.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I think it will devolve upon the State to undertake the task. I trust that the application of the Busselton local authorities will receive consideration in the near future. In dealing with the housing problem I emphasise the necessity of endeavouring to secure materials in good supply at the present juncture. That point

was mentioned by the member for Murray-Wellington who referred to the shortage of bricks. Why not make them now and secure stocks of other necessary supplies as well so as to have them in hand ready for the scheme to be put into operation? If that were done then the work could be carried out with greater expedition. The Government should do its utmost to ensure that supplies of bricks, timber, cement, and all other requisites, are built up. At present there is a serious shortage of all such materials, entirely precluding any possibility of building operations being undertaken.

I have been endeavouring to secure a permit for a man to build a house in Busselton. He has a young family and requires a home, but cannot obtain the necessary materials for building operations. He has had to reduce the size of his proposed dwelling. I suggested to the Workers' Homes Board that the plans and specifications for a larger house should be accepted and the man granted permission to build portion now so that the remainder could be constructed in accordance with the complete plan as the necessity arose. The board would not agree to that and insists upon the adoption of a plan for a smaller house, although it will be impossible to erect additions to it. That is wrong, and the whole position should be looked into closely. I shall not indulge in my customary practice of complaining to the Minister for Railways about the service throughout the South-West, but content myself with saying that every endeavour should be made now to provide a better rail service from the city to country areas. I am confident that if a good passenger service were instituted the railways would retain it for all time. Under the existing schedule I am satisfied that, as soon as petrol supplies and tyres become available, people will revert to the motorcar. I thank the Minister for having at long last, after much agitation on the part of those concerned, authorised the use of sleepers on the train to Busselton. I feel sure he knows that the convenience has been much appreciated, so much so that it has become necessary to book two or three days ahead in order to secure a sleeper.

Dealing with the dairying industry, I desire to impress upon the Minister for Agriculture the necessity of making the services of further veterinary surgeons available. At present many dairy farmers

are suffering serious losses in their herds, and I know of one who has lost 16 cows through mammitis. There is no veterinary surgeon within the area concerned. The officer who was at Margaret River was transferred to Manjimup about 12 months ago because of trouble among the cattle there. The result is that our district is now without the services of a veterinary surgeon. The department should endeavour to provide more of these officers throughout the South-West. In order to retain their services it will be necessary to increase the salaries paid. At present the veterinary surgeons are very poorly paid. One Government officer who was stationed at Busselton about three years ago was offered a position in Fiji at a much higher salary, and naturally he accepted it. Before he left I talked the matter over with the Chief Veterinary Surgeon, Mr. McKenzie Clark, but he said that at present the salaries of Government veterinary officers could not be increased. Better salaries are paid in the Eastern States and other places and our best men leave for those centres. We cannot blame them for that. The Government should endeavour to do something in the way of increasing the salaries of those men. The member for Murray-Wellington referred to the police being underpaid, and I agree with him.

Mr. J. Hegney: In fact we are all underpaid.

Mr. WILLMOTT: One thing that has been worrying the people throughout the South-West in recent months is the announcement of the Government about the building of an electric power station at South Fremantle. I have been told that I should stop the work and do this and that, but it is impossible for me to do anything. The Government does not tell us of these proposals and the first thing we know about them is when we read of them in the Press. Thus the general public knows as much as we do. The Government should take members further into its confidence and tell us when and why these things are being done. The people of the South-West say that if an electric power station is built at South Fremantle, they will never get one in the South-West. All I can say is I hope those people are wrong. I am confident that if we had electric power throughout the South-West, it would prove of great benefit.

Mr. J. Hegney: It would revolutionise that part of the State.

Mr. WILLMOTT: That is so.

Mr. Doney: The Government wanted to revolutionise South Fremantle.

Mr. Cross: That power is wanted in the metropolitan area.

Mr. WILLMOTT: We have heard a variety of reasons from various quarters for putting a station at South Fremantle, but we have not had a reason from the Government. The Government should take us into its confidence. If small committees of members of Parliament were appointed to assist Ministers—I would not say advise them—in their decisions, it would be more satisfactory to all concerned.

Mr. W. Hegney: Members on your side do not believe in a coalition.

Mr. WILLMOTT: This matter of using the services of members has been mentioned by speakers on both sides of the House. Not only would such committees be helpful, but they would also give members greater interest in their work. For my part I have a full time job to do with all the troubles occurring in my electorate. Nevertheless we could all spare a little time to do something for the whole of the State and assist Ministers, who are doing a very worthy job.

Mr. Mann: Be careful!

Mr. WILLMOTT: I mean what I have said. I thought that we in the South-West had all the troubles to bear, but after listening to the member for Roebourne I realise that the North also has its troubles. The hon. member told us the troubles experienced in the Roebourne district and in other parts of the North. He spoke of the rivers and of the need for irrigation. He said—and I agree with him—that members should be given opportunities to travel through the State. I know practically every inch of the South-West and can tell members what is going on there. I am familiar with the conditions; I know how the land should be cleared and how a dairy farm should be run, but I do not know one thing about the North-West. If members were given an opportunity to travel through the State, they would be in a better position to help one another.

Dealing with the South-West electric power project, I can only hope it is not dying a natural death. We have not heard much about it lately, although the commit-

tee has been there taking evidence. I hope the committee will get down to business and tell us what is being done. Such a scheme would benefit not only the people who live in the small towns but also the farming community, the timber community and the industries that are growing and will yet be developed in the South-West. Steps should be taken to supply the South-West with electric current in the near future.

The Minister for Works: I think you will find that the committee will be very helpful.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I think the right place for a power station is where the fuel is mined, namely, at Collie. Collie would also be the most central site and perhaps the best in all respects for a power station. I wish to refer to the Busselton jetty.

Mr. Cross: Has not that been mended yet?

Mr. Watts: One thing is it is long enough.

Mr. WILLMOTT: A few months ago I was informed by the Minister for Railways that the Government had agreed to repair the jetty.

The Minister for Works: The Leader of the Opposition says we are a lethargic Government.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Yes. The portion that the local council agreed to do has been done. The Government was supposed to do the remainder and it has not done so. Members might have noticed during the last week that another death occurred at the Busselton jetty; a man was drowned. It is time the Government fulfilled its promise. It did promise to do the job and its part of the work should be carried out in the near future. I have mentioned the clearing prospects for dairy farms and other future farms in connection with post-war work. One of the most important of those works will be the continuance of roads and bridges throughout the State. Just as the war broke out the then Minister for Works, the member for Mt. Hawthorn, had promised to make all arrangements for another extension of our bitumen on the Busselton highway for 30 miles, which would take it right to Margaret River. However, the work had to be suspended. I hope that when post-war work begins, that will be one of the first projects put in hand.

Another matter is the bridge concerning which I have spoken repeatedly to the Main

Roads Board, a bridge over the Blackwood River. If that bridge was put in and a mile and a quarter of road cleared and formed, it would save at least 50 settlers 14 miles travelling per sale. I refer to the market for the sale of pigs. At present there is one pig sale in that area, the one at Forrest Grove, Alexandra Bridge. If a bridge were constructed over the Blackwood River the farmers could arrive at Forrest Grove in about nine miles' travelling, whereas now they have to travel nine plus 14 miles. I consider the job one well worth doing. The construction of the bridge would not be costly. The timber is right there, and there is a small spot mill working within a mile of the site where the bridge could be erected. Only one mile and a quarter of road will need to be constructed in order to link up with the main road running to Forrest Grove. It would save all these settlers all those miles; and moreover save petrol and save wear on roads. I hope the Minister concerned will do all in his power to have that work put in hand as soon as possible.

MR. J. HEGNEY (Middle Swan): Recently I read somewhere that Ministers listened to and read the speeches delivered here by members, and further that administrative officers checked up "Hansard." Therefore, as member for Middle Swan, I am emboldened to submit some matters to the House this evening, in the hope that Ministers will take note of them. In the first place I desire to congratulate the two members who have preceded me this evening, especially South-West members. I listened with great interest to what they had to say. I am now referring to the member for Forrest and the member for Sussex. They have told us a good deal about what is happening in the South-West, and the possibilities as well as the developments there. During the past week I have had an opportunity to visit the South-West, and of seeing what has happened there and the spirit of optimism which prevails. At Manjimup and in the Pemberton district I was able to visit a good many farms and orchards, and to come in contact with those developing the district. I repeat, much optimism prevails there. The settlers believe that as soon as the war ends the district will expand three-fold.

The Minister for Works: I think it will.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: I am sure it will. As regards providing electric current there, I hope that the scheme will not fall down but will be carried through at the first opportunity. I know what the scheme will mean to settlers in the Manjimup district and the South-West generally. At Manjimup there is a background of dairying, together with very fine orchards. I should also mention the dairy factories. Then again, there is tobacco growing, and the additional background of State sawmills, which are assisting development. Moreover, there are several forest areas available for future development.

I was indeed pleased to see and hear what was being done, and the information given by the two members who preceded me tonight interested me highly. I was impressed with the statements of the member for Forrest relating to workers engaged in the timber industry, especially the case of one who was encouraged and helped to take up a farming block, and who started fruitgrowing and dairying in a small way. The suggestion of the member for Forrest would be a great help to industrial workers, giving them a chance to improve their position and possibly become at least self-supporting and free from industrial occupation. Some may think that working in an industry is better than working on a farm, but my personal view is that the man who works for himself develops a spirit of independence away from the grime and smoke of industrial toil. The proposition submitted by the member for Forrest should receive close consideration, especially from the Agricultural Bank. I saw a highly productive farm whose present owner was engaged in cutting timber before the railway went through to Pemberton. He espied a place on the Warren River, and a more fertile spot one could not find. From the aspect of apple-growing it is one of the best places in the South-West. The trees are marvellous. The same remark applies to potato-growing. There is on the farm a small piece of wonderful summer soil for that. Here we have an instance of an industrial worker who has had the spirit to start in a small way with practically no capital. However, he worked hard, and now he is anxious to sell the place and live the remainder of his days in retirement.

On another farm I saw a man and his wife, who are elderly, and owing to the

war can obtain no assistance. Their children are grown up. When I was on the place they were engaged in spraying and pruning trees and looking after the cows. They were working day and night in order to keep the farm from deteriorating through lack of labour. These remarks apply also to another orchard of 2,600 apple trees. The difficulty there is the pruning of the trees and keeping the property in such a state as to prevent its deterioration. The member for Sussex mentioned the question of prisoner-of-war labour. There seems to be some difficulty in that connection owing to its being necessary to conform to international conditions and therefore this labour is not available for the purposes which he mentioned. I understand that prisoners-of-war are working in the Bridgetown district and that representations are being made that they should be employed further south. That possibility is a matter for the member for Nelson to deal with. The co-operative factory is doing very well and undoubtedly good prospects lie ahead of it. Farmers should avail themselves of these co-operative movements because the profits derived from them go back to the farmers instead of being paid to the middleman, who in some cases is out to rob the farmers.

I wish to direct the attention of the Minister for Railways to what I consider would be great improvements that could be effected in our railway system, even under its present great difficulties. On Saturday last I caught a train at Manjimup at about 8.20 or 8.30. The people were queued up at the station and buying tickets as the train came in. I see no reason why the tickets should not have been made available the previous night, especially as the school holidays were just commencing and the children and their teachers would be leaving for Bunbury and other places. The exercise of some foresight would have led to the making of better provision at Manjimup than was made there last Saturday. It was deplorable to note the large numbers of people who were crowded in both the first and second-class carriages. Surely the Railway Department must be aware when school holidays are about to commence and that necessary arrangements must be made. When the train reached Perth after having left Picton Junction, there were 14 coaches. All along the line

from Manjimup and Palgarup and at the intermediate stations as far as Picton Junction people crowded into the carriages. One coach was added, but it proved to be quite inadequate for the passengers on Saturday.

It is very hard that mothers with small children should have to crowd into railway carriages. At many of the sidings no platform is provided and they must get from the railway track into the carriages. The department should show more initiative and do more planning in providing transport of this kind. That is not an isolated instance. I recently travelled to York and found the same conditions applying on the Diesel. This all shows lack of initiative on the part of the railway officers. They say that the department does not receive any indication of the numbers of people desiring to travel; but the fact is that the department has the experience of past years to go by. Surely it could make an accurate calculation, one that would not be far out. I come now to my own electorate, Middle Swan.

Mr. Marshall: You are on the return journey!

Mr. J. HEGNEY: Yes. I am back in Perth and shall deal with the many problems requiring attention in my electorate. I enjoyed my sojourn in the agricultural areas, but I do not forget that I am representing the Swan electorate, which is diversified in character. In it are carried on viticulture, dairying, poultry-raising, horticulture, industrial activities and factories. In addition, there are 200 natives on the outskirts of Bayswater. The electorate is a many-sided problem.

Mr. McDonald: You have a racecourse.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: Yes, and an airport. Transport is the great trouble in my electorate at present. The Bayswater residents are urging the provision of better transport facilities. The buses from Bassendean pass through Bayswater, but by the time the buses reach Bayswater they are over-crowded. The Maylands service is slow and there are too many spur lines. It ought to be speeded up. The solution of the problem is to provide trolley-buses. These should run through East Perth and Maylands to Bayswater. They would solve the difficulty and the returns from them would go to the Government, and so they would not be in competition with the railway system. The Beaufort-street tram goes out a

fair distance now, but between Maylands and Bayswater there is what is known as Meltham Siding. The train frequently stops there, that is, at the bridge between Maylands and Bayswater. Transport provision should be made for the people in that locality because, as I said, the buses belonging to the private company and running from Bassendean are over-crowded and cannot pick these residents up. If the Government would develop the tram service along Beaufort-street and take it down the Guildford road and so back to Perth, it would be of great advantage to the people in that locality.

I know the transport question is acute but the earliest opportunity should be taken to effect some remedy in these districts. It has also been suggested that Government buses should run from Stirling-street towards the aerodrome in the Maylands district. They could be taken round the river. I hear many complaints from Belmont residents about the bus system along the Great Eastern Highway. I suggested to the people making these complaints that the best solution of their problem at the moment was to request the local authority to convene a public meeting to protest against the inadequate service, so that representations could be made to the proper quarter. I hear complaints of bus drivers passing stops and about the inadequacy of the service. I quite realise it is difficult to obtain buses, but nevertheless some effort should be made to overcome these difficulties. For years past—long before I came into this House—there was an agitation for a siding at Meltham, between Bayswater and Maylands, and the time is not far distant when such a siding should be established. I realise the difficulty is to maintain a station there. The line runs past a fair area of vacant land which could be utilised for workers' homes. Other land adjacent to the railway could be developed and would prove a source of revenue for a station. Twenty years ago land salesmen said that a railway siding would be established and people were induced to go there to live. For a long while people have walked considerable distances to some form of transport, expecting that some day a siding would be placed at Meltham.

A siding should also be placed between Bassendean and Bayswater near the Cresco fertiliser works. Many people are em-

played at those works and have to catch the bus at varying times of the day and night. Towards the Swan River there is a large area of land quite suitable for the building of homes. In fact, I think the Workers' Homes Board has its eye on that land. I would inform the Minister for Works that his predecessor, at the invitation of the Bassendean Road Board, on several occasions visited that area and a proposition was submitted to him that a road should be completed, running along the river and back into Bayswater between the railway line and the river. Such a road would open up considerable land for building purposes and help to develop much of the unoccupied territory at Bassendean and Bayswater. I realise that at present the construction of roads is out of the question on account of lack of manpower, but this is a matter that will require attention in the near future. House building, too, depends upon available manpower. We are still gravely involved in the war and if all the releases sought by the Education Department, by those engaged in primary production and by prospective home-builders, were granted, the Defence Forces would be seriously depleted. As defence activities diminish, however, I have no doubt that men who have been engaged in that important work will be directed as soon as possible into these various important jobs.

I congratulate the Speaker on his elevation to his high office, the Ministers on their election and the member for North-East Fremantle on his appointment to the position of Minister for Education. To see that children throughout the State are reasonably educated is a very important task, and there is no doubt that a great deal of work lies ahead of the Minister and the department. There are many problems, not only in respect of children of average mental development, but also in respect of backward children for whom something should be done. That is a question we shall have a further opportunity to discuss. When all is said and done it seems to resolve itself once again into a question of the amount of money available. Another million pounds could be spent on education in Western Australia. I do not know where we can get it from, but the time has come when we should ask the Commonwealth Government for assistance. Undoubtedly many country children do not have the education to which they are en-

titled, and we should do our best for every child in the country. Admittedly, as the member for Forrest pointed out, country people have to face many difficulties, particularly the women who are called upon to supervise correspondence lessons. That is almost impossible for many mothers. Numbers of children in the country do not have the same chance of education as children in the metropolitan area. It is too far for them to travel into centres where there are schools, and if they want to attend those schools they must board. However, as we shall have an opportunity to consider this matter further at a later stage, I will leave any other remarks I have to make on this subject until then.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I desire to add my congratulations, Sir, to those you have already received on your re-election to your important position. The compliments that have been paid to you have been richly deserved. During the debate the Leader of the Opposition and several members very generously referred in laudatory terms to my own elevation. I value very much their good opinion and am greatly encouraged by their expressions of goodwill. The member for Pingelly spoke rather disparagingly of physical education which is coming somewhat to the fore in the Commonwealth at the present time. I felt that I could not allow his remarks to go unanswered lest a wrong impression be abroad in connection with the real value of this form of education. The hon. member is entitled to his opinion, but I would tell him that a great weight of modern opinion is decidedly against him on this matter. Not only is a great weight of public opinion against him, but even the ancients had a far different idea from his. The hon. member said he was looking to the Minister for Health to help him by seeing that certain steps were taken to prevent the deliberate waste of money. He emphasised the word deliberate, so it was no mere slip of the tongue. He referred to the fact that £9,833 had been spent during the year on physical education, and he said that this was a craze that had been started by some crank.

Everything that has been done in Western Australia in regard to physical education during the last five or six years, however, has been based upon the recommendation of the highest medical authorities in the Empire.

In 1936 the British Medical Association set up a physical education committee, the terms of reference of which were to consider and report upon the necessity for the cultivation of the physical development of the civilian population and the methods to be pursued to this end. That committee, after going exhaustively into the matter, issued a report. I have a copy here, and have taken the trouble to get a number cyclostyled and will make them available to members so that they will be able to read them. The subject is of too great importance to be misconstrued. This report is very valuable and forms the basis of the development of physical education, not only in the Commonwealth but also in Great Britain and South Africa. From this report I quote the following paragraph:—

The necessity of raising the national standard of physical efficiency requires no demonstration. While it is true that certain sections of the more youthful population show a commendable enthusiasm for health-giving physical activities, the general neglect of bodily fitness is evidenced in the examples of physical deterioration which are so common in daily life as to be accepted as inevitable. Men and women, especially those of middle age, who have allowed their bodies to fall into shapeless proportions and ungainly postures, and their limbs to become shrunken and deformed, are a reproach to our sense of physical fitness. The absence of adequate education in the care of the body has led many to accept without thought the deformity of their bodies as something beyond their control. One problem of physical education is to bring home to the individual the knowledge that the body like the mind can be directed by the will and to inculcate pride in the proper control of both.

The Australian National Health and Medical Research Council held a meeting in 1937 and decided to direct the attention of the Governments in Australia to the serious neglect in adequate supervision of the bodily developments in children before and during school age. In the opinion of the council, while something was done on sound lines already, a relatively small portion of the field had been covered. The whole system of health supervision of the children, said the council, should be immediately reviewed with the object of securing:—

1. Regularity and complete supervision of bodily health during infancy and childhood to the age of 16 years.

2. Regular instruction of all children in the elementary principles of hygiene and in physical outline.

3. The regular instruction of all girls in the composition and preparation of foods.

Therefore, considerable research has been made into the necessity for physical education. It was only after authoritative statements had been made in regard to the necessity for this branch of education that the various countries in the world launched out extensively to embody it in the school curriculum. The hon. member mentioned that teachers would be better employed by filling in their time feeding children than by giving them physical education.

Mr. Seward: I do not think I said that.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: As a matter of fact there are certain supplementary feeding schemes in operation. They are undertaken by interested parents and citizens in an endeavour to make good the shortages in the midday meal. They provide soup and milk, and also a lunch on the principle of the Oslo lunch. The teachers assist at these supplementary feeding schemes, but they do not, by any means, carry them out completely. It is no part of the teachers' function to feed the children. That is a parental responsibility.

Mr. Seward: I did not say that.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I read the hon. member's remarks and that is how he is reported. Physical education, upon which £9,000 odd is being expended, is something in which the Commonwealth Government has interested itself in recent years. The money being spent is Commonwealth money; it is not State money. It is made available for a specific purpose, and is spent along the lines laid down by the Commonwealth Department of Health. If the hon. member is looking to the Minister for Health to make some alteration he is looking in vain because he has already given his blessing to this extension of education.

Mr. Seward: I complained about the children being stripped from the waist upwards.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Let us take the point the hon. member raises by way of interjection. He objects to children being taken for physical work stripped to the waist. The films in Great Britain dealing with physical education and sent out to Australia all show that boys of 19 years of age do this physical work in England stripped to the waist.

Mr. Holman: It is done in the Army, too.

Mr. Seward: That does not make it right.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: No, but it shows that even in a far more extreme climate than ours it is considered advisable to adopt that method. The doctors who have inquired into this matter recommend that boys should take their exercise stripped to the waist and that girls should be attired in clothing of the loosest type—bloomers and a loose blouse. The idea is that there should be freedom of movement and free circulation of air, and that after the exercise they should be able to put on something warm and so keep the warmth in their bodies. Considerable tone is given to the muscles and skin by this method, but it is not possible if the children do their exercises heavily clothed. They would be more prone to catch cold if they exercised when heavily clad than in this way. Provided they are kept moving there is no likelihood of their catching a cold. Experience shows that their resistance to colds and the ordinary respiratory troubles is considerably increased as a result of their exercising in this way.

The Perth Boys' School which twice was adjudged to be the outstanding school in the Commonwealth for physical education invariably exercised its children stripped to the waist. The results are such as fully to justify conducting physical education in this manner. I think the member for Pingelly is probably confusing the old idea of physical culture with what we now regard as physical education. Previously the children did a limited number of physical jerks, which, although of some value, could not be compared with the benefits to be derived from the present system which is scientifically based, and is undertaken with the idea of improving the physique of the child as well as enabling him to improve his mind. Better circulation of the blood results, and better mental capacity. He therefore has a better attitude towards his work. That is why it is felt that this education is a vital part of the child's general education. In 1943 leading doctors of the Commonwealth carried out research in connection with this matter, and reached the conclusion that the origin of most of the middle life illnesses is to be found in the faulty posture adopted during the early school years and which, hitherto, was not corrected.

I was speaking to a leading man in this city a few weeks ago with regard to this very subject. He told me that, in his opinion, as many as 90 per cent. of the accidents

which occur at work are due to faulty posture in the childhood period. He said that all sorts of deformities result, and that, later on in middle life as a result of the deformities following on faulty posture, the workmen are unable to carry out the tasks officially allotted to them, and they fall down at some stage, and that is how accidents result. He said that in his opinion if we gave greater attention to physical training in the schools and corrected posture most of these accidents would be preventable. If that were done the men engaged at work would not have these deficiencies which are the direct result of faulty posture in their young days. He gave me a number of illustrations to prove the results that occur because of neglect to carry out ordinary routine exercises to keep the muscles and limbs in proper working order. He mentioned all sorts of things that occurred because of failure to take proper exercise.

If members desire a further illustration, they can obtain it by reference to the advice of oculists when patients visit them to have their eyes attended to. They do not prescribe medicines or drops but frequently merely exercises. They tell their patients that they must exercise their eyeballs by looking in different directions for various periods each day. Oculists argue that when we require to look at an object at the side, we turn our heads instead of our eyes. In consequence we do not give our eyes the exercise that is necessary in order that they may function properly.

Mr. Marshall: That does not apply to some females!

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It is argued that, in order to keep our bodies fit, we must take exercise so that muscles which ordinarily do not come into play will be used. In conclusion I desire to quote to the member for Pingelly two extracts. One is from a book entitled "Framework of the Future," by L. S. Amery, who, in Chapter 13, when dealing with the meaning of education wrote—

An educated man is one who has had innate qualities of body, mind and heart fully developed in order to fit him for life as a sane and intelligent individual, as a member of society and as a citizen. We have long, as a nation, recognised the value of games as a concomitant of education, making their contribution to health and character. But we are still far behind the ancients in realising the full importance of the systematic teaching of bodily fitness as an essential part of education itself.

And many years ago the celebrated poet, John Milton, had this to say in his description of an ideal school—

A place where young men should be stirred up with high hopes of living to be brave men and worthy patriots dear to God; where they shall have an abundance of exercises which shall keep them healthy, nimble, strong and well in breath.

So not only is modern thought trending towards the development of physical education, but hundreds of years ago the same idea was entertained. I say to the member for Pingelly that if he regards this expenditure of money as a deliberate waste of funds, although he is entitled to his opinion, that opinion is considerably at variance with the whole weight of thought on this subject.

Mr. Seward: Not at all!

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Of course it is. We can look forward to a considerable extension of this work. The Commonwealth Government, having increased the amount made available for the purpose, will, I am sure, continue to furnish money so that it can be spent in this direction. Members may be interested to know that £1,500 of the £9,000 has been made available to local authorities for the purpose of providing recreational centres in country districts. While the hon. member may refer to the "waste of £9,000," I do not think the local authorities will agree with his assertion. From that £9,000 we have also made available £1,000 to assist voluntary bodies interested in various centres in the provision of recreational facilities for the leisure time activities in the youth group—14 to 18 years. About £2,800 of the total amount has been furnished directly to the Education Department for expenditure in connection with the extension of physical work in the schools, and additional staff has been appointed for the purpose. There has been no waste; every penny can be accounted for and is giving excellent results. I rose to speak this evening merely because I did not think the hon. member's statement with regard to this very valuable part of our system of education should go unchallenged. I have had copies of the British Medical Association's report cyclostyled and these will be made available to members. I hope they will read the report and so appreciate the ideas that have formed the basis of physical education in Great Britain, South Africa and Australia.

Question put and passed; the Address adopted.

BILLS (18)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Plant Diseases (Registration Fees) Act Amendment.
- 2, Fruit Growing Industry (Trust Fund) Act Amendment.
Introduced by the Minister for the North-West (for the Minister for Agriculture).
- 3, Financial Emergency Act Amendment.
- 4, Industries Assistance Act Continuance.
- 5, Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act Continuance.
- 6, Northam Cemeteries.
Introduced by the Minister for the North-West (for the Minister for Lands).
- 7, Health Act Amendment.
- 8, Nurses Registration Act Amendment.
Introduced by the Minister for Health.
- 9, Testator's Family Maintenance Act Amendment.
- 10, Electoral Act Amendment.
- 11, Constitution Acts Amendment (No. 1).
- 12, Constitution Acts Amendment (No. 2).
Introduced by the Minister for Justice.
- 13, Life Assurance Companies Act Amendment.
Introduced by the Minister for Works (for the Premier).
- 14, Main Roads Act (Funds Appropriation).
- 15, Local Authorities (Reserve Funds) Act Amendment.
- 16, Shearers' Accommodation Act Amendment.
- 17, Industrial Development (Resumption of Land).
Introduced by the Minister for Works.
- 18, Crown Proceedings.
Introduced by Mr. McDonald.

House adjourned at 10.49 p.m.