

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 23rd April, 1942.

	PAGE
Questions: Drought relief	3212
Vegetable growing, as to school plots	3212
Civil Defence, danger from straying stock	3212
Agricultural Bank, as to borrowers' accounts	3212
Evacuees, as to risk of malaria	3213
Agriculture, as to crop restriction	3213
Pastoral Industry—(1) As to use of Canning stock route; (2) as to risk of pleuro and tick	3213
Motions: Printing Ministerial Statement, as to State's War Effort	3214
Butter Industry, to inquire by select committee	3243
Parliamentary Advisory Committee	3254
Adjournment Special	3258

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 11 a.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION—DROUGHT RELIEF.

Mr. DONEY asked the Minister for Lands: 1, How much of the Commonwealth Drought Relief Grant was advanced in 1941 in this State to—(a) Agricultural Bank clients? (b) other than Agricultural Bank clients? 2, How much has been recouped by the State from proceeds of the 1941-42 harvest in respect of clients referred to in both (a) and (b) of question (1)? 3, How much of the recouped amount has since been re-issued to—(a) those farmers who had previously received advances; and (b) those, whether Agricultural Bank clients or not, who had not previously received advances from the grant? 4, What rates of interest operate in the case of the re-issued money referred to in question (3)?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, Advances to the 31st December, 1941, £458,415. I am unable to dissect accounts without obtaining details from branch offices concerned. 2, £381,585 total to the 31st March, 1942. 3, Re-advances to the extent of about £100,000 have been approved to the 31st March. The review of the settlers' accounts for 1942-43 season is not yet completed. 4, 1½ per cent. from the 1st April, 1942, to the 31st March, 1943.

QUESTION—VEGETABLE GROWING.

As to School Plots.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Is he aware that a few years since the schools of the State were provided

each year with a collection of vegetable and flower seeds? 2, In view of the very difficult position today in regard to the need of vegetable seeds, will he give consideration to the resumption of what was once a regular and greatly appreciated grant?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1 and 2, The distribution of seeds to schools has not been discontinued, but it is inadvisable to distribute vegetable seeds except to those schools where vegetable-growing can be carried on without the aid of artificial manures. The seeds distributed are mainly fodder, grass and cereal, though, where desired, certain vegetable and flower seeds are included. Distribution for 1942 has not been made yet.

QUESTION—CIVIL DEFENCE.

Danger from Straying Stock.

Mr. BERRY asked the Minister representing the Minister for Police: Will he take steps through the department to have the roads between Fremantle and Safety Bay and elsewhere if necessary, cleared of straying stock, particularly horses, as these constitute the gravest danger to blacked-out motor vehicles using these highways after sunset?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST replied: Representations will be made to the local authority concerned.

QUESTION—AGRICULTURAL BANK.

As to Borrowers' Accounts.

Mr. SEWARD (without notice) asked the Minister for Agriculture: Will he give instructions to the Commissioners of the Agricultural Bank to supply to the borrower at the end of each half-yearly period—1, A detailed copy of the ledger account of the borrower covering such half-yearly period; 2, A statement showing the separate advances made to the borrower, the amount outstanding on each advance, the amount charged as interest on each advance for such half-yearly period, and the rate of interest chargeable on each advance?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: It would necessitate considerable staff to supply the information requested. If things were normal the answer to the question would be, "Yes." It must be realised,

however, that the Agricultural Bank has lost through enlistments from its country and town staffs over 50 men, and another 15 are waiting to be called up. Any farmer who is anxious to have such detailed account may get it on request.

QUESTION—EVACUEES.

As to Risk of Malaria.

Mr. SAMPSON (without notice) asked the Minister for Health: Realising the number of people from the Far East now in Western Australia who suffer from malaria and may, through the agency of the anopheles mosquito which, although usually found in the Far North above latitude 20° south—

Mr. SPEAKER: This is a statement, not a question.

Mr. SAMPSON: No, I am setting out the location of the mosquito.

Mr. SPEAKER: Standing Orders provide that members may only clarify the question.

Mr. SAMPSON: It is essential that I should make known the type of mosquito which is the malaria carrier. My question continues—may make their way south, has he taken all practical preventive measures to ensure the minimising of the danger of infection, including the active co-operation of local authorities; and is the same being done to provide protection from possible infection of dengue fever spread by the stegomyia or tiger mosquito?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST (for the Minister for Health) replied: Yes.

QUESTION—AGRICULTURE.

As to Crop Restriction.

Mr. WATTS (without notice) asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Was it suggested by the Minister for Commerce that farmers cropping less than 300 acres of wheat should not be further restricted this season? 2, Is it now decided that every farmer must reduce his crop by a further one-third this year? 3, If so, have any means been provided for any increase in cases of hardship?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: The Minister for Commerce has not officially given that advice. The 300-acre restriction

applies generally, although there is to be some recompense, on an acreage basis, and I think generally in connection with hardships. A case has been submitted to the Minister for Commerce in an endeavour to get an exemption of restrictions for all areas of 300 acres and under.

QUESTIONS (2)—PASTORAL INDUSTRY.

As to Use of Canning Stock Route.

Mr. MARSHALL (without notice) asked the Minister for Lands: Will he inform the House whether the Canning stock route is in a fit condition for the overlanding of stock in large quantities? If not, can he inform the House what part of the stock route is in such condition?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: I assume the member for Murchison is concerned with the prospect of overlanding cattle south along the Canning stock route. While to reply properly to his question it might be necessary to make a statement on the matter, I will summarise it this way: Anticipating the tremendous shortage of beef which will occur in this State, and admitting the terrific hazards of using that route, we are arranging to get from 6,000 to 8,000 head of cattle down along that route. It is a task which has never previously been undertaken. The hon. member knows that two or three mobs of cattle have been brought down in one season. We have conferred with a drover named Lannagan, who knows the route better than anyone else in this State now that the late Surveyor Canning is no longer with us. This man's successes have been remarkable. He is likely to be put in charge of all overlanding to be undertaken. The arrangement made is that the producers will be paid at a rate per head on delivery to the drover. They will be paid for the cost of mustering. It is expected that the margin for the producer, in addition to the original advance, on the arrival of the stock at the destination—even of store cattle—will be about £2 per head.

As to Risk of Pleuro and Tick.

Mr. MARSHALL (without notice) asked the Minister for Lands: Is any preparation being made for a strict survey of the stock so overlanded in so far as the danger from pleuro or tick is concerned?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: The risk of introducing pleuro and tick from the North-West has always given cause for great concern, and ships and coastal routes by which stock have been brought south of Broome have been carefully watched. In connection with the Canning route, we have conferred with all the station owners concerned, and they have concurred in the department's plan that we should keep confined to certain areas all the stock so overlanded so that there will be no danger either to clean areas in the Murchison or to the southern areas of the State.

MOTION—PRINTING MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

As to State's War Effort.

Debate resumed from the previous day on the following motion by the Premier:—

That the Ministerial Statement be printed.

MR. RAPHAEL (Victoria Park) [11.11]: The remarks I desire to contribute to this debate will be brief, and as far as possible I intend to confine myself to what, in my opinion, is the position of the State in the general war effort, what it has done and what it could contribute if it were allowed to do so. Western Australia has shown its loyalty by its contributions to war funds and by the manpower made available for the army on a voluntary basis before universal service was instituted. We have to realise that our manpower was definitely used for the building up of shortages in Eastern States' units caused through the non-enlistment of men there. It is no longer a secret that a large number of our soldiers have returned from the Far East after having done very fine work there and won many laurels, and we have found many of our men to be members of Eastern States contingents. Western Australian soldiers have been used to build up the strength of Eastern States' units because of the insufficiency of enlistments in those States. The requisite reinforcements were not forthcoming, and our lads were used to supply the deficiency.

When I spoke in this House last October, I felt slightly annoyed at what I considered was the unfair deal Western Australia was getting, not only from the Commonwealth Government but also from various men in charge, such as Mr. Essington Lewis. I have the greatest respect for Mr. Essington Lewis,

but I objected to the action of such men in disallowing opportunities for our young people and for our secondary productivity to come into operation. At one stage I had to resume my seat while I was being accused of disloyalty for having raised my voice in courteous protest against what was occurring at Welshpool, though the remark was withdrawn at a later stage. A number of months have passed, and many mistakes have been made, but I was assured it would be only a matter of time before that huge factory would be in production.

Mr. Sampson: A long time!

Mr. RAPHAEL: Only 12 months have elapsed since we were assured that the department under the Hon. E. H. Gray was securing the names and addresses of all the munition workers required, and I think the names of 3,000 or 4,000 were obtained. A number of those people were munition workers during the 1914-18 war; they were men and women who had worked in the Woolwich Arsenal and had offered to return to the production of munitions for the Empire, only in this State instead of in England. I was told that I was wrong, so I gave the names of men and women and said that some of the men were engaged in the country on relief work.

I am pleased to say that those men are no longer on relief work: today they are contributing to the war effort. What a wonderful thing it must be for the Commonwealth to realise that such skilled men are no longer wasting their time on relief work in the country! No longer are they patching up roads or doing forestry work. These men, trained in the use of metals and in the production of armaments, have been permitted to participate in the State's war effort—they are digging trenches for air raid shelters in and about the city! That is the way in which these skilled workers are contributing to the war effort! Because they happen to be in Western Australia, they are still shovelling sand.

I have the greatest respect for the Prime Minister; I have been one of Mr. Curtin's staunchest supporters, but I was thoroughly disappointed at what we saw during our inspection of the munitions factories last week. I did not stay to see the Midland Junction Workshops annexe.

Mr. Cross: It is the one you ought to have seen.

Mr. RAPHAEL: There was too much red tape about it for my liking. One had to hang around, hand over a card before one could go in, give it up again on coming out, and sit down and wait until somebody was ready to show one around. I had something more important on which to occupy my time, and refused to waste it in that way. The factories I saw could be put into one little corner of any of the factories in the Eastern States. I do not say that the Minister is not proud of what he has done and what he is essaying to do, but it was an insult to our intelligence to take us out to see those little tinpot shows. If that is the best we can do as a contribution to the war effort, it is a very poor showing for a State like Western Australia. I am not blaming the Minister for what is happening here.

Mr. W. Hegney: There is blame enough to go all round.

Mr. RAPHAEL: Probably he can take his share of the blame. The Minister will remember that I had the pleasure of inspecting, in his company, some of the munitions factories in South Australia, after which I could not feel enthusiastic about a small place turning out Pope products—mincing machines, garden sprinklers and suchlike things. Yet, in less than three months, eight acres of ground were covered with a factory in South Australia and the machines were in production. We are told that all roads lead either to Heaven or to Hell. It strikes me that with a lot of Eastern States concerns the track they take is to Colonel Thorpe, who represents Utopia, or Heaven. To get to Heaven, one must put oneself in touch with Colonel Thorpe. Anything in Western Australia that does not go to Heaven goes to Hell. In this State, Bolton and Co. were given a contract to produce explosive bombs. The firm has many thousands of pounds' worth of machinery lying idle now, machinery that has not turned a wheel. If six months ago the firm had been permitted to obtain in Western Australia the machinery it needed, that factory could have been in production. But the firm was told that the machinery had to come from the Eastern States. Well, it was ordered there for Bolton's and was packed for Bolton's; but it went to Queensland. True, some spare parts and rubbish not wanted in Queensland did come to Western Australia.

Everyone knows that Queensland originally was as far behind with its munitions production as Western Australia. But we read in the Press that two of the huge American bombers are daily being put together in Queensland. The output there has been increased to an overwhelming quantity. But before proceeding further with Western Australian production, let me mention that the "Australian Manufacturer," of Sydney, under date of the 7th March last, speaks of "production proceeding apace." I also wish to quote what the labour requirements of the various States for heavy steel in this connection have been—New South Wales 4,500 men and 2,500 women, Queensland 1,800 men and 1,750 women, Victoria, 4,000 men and 2,500 women, South Australia 5,000 men and 5,000 women, Tasmania (and we know the size of Tasmania as against that of Western Australia) 800 men and 700 women, and Western Australia 220 men and 300 women. Incidentally, it has been estimated that towards the end of June next private factories in Victoria and South Australia will require approximately 10,000 additional workers. Our factories will not be needing any more workers at the end of June at the rate we are going.

The "Australian Manufacturer" is considered to be an authoritative paper, and under date the 14th March last it gives percentages of increase in Australian factory employment since September of 1939, as follows:—New South Wales 29 per cent., Victoria, 31 per cent., Queensland 22 per cent., Commonwealth 30.8 per cent., Tasmania 20 per cent., South Australia 60 per cent., and Western Australia 13 per cent. The paper further states that at the commencement of hostilities some 566,000 people were engaged in manufacturing industries in Australia, and that the total has now risen to 699,000, an increase of 133,000 in 30 months. The journal in question also writes:—

When it is remembered that the overwhelming majority of these workers are today engaged in the manufacture of munitions and military equipment, the vastness and the complexity of our war-production machine becomes strikingly evident.

That is an entirely authentic piece of information which this House might well consider. Just regard these percentages of increase of workers employed: Western Australia 13 per cent., South Australia 60 per cent.! When we find such things happen-

ing, we may revert, as I do entirely without pleasure, to that monument of mistakes, the disused Henderson Naval Base, where a million of money was spent and completely wasted, thrown into the sea. What would the position have been a few short months ago, if the Japanese had come here then, when shipping was at its height? At Fremantle, the number of ships at that time is only too well known. The Commonwealth has in operation at the disused Naval Base one old dredge, taking about two buckets per hour in an endeavour to re-open the channel there after 2½ years of war. Is it any wonder that our young men go backwards? The other dredge, which was there, is now in the Eastern States, I understand.

I left off discussing the Bolton factory to quote figures of increased employment in some Eastern States factories. I repeat that at Bolton's factory thousands of pounds' worth of machinery are lying idle today, turning out nothing whatever to aid the war effort. And that is for the simple reason that certain machines are missing here because they were wanted for Eastern States factories. When machines are wanted in Eastern Australia, if a machine is on a steamship bound for Western Australia but is wanted in, say South Australia, it is taken off the vessel at Adelaide. That makes me think of the rate at which I saw buildings going up in South Australia a little while ago. I have been in that State several times and took the opportunity to put my nose into the munitions factories there, or if I could not do that I spent my time inspecting the factories going up all over the place. That remark applies to Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney alike. The Holden factory in South Australia is a much larger enterprise than is Bolton's. Now it would not be extravagant to say that there are 5,000 people working in the Holden factory in Adelaide.

Mr. Patrick: That is pre-war.

Mr. RAPHAEL: No, now.

The Minister for Labour: There are 5,000.

Mr. RAPHAEL: Yes, 5,000. How many were there at Bolton's a little while ago?

The Minister for Labour: Five.

Mr. RAPHAEL: Yes, five. Mr. Bolton had to sack his men because he had nothing for them to do. He is now employing 100, and he has a few contracts. When we secured a Labour Prime Minister and a man who represented this State, I was very gleeful. I thought that Western Australia would

get the deal to which it was entitled. But when I read that the Federal Government was worried with red tape and was not able to overcome the difficulty, I started to wonder whether we would ever get a fair deal.

I do not know the facts, but I am going to read something that appeared in the Press and was attributed to Mr. Makin, the Minister for Munitions. I do not know how he can make such a statement, because it is not true. The statement, which appeared in the "West Australian" yesterday, is headed "Coastal Factory. Operating next month" and is as follows:—

I have no knowledge of any suspension of work at the munitions annexe and the State can take it definitely that the programme there will continue. Any difficulties that may have arisen—

I want members to listen to this because it shows that he knows nothing about it, and I say that definitely.

—must have been due to either labour or material.

He speaks of the difficulty being due to labour, yet I have men chasing me for work every day in the week.

Mr. Withers: What about materials and machinery?

Mr. RAPHAEL: I will get on to the question of machinery directly. There are men digging holes in the ground to protect us from the Japs. They would be better employed making munitions for our boys to fire at the Japs. Mr. Makin continued—

That is a matter I will inquire into when I arrive in Perth. The factory is being built at a cost of £660,000 and will require approximately 650 males and 750 females as employees when in full operation.

Mr. North: That is the Welshpool factory.

Mr. RAPHAEL: Yes. The Minister continued—

According to my official information received yesterday—

That is more red tape, or four inch ribbon as I call it.

—it will be operating in May and the production will steadily increase until the maximum is reached.

A lot of us will be in the Old Men's Home when the maximum production is reached. There is not the slightest doubt about that.

Mr. Mann: Will the factory be operating in May?

Mr. RAPHAEL: It depends on a lot of circumstances. If reference is made to the lawns being used as bowling greens or

tennis courts or to the use of the cocktail bar or the offices, it will be in production, but if reference is made to the manufacture of munitions, it definitely will not. Practically all the men have been taken off the job. It has been such a big thing! All the plans and specifications had to come from Melbourne, and by the time they put a railway line through the high explosive room and had to shift one or the other, and by the time they had put a sewer under the main building and had to shift either one or the other, a considerable period had elapsed. All that sort of thing takes time, and we have to be patient with the Federal Government in regard to these matters!

Mr. Sampson: My word, we have!

Mr. RAPHAEL: We must realise that owing to the fact that we cannot get machinery there is no need to work the men too hard out there and there is no need to have too many working. At present there are about 50. They used to have a guard marching up and down outside the front of the buildings, and the back fences were down! The construction of factories in war time is a big problem. They must be protected and looked after! What does it matter if the public money is being wasted! A Premiers' Conference is being held today and they want to save manpower. That is why the Federal Government wants to bring in unification through the back door by means of uniform taxation. Believe me it will be a sorry day for Western Australia if our members support the proposition that is to be made to the Federal Parliament.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I am pleased to hear that from you.

Mr. RAPHAEL: You have heard it from many members on this side of the House besides me. I have my principles and will stick to them. When I have to twist on them I will get out of the House.

The Minister for Labour: Do not let them pull your leg.

Mr. RAPHAEL: There is no pulling my leg! The cream of our nation has been driven from pillar to post. Our men have been driven out of Crete and some of them have told me how they lay out there begging for planes. The same occurred in Malaya and Singapore and everywhere else. What must the mothers of these young men and their families think of the useless slaughter that took place, because the men did not have the support that was necessary for them to

put up a decent fight against the enemy? It is time the Commonwealth Government had a clean-up of some of the heads. There is the case of the Nolex Tool Company and this brings me back to my friend Colonel Thorpe.

Mr. McDonald: What is his job?

Mr. RAPHAEL: He is Director of Machine Tools. Nothing can be bought unless he is first consulted. No matter what track is taken, he sits at the corner. I am no engineer. I do not profess to be one but I went to a lot of trouble before I brought this matter up. I persuaded three eminent engineers of this State to have a look at this case and they all say there seems to be a lot in it. Colonel Thorpe, in about half an hour, decided there was nothing in it or, if there was anything in it, it was too big anyhow for Western Australia or Australia to handle, and it would have to go through America or Germany. That was his advice to Mr. Nolan at the time.

The Minister for Labour: Why Germany?

Mr. RAPHAEL: I think he was a director of Macphersons before the war. If that is a German firm, though the name would not suggest it, it seems that after the war all those nice things will be joined together again and we will all be very happy—perhaps! Colonel Thorpe is Director of Machine Tools for the Commonwealth. He is directly answerable to Mr. Essington Lewis, but it can be realised that Mr. Lewis has a big job to do and cannot watch everything. This link and bar principle of tool construction is pretty near as simple as the meccano and the men who have looked into the matter are of the opinion that there is a lot in it, and that after the war its development would be a big thing for this State and a bad thing for a lot of other people. As I have said, I am not an engineer and I must read some of the details because they are too deep for me. Here is the information I have—

In approximately October, 1940, this company commenced the development of the present component part method of machine tool manufacture. By the time Mr. Thorpe, Director of Machine Tool Production, visited this State some time in 1941, the idea had been developed to the extent that a machine for grinding cutter blades of mincing machines had been produced and was in operation.

During a visit of approximately three-quarters of an hour's duration Mr. Thorpe remarked that this method of manufacturing machine tools was most ingenious, but he considered it would take too long to develop into anything worth while.

Too long to develop! What did the Old Country do? With regard to the building up of air training schools and air armadas and other things, it said that such and such would be accomplished by 1942 or 1943. Those prophecies were made in 1939 and 1940. Yet Colonel Thorpe said that this thing would take too long to develop!

In any case it was too big for Australia to develop and should be developed in America or Germany. Mr. Hartnett, Director of Ordnance, later visited the factory, and he was very impressed and had no hesitation in stating that he considered a great deal of use could be made of the idea. He was so interested that after returning to Adelaide he wrote back to his firm here (General Motors) and asked them to obtain further particulars and forward same to him.

Mr. Hartman of General Motors production standards department visited our factory, and we understand he reported very favourably on the idea to Mr. Hartnett.

Nothing more was ever heard from Mr. Hartnett until some months later Mr. Fernie of the local Industries Assistance Board wired him and the wire and the reply are as follows—:

Nolex Tool Company three excellent machines on bar and link principle. This development well worth your investigation. Convinced mass production of bar and links would go a long way towards solving machine tool shortage.

That is what is holding up our production today. The reply was—

Many thanks for your wire advising useful development of machines on bar and link principle. Regret unable personally to investigate at this time. Nevertheless have suggested to Thorpe that he should immediately consider as valuable contribution to machine tool problems.

That is from the representative of General Motors that has a little capital in this State and many millions in America. The statement I have continues—

In the meantime Mr. Nairn and Colonel Collett of the Federal House had been approached and they took up the matter with Professor Mauldon of the Industries Expansion Commission.

The correspondence in connection with this effort is enclosed.

Also during this period another local manufacturer, Mr. Tough of the Tough Instrument Company, had been down to the factory and seen the machines. So impressed by the possibilities of the system was Mr. Tough that he wrote to Col. Thorpe pointing out the advantages of this method of manufacture and he received the following reply:—

Director of Machine Tools and Gauges,
Ministry of Munitions.

It is desired to acknowledge and thank you for your letter of the 2nd March, concerning the bar and link method of machine tool construction as demonstrated by the Nolex Engineering Co. During July of last year when I was in the West, I called on Mr. Nolan and inspected this method as shown by him. I explained to Mr. Nolan at the time that the advantages of his system apply mainly to frame construction and in Australia this is the least difficult part of machine tool building, there being no shortage of pig iron but a greater shortage of steel forgings and bars.

I also believe that to get anything of real benefit from Mr. Nolan's ideas, it would involve considerations to simplify and adapt the more difficult parts of the machine. However, this would take time and staff and up to date we have found it better to get straight on to the work on hand.

Thanking you very much for bringing this matter to my attention.

From all this information and correspondence one fact stands out and that is that all roads of investigation finally lead to Col. Thorpe and as he is not favourable to this idea being developed, no further progress can be made.

Someone else had different ideas and I interested that person in the matter. We next find that Senator Collett wrote a letter to Mr. Sexton, who is a director of the Nolex Engineering Company, in which he said—

Mr. Nairn and I have given some thought as to the best methods to be adopted in order to bring your project under notice in the most advantageous manner and have arrived at the conclusion that as it contains the promise of a new industry for Western Australia, the wisest course is to secure the attention and influence of the W.A. Industries Expansion Commission. With this in mind we are communicating with the chairman today.

I do not know if that was done. Here is another letter from Senator Collett, this one being addressed to Professor Mauldon. In that letter Senator Collett enclosed correspondence he had received from the Nolex Engineering Company, and said—

As regards the matter with which it deals, I have attended at the works and witnessed a demonstration, but as a layman was unable to form definite opinions. However, it is claimed that, given the requisite encouragement, it contains a prospect for a new and considerable industry for the State that will stand under both war and peace conditions.

Hon. C. G. Latham: When we get unification, we will be absolutely done.

Mr. Mann: We will not accept unification.

Hon. C. G. Latham: One cannot leave the country now without a permit.

Mr. RAPHAEL: The letter proceeded—

From a conversation with the directors, I learned that representations already made in several quarters have secured favourable commendation but—nothing else. It appears to me that the adoption of the basic idea would probably entail the scrapping of valuable machinery already installed in large workshops in the Eastern States. Hence the lack of further encouragement.

Viewing all the circumstances, it is possible that an examination of the idea by the W.A. Industries Expansion Commission is merited and would be fully justified. To that end I would be grateful for your assistance.

I do not wish to weary the House with all the correspondence, but Col. Thorpe under date the 27th March, 1942, wrote to the secretary of the Western Australian Industries Expansion Commission as follows:—

I desire to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 17th inst. relative to the bar and link method of machine tool construction as demonstrated by the Nolex Engineering Company of Perth. Last year when I inspected the machine referred to and discussed the whole proposition with Mr. Nolan,—

When Col. Thorpe inspected the machine, it was about half constructed. Since then the erection has been completed and work is proceeding full speed ahead, doing a wonderful job. To continue the letter—

—I explained to him that frame construction, as a general rule, particularly in Australia where there is no shortage of pig iron, presents the least difficult part of machine tool building. For example, in the construction of a lathe, the greatest difficulty is in the design of the headstock, the slides of the saddle and the tailstock. The use of Mr. Nolan's ideas would be largely confined to the bed frame, and as mentioned, this presents the least of our difficulties. The same would apply in the case of a milling machine. Therefore, to get any direct benefit from Mr. Nolan's ideas, they must involve considerations of how to adapt the more difficult parts of the machine, and this, in my opinion, would take much longer than to get straight ahead with the job in hand.

While I have every regard and appreciation of Mr. Nolan's inventive genius, I am afraid I cannot, in this connection at least, see any definite advantage over existing constructional methods of these machines.

There we have the same old story. The writer seems to be unwilling to bat away from his own pitch. There is a further communication in which it is pointed out that no further action was to be taken in the matter, and another from Col. Collett expressing his regret at the delay that had taken place.

I am confident that when the Minister for Industrial Development visited this under-

taking he was immediately impressed, because he promised that some finance would be made available to the firm to enable an extension of the operations to be undertaken. I may be wrong there, but that is the information furnished to me. However, in my conversation with these people they pointed out that they did not want additional capital, but desired to secure more machinery so that they could go ahead and increase their production by 500 per cent. According to reports this firm is the only one in Australia turning out machine tool holders.

Mr. Cross: No, it is not.

Mr. RAPHAEL: The hon. member knows more than I do, of course.

Mr. Sampson: No, he does not claim to know anything.

Mr. RAPHAEL: I made the statement on the basis of the advice I received from this firm.

Mr. Patrick: At any rate all machine tool holders were imported a few years ago.

Mr. RAPHAEL: Yes. The firm is exploiting the American method of production of machine tools and machine tool holders. I was shown the orders received here, and was told they could dispose of as much of the output as they could turn out. As soon as they could supply an order it was snapped up in the Eastern States. The firm is turning out the goods as fast as it can. Obviously the Minister knows all about the business, otherwise he would not have offered further financial assistance.

During the course of the debate many members in mentioning the war effort have referred to our friends who are here from other parts of the world. Mention has been made of their methods as being different from our own. There seemed to be a suggestion that it was derogatory to our own people to draw attention to such matters. I cannot understand why it should be so. We all know that the Yanks move fast; we cannot get away from that. If something gets in their way at Fremantle it is soon shifted. If they want a telephone line and the Telegraph Department is of as much assistance to them as it is usually to the general public, which means that the Yanks would have to wait for a few weeks, they do not wait for that period. They take what they want straight away. I understand they have helped themselves to build-

ings and whatever is necessary. They do not argue the point for too long. We cannot blame them, seeing that there is a war in progress. If they want anything the Yanks take it; we waste weeks in arguing. I shall quote another letter which was sent by the General Sales Manager of Gilbert Lodge and Coy., of Sydney to the Nolex Engineering Coy., in which he said:—

Letter No. 90 of the 20th March refers to wedge type tool holders, which we are urgently requiring for the engineering trade generally and for the Small Arms Factory, Lithgow—

That means that Western Australia is in the forefront regarding this business because the holders cannot be obtained in the Eastern States.

We should be pleased if you would investigate the prospects of commencing the manufacture of these tool holders, as outlined in our letter, and particularly the execution of our orders S20 and S24, which are still outstanding. We would advise that we are very anxious to obtain as soon as possible supplies of the following tool holders, for which we are holding accumulated orders at the present time . . . Anything you can do to expedite delivery of the above types against our outstanding orders will be appreciated.

Mr. Patrick: Who was that letter from?

Mr. RAPHAEL: From Gilbert Lodge & Coy., of Sydney, and is under date the 2nd April, 1942. It would appear that that firm buys from the factory here and sells the tools in turn to the Small Arms Factory at Lithgow. That is perpetuating the vicious circle and encouraging the middleman, which is what the Labour Party does not advocate. The position locally is not at all satisfactory. We have not turned out a single bullet or cartridge case, although we may have manufactured shells at Midland Junction. Even then, before any shells could be manufactured we had to construct our own machines, for nothing was sent over from the Eastern States.

Mr. Cross: I suppose we shall have to make our own tools for the factory at Welshpool.

Mr. RAPHAEL: That will be done after the war, so we need not worry about that.

Member: Which war?

Mr. RAPHAEL: After the present war—I think, Western Australia represents one-third of the total area of the Commonwealth, and is entitled to consideration. Let members contemplate the relative positions of Western Australia and Tasmania in con-

nection with the heavy steel industry. The deal we are getting is appalling.

With other members I believe that Parliament by meeting occasionally and discussing these matters may do some good—provided the military authorities will allow reports of the debates to be published. I think it is time the Commonwealth Government was pulled up. We are living in a country that is still democratic and free and will remain so until we are conquered by the Japs or some other nation—if they can do so. No one has been granted a dictatorship over the Press of Australia. Even concerning minor details we have to ring up the censor to see if he will allow them to be published. I have heard that from half-a-dozen newspaper men. The only thing the censor does not concern himself with are divorce cases. It might be a good thing for the morals of the people if those cases were kept out of the Press. Factories making munitions in the Eastern States are turning out 36,000,000 small arms cartridges per month.

Mr. Mann: What do you mean by that?

Mr. RAPHAEL: I mean .303 cartridges, and they are making only that quantity in the third year of the war.

Mr. Cross: We must have small arms munitions.

Mr. RAPHAEL: If that is to be taken as a guide to what is likely to occur at Welshpool, and what we may be allowed to do in this State, I maintain we shall not get very far. I expected that members of the Country Party would deal with the necessity for installing power alcohol plants in Western Australia.

Mr. Cross: Is not one to be put up at Collie?

Mr. RAPHAEL: Many months ago it was stated that power alcohol plants would be erected, one in New South Wales and one in Western Australia to begin with, but nothing has yet been done. Probably tens of thousands of pounds of the people's money are being wasted through weevils getting into the wheat and destroying a national asset, wheat that could be used for the production of power alcohol.

Mr. Seward: Weevils are not destroying the wheat.

Mr. RAPHAEL: Let the hon. member not believe that story.

Mr. Seward: I gave you the figures the other night.

Mr. RAPHAEL: I will deal with that matter now.

Mr. Seward: I wish you would.

Mr. RAPHAEL: I would not like the hon. member to get that idea into his head. Quite recently I set out to buy half-a-dozen bags of wheat for my birds.

Mr. Cross: They must have been complaining.

Mr. RAPHAEL: I always have wheat tested before I buy it and see a sample of it. Now and again a few stones get into it. Of course the farmers do not put them there on purpose to make up the weight.

The Minister for Lands: I cannot imagine that they would take you down.

Mr. RAPHAEL: They did not take me down, but the attempt was there. I said to the man who was selling the wheat, "I want you to put the tester in and show me a sample of the wheat." A sample of the wheat was then produced.

Mr. Seward: Out of the bag?

Mr. RAPHAEL: When I saw the sample I said, "Only half of that is grain." The man replied, "That is f.a.q. wheat." We then had a discussion, the exact nature of which I would not like to disclose here. I refused to buy the wheat. Someone else then said to me, "You could get that class of wheat at a much cheaper rate."

Mr. McDonald: You know the motto, "I hear no weevil, I speak no weevil," etc.

Mr. RAPHAEL: I will not give the name of the firm I visited subsequently and from which I obtained what I wanted, but I have the particulars in my pocket.

Mr. Mann: You are reflecting on the farmer.

Mr. RAPHAEL: Not at all, but I do not want that kind of wheat. F.a.q. wheat has gone by the board. Today it is "about f.a.q.," because half of it is eaten by weevils and therefore it is only half f.a.q.

Mr. J. Hegney: What does that work out at?

Mr. RAPHAEL: The contract price is 4s. 6½d. per bushel plus 2d. freight and cash before delivery.

Mr. Seward: That would not suit you.

Mr. RAPHAEL: The wheat is supposed to have been cleaned, but it is possible to see not only dust but dead weevils in it. Indeed, many of the weevils seem to have come to life again. The man I first went to asked me to go back and have a look at the

weevils. The full price was being asked for that wheat, whereas it is only worth 2s. 6d. a bushel.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Thank goodness you are irresponsible.

Mr. RAPHAEL: What does the hon. member mean by that?

Hon. C. G. Latham: Your statement is irresponsible.

Mr. RAPHAEL: The hon. member says I am making an inaccurate statement. I will give £10 to the Children's Hospital if my statement can be proved untrue. The hon. member can visit the place with me at dinner time.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I do not say there are no weevils.

Mr. RAPHAEL: The hon. member backs down at once.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. RAPHAEL: My statement is true. I have taken the trouble to ascertain these facts and do not like members to back down in the way the Leader of the Opposition has done.

Hon. C. G. Latham: If I were permitted to do so, I would make a statement myself on the subject.

Mr. RAPHAEL: Far greater use could be made of this wheat than that it should be consumed by weevils. Pig and poultry raisers should be allowed to get it at a cheaper rate, and thus produce the foodstuffs for which the State is crying out. Eggs are only 2s. 4d. a dozen because of the shortage of feed for the fowls.

Mr. Cross: Egg producers are paying the top price for the wheat they buy.

Mr. RAPHAEL: My electors cannot afford to pay that price. We know the basic wage they have to live on and that, because of the decision of the Arbitration Court, the increase to which people were entitled has been denied them. If wheat of this class were used for the production of power alcohol instead of being allowed to go to waste, it would be a good thing for the country. With reference to munitions factories, I would like to deal with one particular case. When I was visiting a munitions annexe the other day, the man in charge said to me "I have had to put off 90 hands, because I had no material with which to get on with the job. The machines are idle and I cannot get the work done." Those people are still out of work and the machines are still idle because of the lack of the necessary material. Permission has

not been given for that material to be produced in Western Australia. We are not allowed to do that because the combines are too strong. To bring the material from Sydney to Perth by train would take a month. We know what the shipping difficulties are.

The Prime Minister is asking for a total war effort and yet these valuable machines are lying idle and 90 people have been stood down because of the lack of material. The factory in question is supposed to be making shell parts. This leads me to the point that we cannot get essential materials into Western Australia. We cannot, therefore, carry out the miserable contracts that we have been offered at our munition annexes. As I said by interjection, our people are being precluded from leaving Western Australia by train. It takes 30 days to bring war materials from Sydney to Perth, but it takes five days to send hundreds of girls from this State to another State to learn how to cook, how to serve cocktails in officers' messes, and how to wait on tables. Such services are required in connection with the Air Force. In the Press this morning reference is made to the hardships suffered by girls who have had to sit up in the train all the way to their destination.

Mr. Mann: Why cannot the training be done here?

Mr. RAPHAEL: I believe Commander de la Rue said he would not have a politician in his office and would kick him out if he got there. In my opinion it would be a good thing if a few politicians and business people were associated with the management of the Air Force.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Is there not a Minister for the Air Force?

Mr. RAPHAEL: That does not matter. Too much attention is paid to the opinions of subordinates. A long-term policy has been laid down. Women have to learn to be cooks in another State. I have never come across anything so stupid as that is.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Some inquiry into that may now be in progress in the other States.

Mr. RAPHAEL: That may be so. We daily see advertisements in the paper in connection with that matter. This year we are spending £400,000,000 on the war, and probably next year £500,000,000. If people are allowed to go on as they are, the expenditure in the year after will probably be

£1,000,000,000. I have seen at the markets members of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force competing against each other for cabbages and paying £4 a bag for them. I have watched this going on. Money does not matter to those people, because it does not belong to them. It is only because of the competition amongst the three forces that the price is as high as it is.

Mr. Cross: There should be one buyer for them all.

Mr. RAPHAEL: Of course we must feed the American Forces and other visiting forces; it is right that we should do so. Our men are surely entitled to receive the same food as the Americans get, but they do not. One can see the Americans eating fruit and ice-cream, grilled schnapper and grilled steak. Whether they buy it themselves or not, I cannot say.

Mr. Thorn: I would not worry about that side of the question.

Mr. RAPHAEL: I am not. But our soldiers' food supply has to be cut down. As the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Styants) pointed out, when there was a shortage of bacon the difficulty was easily overcome. The military authorities simply cut the men's ration in half.

Mr. Cross: But the Americans are bringing their bacon from America; do not forget that.

Mr. RAPHAEL: I am not now talking about the Americans, but about the soldiers at Northam.

Mr. Thorn: I understand there are peacetime rations and wartime rations.

Mr. RAPHAEL: I do not think there is lack of opportunity to train men and women in this State. If there is a shortage of instructors, however, probably some of the police instructors would be only too pleased to help to train the service police. It is ridiculous to think that these men must be sent to the Eastern States to receive training. I know the Air Board is stationed in Melbourne. We hear nothing but "Melbourne." As a matter of fact, I went to the Air Force office myself to enlist. There were about five in the office, including a dear little lass. An advertisement had appeared in the newspaper for recruits for the R.A.A.F. After standing there for some ten minutes, I put up my hand in an attitude of "Please, teacher, may I say something?" and said that I wanted information about enlistments. I was informed by the young

girl that she was going to the buffet for a cup of tea. By that time I had become a little terse, and demanded the information I required. She then said, "Write to the Air Board at Melbourne," and left me cold. Everything in connection with the Air Force is done from Melbourne. Our men and women must be sent there for training. Notwithstanding the huge congestion on the Commonwealth railways, women from this State must be sent to Melbourne to be trained as cooks, waitresses, orderlies and wireless operators. Why cannot they be trained here? Inquiries should be made into these matters.

The civilian population of Western Australia is as much entitled to travelling facilities as are the residents of the other States. I wondered if the train service was being reduced between Adelaide and Melbourne, Melbourne and Sydney, and Sydney and Brisbane. The only way I could find out was to telegraph, when I found that traffic in those States was still normal. The Premier of South Australia, Mr. Playford, is talking about curtailing travelling in his State. There is no such talk here, however, because one cannot get on to the trains for the Eastern States. The train which took the evacuees from this State only had sitting accommodation for the passengers; but a sleeper can be obtained between Adelaide and Melbourne, and Melbourne and Sydney.

Another matter that is causing concern and with which Parliament should deal, is the delay taking place in the arrival of letters from the Eastern States. Some of them have taken 18 days to reach Western Australia from Sydney. They could have been carried here in that time on the back of a donkey. What is the reason? It is that South Australia has received a huge share of munitions production, and has refused to allow the deviation of the Broken Hill railway to Port Pirie. South Australia had to be given compensation when the Redhill line was constructed. South Australia is not much of a State, anyhow, although I was born there.

Mr. Thorn: It is a good State.

Mr. RAPHAEL: I do not think much of it.

Mr. Thorn: I do.

Mr. RAPHAEL: The hon. member visits that State to attend meetings of the Wine Board. South Australia certainly produces

good wine. Why should South Australia refuse to allow the construction of the railway I mentioned? It was in 1908 or 1909 that Lord Kitchener recommended the construction of the transcontinental railway. The member for Albany (Mr. Hill) has pointed out that rivers and harbours here have had very little spent upon them by the Government, and that is what is happening to our Commonwealth railways. They were intended for defence purposes. But what has happened? The engines are in bad repair and cannot be relied upon to do the work for which they were intended. The line should have been duplicated many years ago.

Recently I read an article in the Press about the Transport Officer in Melbourne, a kindly old gentleman. His duty is to control the traffic on the railways. In regard to the train that left here two or three months ago, he was on the station at Melbourne, presumably to look after the passengers. He saw the Western Australian "Overland," as it is called, but what struck me as humorous was that he had not seen the men, women and children sitting up all night, yet he said that preference was given to them over young men who wanted to travel.

Mr. North: Perhaps the Americans will shake up the line if they are here long enough.

Mr. RAPHAEL: I want to say a few words about the A.R.P. I hope I shall finish by 1 o'clock.

Members: Oh!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Victoria Park will proceed.

Mr. RAPHAEL: I wish to speak upon the conditions, as I found them, in the Northam camp. The food was good. There was, however, a sad lack of equipment. I went to my own surgery and took back with me many instruments for use at the camp. I had made a complaint to Colonel Terry about the lack of equipment, and he replied, "We can do nothing; everything must come from Melbourne." There we have the bottleneck again: everything has to come from Melbourne. It is not possible to buy a pair of forceps or a needle or any instrument, unless it is procured from Melbourne. I inspected the dentures that were made, and would say that apparently all the good teeth were retained in Melbourne and Sydney, the

indifferent ones being sent here for our men. How long is this sort of thing to go on?

Mr. J. Hegney: As long as we allow it to go on.

Mr. RAPHAEL: I am glad that we have Lieut.-General Gordon Bennett in this State, because he is a forceful leader. He wrote a report on the debacle that occurred in Malaya and at Singapore, but the authorities in England will not allow it to be published. From what I can learn of him, he is certainly a fast mover.

Mr. J. Hegney: He is a mover, all right?

Mr. RAPHAEL: I believe he will carry out his duties efficiently. He is not the sort of man to stay in his office and give instructions as to what should be done; he gets about himself and sees that the work is done. I hope he will be given the powers which at present seem to be retained in Melbourne. I will leave further discussion on war matters until the next meeting of this House, when probably I shall be able to devote more time to them. I notice that the Leader of the Opposition is becoming restive.

Mr. J. H. Smith: We have all next week and the week after!

Mr. RAPHAEL: I now wish to deal with A.R.P. and tea matters. I am sorry I feel compelled to deal with these at some length, as there are various aspects upon which I wish to touch. There is first the question of tea-rationing in this State and the payment to Mr. Bennett of £30 a week, plus 30s. a day travelling expenses, which brings the total amount to over £2,000 a year. With his staff the cost will be from £5,000 to £10,000 per annum, as he will be travelling around all the time. If the Commonwealth Government had appointed Mr. Bennett to this job two years ago, and he had been a man of vision and had built up stocks of tea in this State or in the Commonwealth, so that people could carry on normally, I would be in full accord with the expenditure of that money. But why appoint a man now at £30 a week? It is like bolting the stable-door after the horse has gone.

Mr. Warner: There is no tea to ration!

Mr. RAPHAEL: Our stocks are very low. The grocers have to do the job of rationing. Now, when money is short—we have been told it is pretty well non est—it is ridiculous for boards to be appointed in

the way that is occurring. Building materials are being frozen; there is a petrol board, and no one wanted that.

Mr. J. H. Smith: You would expect a board for the timber industry!

Mr. RAPHAEL: Money is being squandered in every shape and form. Even Federal members are on all sorts of committees, and are a big expense to the Commonwealth Government. Surely we do not want boards for all these things. One man should be able to do the work. If building is stopped I cannot see why we should have six or eight men on a board to say what we shall do or not do. Let the firms make some decisions for themselves. Tools are frozen; saws, bits, hammers and everything else. Tyres, too! Not much is left which is not frozen.

Hon. C. G. Latham: When will you freeze this speech of yours?

Mr. RAPHAEL: I enter my protest against the creation of these boards. The people have been denied tea. Old-age pensioners, munitions workers, and everyone else are in the same position. The grocers have to handle all the forms, so why appoint Mr. Bennett at £30 a week to do the work.

Mr. Warner: Another cushy job!

Mr. Berry: If they sent him to Colombo to bring some tea back he might be worth it.

Mr. RAPHAEL: In dealing with the A.R.P. in this State, and what has happened through wiping out the brown-out and black-out regulations in another place, I wish to say that there is no one more pleased than I at what has been done. I am head warden of the biggest A.R.P. district in Western Australia, and perhaps in Australia. It consists of 23 sectors, and we have had a hard job to get the people to brown-out the different buildings. I saw last night an article by Mr. Hendry in which he said he went round and brought about 27 prosecutions in one night. Perth has been outstanding in its defiance of these regulations. I do not want to touch on Fremantle, but the representatives of that district say that as far as the black-out went it was a farce there also, inasmuch as the naval authorities would not listen to the military authorities and lights would be found on in the hotels. The story the Minister told about the Yankee and the warden was quite true, because I heard it myself. Perth has defied these regulations from beginning to end.

Mr. Rodoreda: Quite right, too!

Mr. RAPHAEL: Not only did the flat-ites in the Terrace have their lights on but in some instances the backyards were floodlit. I have seen at all hours of the night flats lit up in Hay-street. Not only did the civil population flout these regulations, but Parliament itself flouted them the other night, and the State Government is just as bad an offender as is anyone else. Every floor of the Government Printing Office was a blaze of light on many occasions. The windows were not even covered with pieces of brown paper. Commonwealth departments, the railway stations and the military offices were always a big blaze of light. The police buildings in Beaufort-street housing the force which is going to administer the regulations, had an old torn blind covering a window, and there was a beautiful blaze of light from it. As the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Styants) stated the position, it was a wash-out. I hope when the Government deals with this matter in the next few weeks it will not bring down another set of regulations without seeing that they are properly framed. One of these regulations contained authority for the police, or wardens, to apprehend any person, and for him to be charged in the court, but no penalty was set out for the magistrate to inflict. That was the fault of the Crown Law authorities.

Mr. Cross: Will you—

Mr. RAPHAEL: The member for Canning has been worried by the members of my organisation.

Mr. Warner: Did not they think he was a bright light?

Mr. RAPHAEL: I hope the brown-out and black-out are finished. I spent a lot of money on my place; I had to set an example. By the disallowance of the regulations last night that is all finished with. If again the military authorities ask for certain things to be done, we should see that they definitely black-out or brown-out their own establishments, or whatever it is they ask us to do. Today we drive along with hooded lights and meet 10 or 12 military trucks travelling at 30 miles an hour—some of the Yanks do 60 miles an hour—with their lights fully on. A good many deaths have resulted from the brown-out. If the brown-out comes into operation there should be a strict speed limit enforced of not more than 25 miles an hour, and the Police Force should not only be augmented by the special

constables it now has, but there should be a number of extra men appointed who can ride motor bicycles and catch these speedsters.

Another matter affecting the nerves of wardens has been the lack of co-operation between the Civil Defence Council and the wardens in regard to the issuing of the necessary equipment which has been promised for the last 2½ years. The Civil Defence Council during the last few weeks has moved along a bit. About 2½ months ago they sent me out 10 of these papier mache miners' hats. Men and women were expected to wear them and go out in the middle of a blitz on rescue work. No respirators have been issued, and for a long time no bandages or anything else. When these hats came out I was using a 3 ft. folding ruler, and I tapped one of the hats with it and it went clean through the hat. I returned them all with my compliments. The gentleman in charge of the Civil Defence Council said, "You take the lives of your rescue parties in your own hands by not giving them these hats." I had made a big hole in one with a ruler!

I cannot say that there is no equipment, but there has been a sad lack of it until the last few months. I do not know how the civil population of this State will fare when we only have 85 respirators amongst some 400 wardens, messengers and other personnel. God help the civil population of this State if the Japs ever land and make a gas attack upon it!

I should like to speak of the action of the Arbitration Court in refusing the workers of this State a rise in wages. That brings to my mind that many years ago—

Mr. SPEAKER: It brings to my mind that the hon. member is out of order in speaking on that subject.

Mr. RAPHAEL: That being so, I will not discuss it.

MR. RODOREDA (Roebourne) [12.46]: In common with other members representing the North-West, I have been very greatly disturbed indeed at the state of affairs that has obtained in the north and north-west part of the State during the last few months. Western Australia has been, in a large degree, neglected by the Federal authorities, but the north and north-west of Western Australia can be termed the forgotten land of Australia. North-Westerners have

been ignored by the Federal Government ; neglected through the years to an extent by the State Government, and apparently it was the intention of the military authorities to have us thrown to the wolves. There can be no disputing that.

The position up there was alarming to an extent that the people in other parts of Australia cannot possibly imagine. In what I am about to say I shall not be disclosing any military secrets—I could not do so because I do not know any—but it was common knowledge that there was no intention whatever of making any defence in that part of the State. Yet, at the same time, the people in the North were being asked to form home guards, voluntary service detachments or whatever the term might be.

Mr. North : A volunteer defence corps.

Mr. RODORED A : They formed a very efficient volunteer defence corps and entered into the work heart and soul and full of enthusiasm. Yet it was the intention of the military authorities to leave them to fight it out unaided had the enemy landed on our shores.

Mr. Marshall : With the usual equipment !

Mr. RODORED A : They had a few of their own rifles but, under the impressment order, those rifles were taken from them and were stored for six or eight weeks under cover in the towns. They were in charge of the local police. The rifles were supposed to be required for the military ; we understood they were wanted urgently to equip the soldiers, and yet they were left stored away as I have mentioned. When I complained to the military authorities in Perth, a reply was given that it was not their fault ; the people should never have delivered up those rifles because no impressment order was in force above the 26th parallel. That was not a fact ; it was merely an attempt by the military authorities to get out from under, because the same position obtained in the north of Queensland and the pastoralists there made a similar complaint. The regulations published in a paper bear out my statement. In fact, the police went around and impressed the rifles, and a military captain who toured the North valued the rifles for the Defence Department. Yet I am told it was the fault of the owners for delivering them up. That is the sort of organisation we have to contend with.

The position was very worrying to North-West members, both State and Federal, so worrying that when we were told by the officer in charge, Western Command, that there was no intention of defending the North, we took action. We got into touch with the Federal authorities, sent code wires and stirred them up by all means available, and maybe we will get some action now. I certainly hope we shall. We have a man in charge of the defence of this State who, when he returned from Malaya, publicly stated that the policy of destruction and retreat was no good to him and that we must attack the enemy wherever he was. He said it was of no use defending only the comfortable south, but what are we doing now beyond preparing concentrations of forces in the Eastern States ? Yet, while this is going on, Federal Ministers come here and give us soft soap to the effect that this State is going to be defended.

Words will not defend this State. What we want is equipment and we want the equipment in the right place. It is quite obvious to any thinking person, as General Wavell has said of India, that it is impossible to defend the whole coastline of a continent. The best point at which to concentrate our forces is not in Adelaide or Melbourne as at present. Of that I am positive, and I defy any military expert ever born successfully to contradict it. One has to view not only possibilities, but also probabilities, and while I am no military strategist, I think the probability is that South Australia is the last place that would be attacked. We have to presume that the enemy will attack us where we are weakest and at the points nearest to his own bases.

Mr. Thorn : South Australia has the nearest approach to the Northern Territory.

Mr. RODORED A : The people of the North-West are bewildered ; there is no other word for it. They were the first people in the State to be bombed. I give the State Government full credit for having moved the women and others from Wyndham. Some of them had ringside seats at the conflict and did not at all appreciate the privilege. There was nothing else to do in the circumstances ; there was not a sign of any defence measures at that part. The Government could not get the women out of Broome in time. It is criminal that the North-West should have been neglected to such an extent, in fact, more than

criminal. To allow a place like Broome to be bombed and destroyed and lives to be lost, simply for the want of ten or a dozen fighter planes, was scandalous. The attitude of the previous military commanders was entirely beyond my comprehension.

Mr. Thorn: Were not there planes at Broome when it was bombed?

Mr. RODOREDA: There were no fighter planes. The position in the North-West, so far as the civilian population is concerned, is growing worse. The isolation of the people is becoming more pronounced. The planes do not travel as frequently as they did and the service is irregular. Consequently the mails are irregular. Ships are not permitted to go north of a certain point, and there has been no one in authority in the North to indicate to the people what action they are expected to take in the event of an invasion or in the event of their being bombed. They have not even been told what authority they are to obey. The people in one of those towns were evacuated by order of the head of the volunteer defence force, and he had no more right to take that action than I had. But the people obeyed him; they are law-abiding and they are prepared to act on the instructions of anyone in authority. As soon as it was discovered what had happened, that order was cancelled. We have all sorts of conflicting authorities, one telling the people differently from what the previous one said. We have no one in authority to go to or to do anything, and the man in charge of the military effort there knows no more of the North than he gained on a couple of trips to Broome.

The Minister for Lands: The people there are more afraid of our people than they are of the Japs.

Mr. RODOREDA: Yes. I could not allow this opportunity to pass without stressing the seriousness of the state of affairs that exists. Had I neglected to do so, I would have considered that I was seriously lacking in my duty to the people I represent. Whether my remarks will reach the ears of the military authorities, I do not know. I have no control over that, but at least I have to do here what I conceive to be my duty.

Let me give an instance of the lack of interest being taken in the northern portion of our State by the Federal authorities. For 12 months I was a member of an

emergency road transport committee appointed by the Federal Government to devise a scheme for feeding the people of the North-West in the event of the shipping service becoming dislocated. We worked out a reasonably good plan in great detail. It took nine months of intensive investigation to do that. The whole scheme depended upon supplies of petrol being laid down at various points while ships were still available. Of course, it was not done. The committee has not functioned for nearly 12 months and now, when the emergency has arisen, we are not even holding meetings because we realise the uselessness of doing so.

The food position in the North has to be faced. The Navy demands that no ship shall proceed beyond a certain point, and some arrangement has to be made to feed the population. So far as I know, there is no organised plan. Perhaps, when the position becomes desperate, a truck will be rushed through from Alice Springs carrying food for the women and children in the outback centres of the North. Whether it will, I do not know. The position must be faced as it cannot be ignored. It will not become desperate for a month or so while emergency supplies hang out, but sooner or later those people will have to be fed or removed from that part of the State. Members will realise that if the industries in the North are to be carried on, the people will have to stay and will have to be fed. Whether the Federal Government or the State Government undertakes this duty does not trouble me; presumably it is a matter for the Federal Government, but the position must be faced, and the sooner it is faced the sooner the people will know just what action they are expected to take, and whether they are to stay there or make arrangements to leave.

Mr. North: Is not the coast being patrolled all this time?

Mr. RODOREDA: I do not know. One would assume that the coast is being patrolled. We have been told it is a danger area, but ships are constantly passing through danger areas to England and, if the people in the North are to be fed, the food must be taken by ships through the danger area or by some other means.

Mr. Berry: You would not get a truck through from Alice Springs.

Mr. RODOREDA: If a truck did get through, who would pay for the cost of

hauling food 1,000 or 1,500 miles by motor truck? The people up there cannot afford to pay for it.

Mr. Berry: What are they living on at the moment?

Mr. RODOREDA: Like the camel, they are living on their fat. They had stores for an emergency and only during last December were most of those supplies placed at various parts.

Sitting suspended from 1.0 to 2.15 p.m.

Mr. RODOREDA: Throughout last year we North-West members were continuously engaged, to the utmost of our ability, in trying to get supplies stored at North-West ports. We met with a stone wall of indifference. No-one was concerned about the matter. Everybody was concerned with arranging details as to who should pay for the stores and how the job was to be carried out. But departmental details had to be fixed first. The primary consideration was not the sending of supplies. When I was touring my electorate for two or three months of last year, I insisted upon store-keepers sending down lists of the goods they wanted, irrespective of how those goods were to come to hand. I also persuaded most of the stations to get in supplies. There was yet time when I did that. On the other hand, had we left the matter to the Federal authorities, say to the Emergency Foodstuffs Committee, I doubt whether the supplies would be in the North-West even now.

As things are, the bulk of our outback population is short of supplies. Meanwhile, every departmental detail and requirement is fixed; but, unfortunately, now that there are all sorts of forms available to send to head office for requisitions, there are no surplus stores available. The same state of affairs exists in regard to petrol. As I pointed out on the last Address-in-reply, there were no petrol supplies then on the North-West coast. The unfortunate case of the "Sydney" is in point. When planes had to be sent north to look for her, the aviation petrol required had to be brought up by truck over hundreds of miles from Port Hedland to Onslow, as none was available elsewhere. Such was the position that obtained. I hope it is now being rapidly remedied. In addition to other disabilities, transport in the North-West is being constantly hung up because of the block in regard to frozen motor parts, tyres, etc. When an order is sent

down for a frozen spare part, and a request made for its release, one is told that application must be made to Canberra or Melbourne. Why on earth should we have to apply to Canberra or Melbourne? What is the use of the Supply and Development Department here? Could not some arrangement be made whereby members for out-back districts could certify that such a part or such a tyre was for essential purposes, thus ensuring that it was sent with a minimum of delay? Surely we, as members of Parliament, should have sufficient sense of responsibility to decide whether a spare part ought to be released or not. What earthly opportunity has a man in Canberra or Melbourne to decide whether a thing is or is not essential in the North-West? This system of referring to Canberra or Melbourne for a decision in every conceivable case is where the red-tape comes in. A certain amount of red-tape is no doubt essential, but what is so objectionable is the delay in reaching a decision, the number of hands an application has to pass through. The great trouble is that one can never get a man to make a decision. Somebody in Perth in an official position should be able to make a decision promptly.

Mr. Sampson: Those officials have the letter-writing mania.

Mr. RODOREDA: That is what delays and obstructs all activities in the North-West. Motor transport is the only means of transport available there, and motor cars are indispensable to traffic in the North-West. A man may wire for a part to come up by the first plane and it takes six or eight weeks to get it released from Canberra. Such a delay passes my comprehension. That state of affairs might lose the war for us. Now it has been decided that North-Western wool is not to be brought into the ports under present circumstances—a very wise decision, because the wool would only be an added attraction to our enemies to come to the ports and take that very essential thing for them, our wool. The repercussions arising from that decision will prove very serious to the North-West, because most of the people there depend on motor car earnings for their own living and that of their families.

Whole towns in the North-West live largely on the earnings of employees of the big transport companies. There is no talk of any compensation or any other avenue in which the huge transport fleets could be used. If the Military want transport,

expert drivers and their vehicles are available in the North. The drivers do not want to be given uniforms and military ranks, but want jobs to do. We have seen a military convoy of town drivers in the North endeavouring to get over the bush roads existing there, and they have tipped the trucks over. On the other hand, there is all this expert labour available in the North—men who will carry ten tons over a bush road in a three-ton truck. There is an avenue to be exploited, but there is no talk of doing so—no talk whatever. The position should be seriously considered by the Commonwealth Government, as to what is to be done with all the transport available there, which at present has no work whatever to do. It would be very useful in the event of a decision being made to defend the North-West and hold our national heritage there.

The question of defence involves the question of roads. For years past I in particular, amongst other North-Western members, have been impressing upon the State Government the need for a decent road to be made from Meekatharra to Marble Bar. However, too much money was needed for bituminised roads in the settled southern portions of the State. Money could not be spared for the North-West. The paramount need of land forces for a road to the North, which under normal circumstances would stand up to all the traffic the military authorities could put over it, was disregarded. In the event of rain, however, all transport in the North will have to stop. That is a strong factor in any defence scheme for that area. The sooner the State Government takes that matter up with the military authorities, the better will it be for Western Australia. A private citizen or member of Parliament is rather loth to touch on the defence aspect with regard to strategy. But that road is vitally important to the welfare of Western Australia.

In my opinion the North-West is easily defensible, as I will show in a few words. I am not one of those who consider the defence aspect of this State or any other portion of Australia to be the sole prerogative of the military chiefs. I do not stand back with bowed head and reverence for their attainments. I should say the average man who studies the subject and knows the terrain should be able to form a reasonably sound opinion as to whether our North-

West can be defended. There is no need for a vast deal more co-operation between the Army and the civilians. It is not for the former to disregard anyone outside the Defence Department. But that is the attitude the Military authorities as a rule adopt. I should say that the country in question could easily be defended if the right steps were taken to do it. For instance, there is no water supply on the coast from Wyndham to Geraldton that would fill the needs of even a small army. That is a wonderful factor in our favour, because an invading army can bring with it everything except the water to drink, and we can defend our water supplies back from the coast. Again, there should be someone very close to Lieut.-General Bennett who knows the Northern terrain, knows where every water supply, every road, every track, every building, is located.

There is only one high military official who possesses that knowledge, and he is not in this State. He is being employed to build a road somewhere in Eastern Australia. There are a thousand military men who could build that road, but not one who could take the place of the officer I have in mind. We are entitled to ask that that man be sent back here and given charge of the North-West area. An application to that effect has already been made. Whether it will be granted or not we cannot say. If it is not granted, I would offer the unorthodox suggestion that a liaison committee should be formed comprising North-West members, who would assist Lieut.-General Bennett in the event of his wanting any details about the North-West. The General could get no better advice from anybody. No man, whether Lieut.-General Bennett or anyone else, could possibly absorb all that knowledge in even five years of his life. Far more co-operation should exist between the Army and a civilian organisation of this description. My proposal may be unorthodox, but this is an unorthodox war, and we have to do something out of the common. No doubt dead and gone Military commanders of the British Army would turn in their graves at such a suggestion. Nevertheless, I regard the suggestion as quite feasible, and as one the adoption of which would result in great benefit.

Mr. Warner: Anyhow, bushmen are the best soldiers that could be sent up there.

Mr. RODOREDA : For instance, there is the question of the natives in that portion of the State. I have no hesitation in saying that those natives could bring about a defeat, or mar the prospects of victory in that part of the country, yet there was a proposal by the Army to use them as lookouts and spies and spotters. It was the most criminal suggestion that could have been made. Anyone knowing the natives is aware that if one of them fell into the enemy's hands, a complete knowledge of our defence measures, and of the position of our men and water supplies would be available to the invader. They are the most easily led race in the world. They have no loyalty to anyone. They do not know the meaning of the word. A few sticks of tobacco would buy the services of any one of them. Nevertheless, through lack of knowledge of the situation, there was a proposal to utilise their services.

Anyone understanding the natives knows there is only one thing to do with them, and that is to see that they are kept under the control of the men for whom they are working at present, so that in the event of an evacuation or an enemy landing, they could be taken back from the coast and kept under supervision. The unemployed natives, who are holidaying on the coast, should be sent 100 miles or so back to the reservations and kept under the control of someone in authority. That is the only way to deal with the natives. To expect any help from them if they are allowed to run loose is fantastic, yet that proposition was seriously made by the Army as part of our defence strategy.

With all these conflicting opinions, ideas, and authorities, North-West people, as I said before, are bewildered, and the sooner some definite statement is made to them as to whether they are going to be defended or not, and what they are expected to do in the event of a crisis occurring, the better off they will be. They do not want to leave that portion of the State. Their sole desire is to remain there and protect the assets built up by their fathers and grandfathers before them. They will stay. They only want a little encouragement and to be told that in the event of a crisis, help will be rushed to them, and they will hang on. There is no question about that. They could be a thorn in the side of any invader that ever came to that part of the country. They know the land like the palms of their

hands ; they are deadly shots ; they can shoot a running kangaroo at a couple of hundred yards and never miss. Such men would be of vital assistance to the Army, but they must be assured that while they are hanging on assistance will be rushed to them, and the sooner they see some signs of preparation being made to establish military camps, aerodromes and that kind of thing, the better pleased they will be and the more satisfactory will be the whole state of affairs in the North-West.

Now to turn from the sublime to the ridiculous, though I say it myself ! I hope that in an endeavour to economise manpower, printing, stationery, time, and trouble, the Government will try to cut down all the voluminous returns that are placed in front of us every session of Parliament. For instance, there are the Railway Department returns, the Mines Department returns, and those of other departments. There are hundreds of pages of matter that do not interest a soul, and I would suggest they are seldom looked at by members of Parliament. If anybody wanted to secure any information, he could go to the department and obtain it. There must be an enormous number of men employed in collating all these statistics that are not necessary in time of war. It does not matter how many ton miles the railways have run this year. The men are in top gear trying to do their job, and it is of no interest to us how many railway miles or train miles have been covered, or what it costs. It has to be done. The same may be said of the Mines Department returns. Stuff of this kind is turned out year after year and is of no importance or interest to anyone at all. Yet a great number of men are busily engaged all the year in getting these figures together. So it is with all the other departments. We get a valuable return from the railways covering a couple of sheets before the bigger report comes out, and that should be sufficient.

Again, we have the spectacle of conductors on trams, and more especially on trolley buses, keeping a great tabulated list of the tickets they issue, and that is being done under black-out conditions. It is difficult to see the paper, let alone the figures. That is done on the Claremont trolley bus run and I suppose the same applies to the Wembley route. What hope have they of doing this thing properly, and of what use is it ?

Mr. North: It is in case members ask questions.

Mr. RODOREDÁ: It is of no use at all.

Mr. Cross: It is to catch people overriding their section.

Mr. RODOREDÁ: It is scandalous to ask them to do it. The conductors cannot see whether they are getting 1s. or a ½d. for a fare, yet they are asked to tabulate a full list of ticket numbers. How ridiculous it is!

Mr. Needham: A deputation waited on the Minister about it.

Mr. RODOREDÁ: I am glad of that because it is scandalous to ask them to do such things. I hope the Government will bear in mind what I have said about returns. The paper is all right for bath-heaters but, if the returns have any other use, I cannot see what it is.

From the trend of this debate one would gather that most people are not satisfied either with the military effort or with a lot of other things. In spite of it all, however, I think Australia should be proud of the effort that has been put up. It has done a wonderful job in the space of time allotted. In less than 2½ years Australia has turned from a peace economy—and a very casual one, too—to an intense war effort and, in spite of the little matters of organisation that go wrong, I am convinced a definite plan is emerging. The rough edges have to be smoothed and the irregularities to be attended to, but I am sure we shall eventually see a plan with a mirror-like finish which will be a satisfaction to all of us and which will see us through this colossal struggle.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. E. Nulsen—Kanowna) [2.37]: I will be as brief as I can. I do not propose to follow the example of the member for Victoria Park (Mr. Raphael) by making a long speech, because I think the House is anxious to adjourn as soon as possible. I was pleased to see so many members of both Houses of Parliament visit the Midland Junction Workshops, though I was sorry that all who intimated their intention of going along did not do so.

Mr. Cross: It was too late in the day.

The **MINISTER FOR JUSTICE**: I am sorry there was not time to see the works properly, because unquestionably the work being done at the munitions annexe and at the shops generally is a credit to Western Australia and would be a credit to any other State of the Commonwealth.

Mr. Triat: That is so.

The **MINISTER FOR JUSTICE**: The work being done is excellent, and the feeling of harmony and patriotism is very good indeed. The men have one aim, and that is to make an all-in effort to do their bit in the prosecution of the war. I want to touch on the railway position, but will allow room for members to fill in what I omit.

The increase in revenue for the nine months ended the 31st March, 1942, compared with the corresponding period of 1941, was £236,877. That will give an idea of the increased work the department has had to undertake under difficult conditions. The expenditure was £157,990 greater than for the similar period last year. The increase in expenditure was largely due to the rise in the basic wage, the payroll tax, and the increased cost of fuelling, which is right out of the control of the department. Nevertheless, there has been an improvement of £78,887 for that period. That in itself speaks volumes for the management of the railways. In undertaking extra work, the rolling stock generally has been taxed to its full capacity. The heavy demand on the rolling stock has made it very difficult to give the service to people to which they are justly entitled. Very good work has been done in connection with the manufacture of munitions. The maintenance of the railways has been a tremendous task, owing to the age of quite a lot of the rolling stock. To put that rolling stock and the railways generally in order—as I know a number of members would like to see done—would cost not thousands of pounds, but millions. The whole trouble is that the system has been starved, not so much by this Government or by the previous Government, but right from the inception.

Mr. Seward: What about the expenditure for belated repairs for the last five years?

The **MINISTER FOR JUSTICE**: That has been very extensive, but has not reduced the age of the rolling stock or supplied rolling stock to meet the increased traffic.

Mr. Doney: As so many men are not fully occupied on munitions, will you take steps to see that they are placed back on railway work?

The **MINISTER FOR JUSTICE**: I do not know whether there are any men available; but if any are, there is an opportunity to give them work; we are looking

for men not only in the Railways, but in the Tramways and for other departments under the control of the Commissioner of Railways.

Mr. Doney: Too many have been sent to the Midland Junction Workshops to work on munitions.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Does the hon. member think we should cut out work on munitions?

Mr. Doney: No. Take the men who have been on the railways and put them back there!

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: If the hon. member will wait until I have finished, he will understand the reason why the railways have had congestions. The Commonwealth Government has also demanded engines and wagon stock. The requirements have been rather high. I cannot give the figures but I can assure members that the demand has hindered the operations of the Commissioner of Railways very considerably. Our manpower has been depleted in order that assistance may be given to the war effort in other parts of Australia. There again I cannot give members the actual number of men taken from our activities. The Commonwealth Government also demanded an ambulance train from this State, and compliance with that order meant the removal of a number of our carriages. The effect has been further to deplete our rolling stock. The securing of material has been a great stumbling block in the work of construction and repairing rolling stock. We have lodged application after application, but we are so low down on the priority list that our orders have not yet been completed. I communicated with the Chief Mechanical Engineer, and asked him if he had endeavoured to put the position as he sees it before the Commonwealth Government, and this is what he reported to me—

Very serious difficulties have been experienced in obtaining materials for essential maintenance of locomotives and rolling stock. Very strenuous efforts have been made to impress upon the Commonwealth authorities the urgent need for such materials, particularly in regard to replacement of outworn locomotive boilers, but with very little success. In direct consequence the State has been put to extra expense in repairing boilers and locomotives which should have been scrapped. Far too little attention has been given to the essential necessity of maintaining rail transport.

I hope members will understand that the Commissioner of Railways has done everything possible to maintain the railway system on a reasonable basis. It may be of interest to the House to learn that we have on order 4,421 steel castings affecting 178 different patterns that have been on order for from 12 to 18 months, and yet those orders are still not fulfilled. I shall take this matter to Cabinet and ask for the consideration of the installation of a steel casting plant at the Midland Junction Workshops.

Members: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Therein, I believe, lies our only hope of being able to secure the material necessary to operate the railways as efficiently as the Government desires. We have ten "S" class heavy engines in course of construction, but I am sorry to inform members that the first will not be on the track until the end of September. Under the lease-lend provisions, we have ordered another ten engines, but I do not know when they will arrive. Their presence on the track will greatly facilitate operations from a haulage point of view. Also in course of construction are six "AZ" two-berth corridor sleeping coaches. There again, however, we cannot get on with the construction work because we are unable to procure all the materials required. I can assure the House that does not arise through want of endeavour to obtain them.

During the debate members have indulged in some criticism of the railway system, and probably some of it has been quite justifiable. Quite possibly, members have not taken into consideration the adverse circumstances with which the department has been confronted. For instance, in January and March, abnormal rains hung up traffic considerably. There were serious washaways that caused disorganisation and congestion. Repairs have been effected to the track, and the railways are now working to normal schedule as much as possible. I could probably dilate for half an hour or more on the disabilities and difficulties experienced by the Railway Department, but I shall not hold up the debate much longer.

I ask members to be fair in their criticism. I do not mind constructive criticism, but I do not like that which is captious or carping. There are some who have exaggerated. For instance, one member mentioned that seven firemen had contracted hernia

owing to rough journeys and engine work. I think that statement was an exaggeration ; if it was not exaggeration, it represented propaganda. I believe that hon. member was not told the truth ; I do not doubt his good intentions. As regards A.R.P. work, the department has done everything possible for the protection of the staff and passengers. Shelters have been erected, and glass has been removed. Every endeavour has been made to meet the requirements of the Civil Defence Council and the provisions of the Civil Defence (Emergency Powers) Act.

Defence work has been undertaken extensively at the Midland Junction Workshops. If members were to inspect operations there, they would find that complete sets of main propelling machinery have been constructed, and that means a lot of important work of an exacting nature, necessitating compliance with intricate specifications. The whole of the work has been carried out satisfactorily, and the department has every reason to be proud of its accomplishment. Then again, the department has turned out manganese bronze propellers. To date, 28 have been constructed, and more orders are expected. Repeat orders really constitute the best testimony that any undertaking can have.

Other important tasks have been carried out. I shall not detail the full list, but will enumerate some of the items. For instance, the important job of constructing steam engines and main steering gear, mine-sweeping plant—there again, repeat orders bear testimony to the excellence of the work—practice shots, depth charge carriers, fortress work—that necessitates working under conditions of secrecy—and many similar operations have been carried out most ably. On one special occasion the works turned out a propeller for the U.S. Navy.

Mr. Berry : And the American Naval authorities said that the work had been most efficiently and courteously carried out.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE : The work was completed in the astonishingly short period of two weeks. It is perfectly safe to say that it could not have been done more quickly or more efficiently anywhere else. We have had expressions of opinion from the representatives of the U.S. Navy that the Midland Junction Workshops play a very worthy part not only in the construction of locomotives and the maintenance

of railway stock, but in connection with munitions.

The shell annexe is working very satisfactorily. Members have heard that there has been a very considerable rejection of shells. Those shells were not rejected through any fault of the men employed at the annexe. They were found to be defective when they arrived here. However, the fact remains that the defect was due to no fault of workmanship here. In fact, the rejections on account of work done here represent less than one per cent.

Hon. C. G. Latham : Do you mean that the shells were rejected when they were sent here ?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE : Yes, after a lot of work had been done on them. It was only then discovered that they were not up to standard.

Hon. C. G. Latham : Flaws were discovered afterwards ?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE : It is pleasing to note that many of the men have made valuable suggestions to the Chief Mechanical Engineer and his staff, for which they have themselves received full credit. The men are to be commended for taking such a deep interest in their work, while the management is also to be complimented on the attention devoted to the men's proposals. The one objective the workers had was to make a contribution towards the successful prosecution of the war.

With regard to the plant at Midland Junction, to which reference was made by the member for Victoria Park (Mr. Raphael), members will be interested to know that the plant there is that originally installed for railway operations. We have not introduced one new machine from the Eastern States.

Hon. C. G. Latham : But you have made machines there.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE : That fact is a credit to the State and of assistance to the Commonwealth. We have, as the Leader of the Opposition indicated, made necessary machinery for ourselves, but we have not imported any from the Eastern States. When we have lodged orders there, we found that Eastern States requirements have had to be met first, and we have not been able to secure compliance with our requests. If we had been able to procure the machinery when ordered, munition-making here would have proceeded more quickly.

Mr. Doney : Have you made all the necessary machinery ?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE : No, some is still under construction. We are awaiting plans and specifications to enable us to proceed with further work. The fault that the machines are not already constructed does not lie with the Midland Junction Workshops but with those in control in the Eastern States. Regarding other transportation phases, the trams and the trolley buses have a tremendous task to undertake in coping with the increased traffic. Here again, the question of manpower represents one of the greatest stumbling blocks preventing increased activities. If we had more men at our disposal, we could put more buses on the road.

Mr. Marshall : You should make the restrictions on physical fitness less stringent.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE : I agree with the hon. member. That aspect will have to be gone into. For instance, we have the eight new gas-producer buses for the South Perth service, and they have to remain out of commission temporarily because we have not the personnel to man them. As soon as that difficulty is overcome, I assure the member for Canning (Mr. Cross) that the buses will be put on the road immediately.

Mr. Warner : That will cheer him up.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE : We have six Reo diesel engine chassis in this State and a contract has been let for the manufacture of bodies for them. We hope these will be completed at an early date. We have also nine trolley bus chassis at the Midland Junction Workshops, where bodies are being constructed for them. As soon as these bodies are completed the buses will be put into operation. In addition, we have nine on the water which we hope will soon arrive. When they do they will be helpful in relieving the present congestion. We have purchased 38 buses, including trolley buses, within the past 18 months. Members will, therefore, realise that the Government has made every effort to cope with the congestion.

A few extensions have been put in hand. The extension from Cambridge-street to Floreat Park has not been completed, because we have been unable to secure the necessary material. The same remark applies to the bus service extension to the Peninsula-road, Maylands. Immediately we get a couple of Reo buses they will be put

on that route, that is, provided we can get the personnel. The small extension to Inglewood has not been completed for the same reason.

Ferry earnings have greatly improved, although I regret to say that the new ferry has not been completed, because we have been unable to obtain the propelling machinery. We expect that at any time ; and, as soon as it arrives, the member for Canning (Mr. Cross) will have another boat in commission.

Mr. Cross : We get nothing but promises.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE : We have only fallen down on our promise because of the impossibility of obtaining the machinery.

Hon. C. G. Latham : The member for Canning would do more to assist the war effort if he could induce his constituents to trade in their own district.

Mr. Cross : But they must come to town to work.

Mr. SPEAKER : Order !

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE : I wish to deal briefly with electricity supplies. These have been very satisfactory. The East Perth power station is the most efficient "B" station in Australia. Thousands of pounds could be spent upon extensions, but these cannot be carried out, as the necessary material is at present unprocurable. The thermal efficiency of the new East Perth power station has now reached 28 per cent., which is the highest in Australia. For the month of March it reached 28.4 per cent. That leaves all other Australian power stations a long way behind in thermal efficiency. The "B" station generates a kilowatt from 1.38 lbs. of Collie coal, against the original low pressure station which generated a kilowatt from 3 lbs. of coal. The improvement is over 100 per cent. It is 1.62 lbs. of coal per kilowatt. The "B" station holds second place among similar stations in England. Few, if any, other power stations can show better results.

In passing, I feel I must pay a tribute to the general manager, Mr. W. H. Taylor, to the engineer-in-charge, the shift engineers, and the staff, for their splendid efforts and undoubted loyalty. We should give credit where it is due. It seems to me that in this world, generally speaking, the man who makes the effort and does the job receives the least pay.

Hon. C. G. Latham : Do you mean to suggest that other men in Government employment are not giving good service ?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE : No.

Hon. C. G. Latham : You are picking out particular men.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE : I know the Leader of the Opposition appreciates efficiency.

Hon. C. G. Latham : Yes.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE : I know the more efficient our engine-drivers on the railways are the less money they get. I refer to those who run their trains to time.

Mr. McDonald : That is a bad arrangement for the Railways.

Hon. C. G. Latham : It is a charge against the Commissioner.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE : No. It is the system. The Commissioner has made every effort —

Several members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER : Order !

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE : I can quote an instance that occurred years ago. An engine-driver in Kalgoorlie came to me and said, "Do you know I am the lowest paid engine-driver in the Railways, although I am a senior ?" I inquired why. He replied, "Well, I like to run on time and do run on time, but I am not paid any over-time."

Several members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER : Order ! Members must keep order.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE : If members like to inquire into the matter, they will find that what I say is the truth. There is no need to kick up a row about it.

Mr. Doney : You have elucidated the point we have been doubtful about for a long time.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE : Whatever I say in this House is the truth.

Mr. Doney : We agree with that.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE : I am not seeking propaganda in this House. The engine-drivers have to do their job in accordance with their award, and they do it. They are loyal workmen.

The mining industry has been threatened with extinction. Mr. Johnson, M.H.R., has warned us, and I think the goldfields people especially should be grateful to him. We should thank him for his efforts to secure a fair deal for the goldfields. He intimated to us that key men only would

be kept on the mines in order to prevent them from becoming flooded. Were the goldmining industry to be closed down, it would be a disaster to the State. It would affect us economically more seriously than some people imagine. We would lose 20 per cent. of our revenue, and that means a loss of about £2,000,000 per annum. In addition we would lose the new money that is created and put into circulation by the industry. Should it prove absolutely necessary to close the industry, then the Commonwealth should give due consideration to establishing other industries in the State to make up for the loss. In that way, we would have some chance of retaining our goldfields people in the State, otherwise they will drift to the Eastern States, and this State would be put back at least 50 years. I do not wish to infer that we have any desire to shrink from our duty ; we are anxious to do probably more than our part in the war effort. If we lose the war, however, we lose everything.

The Commonwealth authorities stated that 60,000 men were required. If one-fifteenth of that number were to be secured in Western Australia, then we would contribute 4,000, of which the goldfields proportion would be 500 or 600. Before the war, there were 12,000 people employed on the goldfields ; today there are 8000, so that up to the present the goldfields have contributed one-third of their mine workers to the fighting forces of Western Australia. I hope the Commonwealth Ministers and members of Parliament are conversant with the position. In Victoria the situation is not comparable with this State, nor is it in New South Wales or Queensland. The closing down of the gold industry in Victoria will not affect the Treasury there beyond one per cent. That is a very small contribution. If this State were affected only to that extent we would not hear much about it. We have to consider other things. If this came about something like two-thirds of this State would revert to its natural condition. It would mean that out of 4,381 miles of railway more than half would go out of use. The Wiluna line is more than 700 miles long ; Laverton is over 600 miles ; and Kalgoorlie is 375. These railways would become almost useless.

I trust the Commonwealth Government will give further consideration to the matter. I have wondered whether it has

considered a comparison of the financial and general aspects of this State with Queensland. Has it given consideration to reducing the production of sugar? Many people will say that is a necessary product. I know it is. But if such a thing would mean a big contribution, I cannot see why everyone should not do without sugar in their tea, or do without sugar in other directions. Why should we in this State close down mining, which has contributed more than the agricultural and pastoral industries together?

Mr. Doney: Quite a lot of luxury lines are as yet untouched.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: That is so. The position is serious. Since this announcement I am informed there has been a 40 per cent. reduction in the production of ore in this State. People have taken it so much to heart that they have felt they could not go on producing stone. This outlook will jeopardise the livelihood of the goldfields and other parts of the State. If mines are closed down, unless they are very rich, they seldom re-open. The same thing applies to mining machinery—it deteriorates very quickly. I venture to say that not one quarter of the mines in this State, or any other, would re-open if they were closed down for any lengthy period, because once the water rises in them they fall in. Also, the value of the gold remaining in the mine would not equal the amount of capital necessary to re-open it, because the average yield now is below 6 dwts. That, in itself, indicates that the mines are working very close to the wind. The average in 1903 was 21 dwts. per ton of ore, and today it is below six weights. I hope and trust we will find some other way out of the difficulty in place of closing down this industry.

Mr. J. H. Smith: The price of gold has increased double, and nearly treble, since that time.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: That is so, but it does not equal the drop in the average recovery. The social amenities, such as schools and railways, etc., have to be considered. A tremendous loss is involved there. The industry is highly specialised, too, and if these skilled men are dispersed a further difficulty is raised. Should anything happen to our mining industry, unless there is a big alteration in methods of distribution and our monetary system after this war, we will be put back 50 years.

If the manpower position in other avenues throughout Australia had been fully explored, and it was really necessary that, to win the war, the mining industry should be closed down, I would say, "Close it down." But I venture to say that these avenues have not yet been fully explored, and the authorities have come to Western Australia to close down the mining industry simply because they have listened to a few economists in some of the universities, and now believe that gold is not necessary. They have not considered how, under the present system, this State would be affected.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Plenty of avenues have yet to be explored for manpower—tramways, railways, and the big city emporiums.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: It is not the city about which I worry, but the back country. That is the mainstay of the State. There would be no Perth if there were no back country.

Mr. J. H. Smith: They should not interfere with the back country.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: That is so. The primary producer, who today lives under adverse conditions, is the mainstay and backbone of this State. If the people on the goldfields, and the rest of our population understood the true position, and we did not have so much of this hush-hush business, there would be a better understanding all round, and I am sure that everyone would, if necessary, abide by the decisions of the Commonwealth.

If the mining industry is to be curtailed in any way the Commonwealth Government should give consideration to the establishment of munitions works on the goldfields, where there is every facility. There is plenty of electric power at Kalgoorlie, and electric power which does not need imported fuel for its creation. There is also a number of Diesel electric plants in Kalgoorlie and Boulder owned by the municipal council, the Boulder council, and some of the mines. Not only should Kalgoorlie and Boulder be considered in this matter, but Norseman and Laverton, too. Plenty of machinery and necessary facilities for the manufacture of munitions are located in those towns. The goldfields are connected by the transline to the Port Pirie iron works, and a boat calls at Esperance, which is connected with Kalgoorlie by 258 miles of railway. To establish such works there would assist in the policy of decentralisation.

Mr. North: Has that been put to the authorities?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I might state that we are to meet Messrs. Makin and Drakeford at 10 a.m. tomorrow, when all these matters will be discussed. If the mining industry were to close down there would be over 100 towns affected, each with a fair amount of equipment. There would be somewhere between 6,000 and 7,000 homes which are worth a lot of money—probably over £2,000,000. The housing problem, therefore, would not arise. It behoves the Commonwealth Government to give some consideration to this State.

Mr. North: It is safer from bombing, too.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes. Because the Eastern States have a larger population than we have, they get the orders. The goldfields have a good water supply, too. Their vulnerability is no more than that of the metropolitan area, because we have to go to the hills for our supplies, and although a large quantity of the water is pumped through to Kalgoorlie, I do not see that that would alter the position in any way. On the goldfields we have many skilled workers, so that there would be no difficulty in that direction, and we have also engineers. Seeing there is some uncertainty regarding the future of the goldmining industry, we should endeavour to impress upon the Commonwealth Government the need for installing other industries if they are going to take away the main industry of this State. If they do take away that one prop at the present time, the whole structure must disappear.

Mr. Doney: You are not alone in appreciating the importance of the goldmining industry to this State.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I remind the member for Williams-Narrogin that the industry he represents and, in fact, every industry, is more or less assisted by the mining industry.

Mr. Doney: I agree with that.

MR. WITHERS (Bunbury) [3.26]: The speeches delivered by various members, even apart from those we have had from Ministers, prove that the Government was fully justified in summoning the House on this occasion. I would not like it to be thought that there was any influence behind the calling of this sitting. I would not like it to be suggested that, because some sections of the community wanted

Parliament summoned, the Government acted as a puppet and acceded to their request. I think the Government called Parliament together realising that members should be given an opportunity to hear what was actually being done.

Mr. Thorn: Do not we represent public opinion?

Mr. WITHERS: We represent portion of public opinion.

Mr. Thorn: It counts at election time.

Mr. WITHERS: Much could be said about public opinion. Three people at a public meeting can upset the meeting, and when a candidate goes up for election, a majority of the electors are as likely as not to vote with those three. Then it might be said that public opinion consisted of those who had upset the meeting. What we get day by day in the daily newspapers is really representative of a minority.

Mr. Fox: That is written in the newspaper offices.

Mr. WITHERS: No matter whether it is written in the offices, one has only to weigh the statements made in the Press to realise that they represent the opinion of only a minority of the people. It was only right that at a time like the present we should not continue in recess from December to July or August without having an opportunity to hear what Ministers had to say. The speeches of the Minister for Lands and the Minister for Labour especially, certainly cut the ground to a large extent from under the feet of some members. Those remarks eased our minds and rendered unnecessary some of the criticism that might have been offered. I do not wish to reiterate what has already been said. Most members seem to have traversed much the same ground, probably because the matters they dealt with are uppermost in the minds of all of us.

I always hesitate to discuss war conditions or express an opinion as to what we should be doing. I have not had military training, and I consider it beyond my province to criticise to any extent what the military authorities are doing. They are responsible for their own job. Although it might be said that we have not made progress in certain directions, or cannot see evidence of equipment being supplied for our protection here or there, I maintain that it is not for us to criticise the men charged with the responsibility for such work, or to say that they have fallen down on their jobs. I decline to enter upon a discussion of those

matters, because I do not know sufficient about them, but I do want to say a few words about civil defence, in which I have been interested since its inception.

When the Bill was before the House, I supported it because I realised it was the duty of all who could to give their services to assist the nation in some way, even though it might not be in the purely military sphere. As time passed, I came to the conclusion that civil defence must be regarded as the fourth arm of our forces. We have our Navy, Army, and Air Force, and now we have the civil defence organisation. To some extent civil defence has played an important part in maintaining morale in Australia. During the Address-in-reply debate last year, I urged the Minister to take action to ensure that people in the country districts received greater consideration from the Civil Defence Department than had been given them, especially when we knew what was being done in the metropolitan area. As a member representing a country constituency, I am not jealous of what is done in the metropolitan area, but I like to see something in the nature of equitable treatment for the country. If we mention that the country is not receiving the consideration to which it is entitled, we are told that the authorities have to start with the more thickly populated parts and that the country areas will be considered in their turn. This is an all-in war, and we have an all-in Government; and therefore all parts of the State should receive consideration.

The task of organising civil defence in Bunbury was exceedingly difficult at the out set but, after strenuous efforts, we have air raid precautions that are quite up to standard; in fact, I think ours will compare with those to be found in any part of the metropolitan area. We have reached the stage of having one paid employee sent to us by the Civil Defence Council to carry on operations for us. We have obtained a considerable amount of equipment. We had to put up a great agitation to get it; and we did not get it without asking for it.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Of course, Bunbury is in a danger zone.

Mr. WITHERS: Yes, we realise the vulnerability of our position. We have as many women taking part in A.R.P. work in the capacity of V.A.Ds. or first-aid workers as we have men. When I under-

took to organise the air raid precautions at Bunbury, I endeavoured to select people who would not be likely to be called up for other service later on. I realised that we should attempt to build up an organisation, the personnel of which would not be interfered with later. We gave all the people who took an interest in these matters an indication of what we want. Since then we have had our ranks depleted by such bodies as the garrison force coming in. Older men, whom we thought we had gathered in, were taken away for the garrison force or for home guards. However, our organisation is well up to standard.

I find that members of the House have been concerned about the black-out. It is better to be prepared and have nothing happen, than to have something happen and not be prepared. I have been prepared to concentrate on a definite black-out. I have been asked, "Is your light burning?" "It is burning!" "Then you have not a total black-out." Members of those institutions, if we may call them such, are working under an authority, and immediately an air raid warning was given would turn off the meter at the mains. They would be responsible persons, but every householder could not be trusted to act similarly. Therefore we must have a system of black-outs, more especially within the three-mile area. We have to give a little in that respect. However, I was astounded when I came to Perth a couple of weeks ago to see the practice black-out. One could go along South Perth and see Perth lit up, or go along Perth and see South Perth lit up. That is absurd.

Certain regulations were disallowed in another place. Look around and see the number of people who have complied with the regulations laid down—90 odd per cent., I dare say, and some of them at considerable expense! This is the fourth regulation to be overridden by Parliament. When the regulations were promulgated, I blacked out my car in accordance with them. Then special regulations came out, and I had to discard my torch. Immediately that was done, the car had to be smeared with white paint. People who conformed with the regulations disfigured their cars in that way. There is a time limit for the regulation. When the time is up, the Traffic Branch of the Police Department declares what the regulations are. Those who have conformed with the regulations now have a piece of white tin pasted on the back of the car. One may do what one likes so long as one's

headlights accord with the views of authority. That is not much satisfaction to people who conformed with the regulations in the first instance since, if one does what is needed to the satisfaction of the Traffic Branch, the heavy expense already incurred might not have been necessary. Are we now to have fresh regulations promulgated from another quarter that cannot be over-ridden by Parliament?

All the good work men and women, old and young, are doing in connection with evacuation may be nullified by somebody coming along overnight and saying, "It is not your job; we will control evacuation; we will control the black-out." A good deal of conscientious work has been put into this particular effort to win the war, and all that work has been pushed aside overnight. Wardens have gone round from house to house. They have tabulated every person, man and woman and child and invalid, and all these people have been allotted places in the event of their evacuation. The Mayor of Bunbury, who has been very helpful in this matter, has authorised a plan which is distinctly stated to be only a plan. Under it I shall have to go to the Bunbury central station to board a train, and somebody else will have to go to another station to board a train, and so forth. But the military authorities may come along and say, "This is not your job; we will look after evacuation."

Anything that is done in connection with civil defence from now onward should come under the direct control of the military authorities, so that we shall not be doing today something that will be undone tomorrow. If other regulations are promulgated, I hope they will be promulgated by some authority that even Parliament will not be able to override, so long as they are for the winning of the war. I did not on this occasion desire to have anything to say regarding the Railway Department, but one is tempted to do so by other members who make statements that one considers should be refuted.

We listened the other evening to a very academic address from the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe (Mr. F. C. L. Smith). It was in scholarly phraseology, and very pleasant to listen to; but when the same gentleman criticised our Premier for going round and round and saying very little, I consider he was definitely unjust. The Premier may not have that academic style

of expressing himself; but I frequently notice, after listening to our Premier or reading what he has said, that he has got to his mark without many stumbles. He may have his own method of doing it, but he does it. I do not want the Premier's speeches to tickle my ears; I want statements of fact. I would like the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe to arrive from the South-West as I do, instead of doing so in the morning when all the transport facilities are available to him. Leaving Bunbury at 3.35 on Sunday afternoon, one is scheduled to get here at 10.5 p.m., but one finds oneself landed at 1.30 a.m. on Monday, with no transport facilities of any description to get to one's suburban home. I would like to see the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe faced with that problem. Two hundred or three hundred people are put in a railway train and told, "We have got you there; your destination is Perth and when you get there is another matter."

Mr. Marshall: And you have your Parliamentary representative silenced.

Mr. WITHERS: That has actually happened. Can anyone convince me that it is necessary for a train leaving Bunbury on an afternoon, for the purpose of conveying 200 or 300 people from Bridgetown, Bunbury, and the South-West generally, to stop at a siding like Wagerup with a platform of milk cans on one side and a double-decker of milk cans on the other side, and pick them up? If so, I have something to learn about railways. Bear in mind, a train has preceded that passenger train and another train will follow. With all due respect to the Minister for Railways I say that when we return to normal transport conditions and other means are available to travellers, they will leave the railways like flies and use that other transport. Something must, therefore, be done to bring about an improvement so that people will not give up patronising the railways.

We must be prepared to give good service to the people using the railways. I asked a railway official why it was necessary to stop the train to take on the milk, and he replied that the milk was for the camp at Northam. Why Wagerup milk for the camp at Northam? Is there not some nearer place from which the camp could draw its milk supply? When the train reaches Carlisle, there is a huge lorry at the platform and the train pulls up to

let passengers down. Then the department wonders why passengers grumble. Such action would not have been tolerated 40 years ago, when the railways had a virtual monopoly of transport in this State. A train left Perth at 8.30 p.m. on the Thursday before Good Friday and took seven hours to reach Bunbury. It was a passenger train and arrived in Bunbury at 3.30 a.m. What delayed the train? Not the engine-driver about whom the Minister was speaking! The delay was caused by waiting at sidings for goods trains. In some cases there was a delay of 20 to 25 minutes. That causes passengers to miss their connection with some other train; so that the further one goes on this 115-mile journey, the further one gets behind. The passengers have reason to complain.

I sympathise with the department and with the Commissioner, because in the past there has not been sufficient money to put the rolling stock in order, but the position is not getting better. I am not complaining today, as the member for Pingelly (Mr. Seward) has complained in the past, about the class of accommodation we are given. I know the department is pinched; I know it is necessary to move troops hither and thither. We have to put up with second class carriages without lavatory accommodation, and I am not complaining about that. In these times we must put up with much inconvenience. The time fixed for the journey from Perth to Bunbury is 4½ hours for a through train; but the train cannot do the journey in that time on account of the roadside work. Possibly it is not a matter to mention at this particular time, but I would like the Minister and the Commissioner for Railways to realise that the department has an obligation to the paying public.

The Minister for Justice: I assure the hon. member I do realise that.

Mr. WITHERS: If the people do not get better service on the railways, then, when the opportunity arrives, they will cease patronising the railways. I wish to touch upon the liquor question, although it may be sub judice. We have not yet learnt the decision of the Premiers' Conference on this matter, but I wish to voice the opinion of people in my electorate. I do not mean by "people" either the publicans or the "wowzers," but the people generally. We are told that we must stay put; trading hours have been restricted to seven and the closing hour has been

fixed at 6 p.m. I would suggest that it might be better to fix the hours from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., and from 5 to 9 p.m. For two summers we have had between 700 and 800 light horsemen in camp at Bunbury. Personally, I do not care at what hour the hotels close. I have had my share of liquor; that, of course, may sound selfish.

While those light horsemen were camped at Bunbury they were under strict military discipline. There was a wet canteen at the camp, and a person could go into Bunbury at night and see no drunkenness or misbehaviour. It was one of the best behaved camps I have ever seen. Then we had a garrison battalion stationed at Bunbury. This comprised mostly older men, but the same remark applies to them. The people of Bunbury provided entertainment for them. There were dance halls and other pleasure resorts where they could enjoy themselves. They did not wish to go to the hotels.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Was it really always as satisfactory as that?

Mr. WITHERS: Absolutely! There has not been during the whole war period any cause for complaint about drunkenness at Bunbury, which is a seaport town. I know that in the metropolitan area something had to be done about the matter. But is 6 o'clock closing the solution of the problem? I refer members to a Press report of the Methodist Conference held at the end of February and the beginning of March. A resolution was carried by the conference approving of 6 o'clock closing, and stating that it would be the solution of the trouble. I do not know whether the "West Australian" did this purposely or not, but the paragraph immediately beneath that report dealt with the trouble the police were experiencing in New South Wales in trying to keep down sly-grog selling. Six o'clock closing is in force in that State. In my opinion, it is doubtful whether this 6 o'clock closing of hotels will effectively solve the problem. I have discussed it with people in the trade and asked them, "What have you done?" They said, "We have protested." That is the trouble; they protest too much. A meeting may be held at a town hall to deal with the liquor question. The hall may be full and the people in attendance may pass a unanimous resolution on some phase of the trade. But is that the opinion of themselves only, or is it the opinion of the

30,000 or 40,000 other people in the metropolitan area? We must be guided by commonsense in this matter.

Mr. Doney: How otherwise would you get an expression of opinion?

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: By the Gallup poll.

Mr. WITHERS: If the hon. member likes; I am not concerned about that.

Mr. Doney: It is as good a way as any other.

Mr. Patrick: Why not get the opinion of a cross section of the people at Bunbury?

Mr. WITHERS: That would suit me if the people came from the right quarter, but I know the people there and they are not asking for a Gallup poll. The drink traffic could have been controlled in the beginning. From the inception of this war there should have been stricter military discipline in connection with drinking by soldiers. Let a Jap get drunk in uniform and he is no more a Jap. He is not asked to fight any more. They find a burial place for him. Discipline is so strict that they put him up against a wall and shoot him. I do not say we should do that with our men, but discipline should be demanded by those in authority. I have seen young soldiers who had never tasted liquor before they got into uniform and the first time they visited their mothers, after having gone into camp, they have returned home drunk; not because they are drunkards but because it is something they have been allowed to do. They have got in with a big body of men in the Army, travelled on a train on which there has been strong drink, and have left the train intoxicated, and that is the first picture of their boys the mothers have had.

Mr. Cross: Why not reduce the strength of liquor?

Mr. WITHERS: I would do that, too.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: They would have to drink more then.

Mr. WITHERS: I have heard complaints about soldiers on trains. I have travelled on a train with 200 or 300 soldiers and four or five have made trouble, but are we to judge the majority by the minority? If we are going to judge the public generally by the minority, then in one respect we must all be good people because a minority is clamouring all the time for liquor reform, and we should be given the credit for being as good as they are.

The problem is not going to be overcome by closing hotels, but the situation can be controlled if the military authorities and the

civil police enforce the law. If our laws are given effect to, there will be nothing to complain about. I am satisfied that when a transport ship is in port, there should be some control over the sale of liquor—perhaps the closing of hotels—in order to prevent rowdiness, but the main trouble is that we have not had law enforcement, and the people who have always clamoured against strong drink have not done very much except carry resolutions and send out pamphlets to members of Parliament to be so good as to do so and so. They do not do much themselves. If I was as sincere as they profess to be, I would take it upon myself to organise a band of people to watch the matter and direct the attention of the police to breaches of the law. But people join Women's Christian Temperance Unions and Bands of Hope, which were in existence before I was, and the drink position is worse today than ever it was.

Mr. Fox: It is always worse than ever it was.

Mr. WITHERS: What, the law?

Mr. Fox: No, the drinking.

Mr. WITHERS: The law is as good today as it has been in the past. What we need is law enforcement. I am putting up a case along those lines, because I realise that in the South-West the prevention of the sale of liquor after 6 o'clock has not had the effect it has had in the metropolitan area.

MR. J. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [4.0]: I listened with a great deal of interest to the many varied speeches that have been made since this debate began. We are all unanimous on one thing, and that is that the resources of the country in manpower, money and materials should be used to the utmost in prosecuting the war to a successful conclusion. I feel certain that if the member for Toodyay (Mr. Thorn) had spoken much earlier in this debate, the torrent of words that has flown since the debate began would not have taken place. During his speech he said that after listening to the informative and lucid addresses of Ministers he felt that the thunder of the Opposition had been stolen. That being so, and if the members of the Opposition had all the information they wanted, it seems hardly necessary that such a torrent of words should have fallen.

Mr. Needham: I think it was a deluge.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: The member for Toodyay admitted in effect that the Ministers were political strategists and out-manoeuvred

the Opposition. However, a precedent has been set; hence the reason for my intervention in the debate. Nevertheless it is not my intention to delay the House for long because most of the subjects that are relative to the statement made by the Premier have been fully ventilated. I hope the points raised will be brought to the notice of Commonwealth Ministers and the military authorities, and that those people will give consideration to them.

I support the plea of those members who have urged a moderation of the black-out conditions. There is no doubt that the restrictions have been overdone, particularly in respect to torches having to be covered with two or three pieces of paper, so that they will not show a bright light. I regard that as a ridiculous regulation that should be modified at the earliest possible moment. I feel certain that as a result of the debate here, and the fact that another place has disallowed the regulation, those in control will view things in their proper perspective and reconsider the matter in the light of common-sense. If that is done, the majority of people will agree to what is proposed, having regard to personal convenience, our own way of life and the defence of the country.

One matter that was not sufficiently stressed concerns the shortage of supply of wearing apparel in this State. I urge Ministers to take this matter up because it is important for the people of Western Australia. There has been a shortage of shipping but I understand two or three vessels will be here in the next few days. Because of the lack of shipping and the interference with transport over the Transcontinental railway by the military, it is difficult for buyers of clothing to ensure prompt delivery. In Melbourne and Sydney, where most of the clothes are manufactured, supplies are available to local retailers because from them the manufacturers can obtain prompt payment. There is, however, difficulty in transporting such goods to Western Australia and two or three weeks must elapse before payment can be made.

If there is to be a shortage of wearing apparel, it is incumbent upon the Commonwealth Government to ration such goods throughout Australia, so that Western Australia may have its fair share. Say for instance, that 10,000 boys' trousers are manu-

factured for the whole of Australia. Assuming Western Australia is entitled to one-fifth, the Government should make representations to the Commonwealth authorities to see that we get our share. It is a difficult problem. Some houses here are branches of Eastern States' firms, and are able to keep the manufactured articles in their stores and retail establishments in Eastern Australia until shipping is available. Many other retailers in this city are not so fortunate, but have to depend on a Customs agent.

The shortage of wearing apparel is becoming a serious matter. Shirts and other articles are short supplied. We have no manufacturers of these articles here, so the Government should make the strongest representations to the Commonwealth to see that we get our proper share. The Commonwealth authorities have control of this matter because they ration the amount of stuff leaving the manufacturing establishments. If the Ministers make representations in the proper quarters to see that this State is not short supplied but gets its fair share, we will have nothing to complain of. If, however, the people more fortunately placed in the Eastern States are going to be supplied and not us we will have reason to complain.

I know there was a supply of tea here a short time back. Some wholesalers, knowing the difficulties of the Eastern countries and that supplies were likely to be cut off, made proper arrangements. Many firms did not stock up with extra supplies to prevent us being rationed so soon, but I know of one firm which got supplies from Ceylon. What happened when the Eastern States became short supplied? A ukase went forth, and these supplies were transferred to the Eastern States. Western Australia is now operating under a rationing scheme. If they were short supplied and took the tea from Western Australia, the matter of clothing should be fairly adjusted in respect of Western Australia.

Members are probably tired of a repetition of the many subjects which have been mentioned. I only desire to bring these two matters to the notice of the Ministers.

The DEPUTY PREMIER: I ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

MOTION—BUTTER INDUSTRY.*To Inquire by Select Committee.***MR. SEWARD** (Pingelly) [4.8]: I move—

That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into and report generally upon the butter industry in Western Australia with particular reference to—(a) measures to increase the proportion of choice butter; (b) measures to improve the transport and grading of butter-fat; (c) management and control of butter factories.

I bring this motion forward because over the past 20 years I have not purchased butter of such an inferior quality as has been on the market during the past six or seven months. Secondly, I do it because of a report from the Superintendent of Dairying which appeared in the "West Australian" of the 7th April, wherein he stated that a substantial improvement in the quality of butter produced in this State and marketed in the metropolitan area during the last season was revealed. That is in direct contradiction to the experience which I myself have had, and that which other people with whom I have spoken on this question have had. Another motive I have for moving this motion is the practice of producers in country districts of sending cream extraordinarily long distances to the factory to be treated, and in the course of the journey passing one or more factories. My fourth reason is that the quantity of choice graded butter in this State is not on the improve.

In case some members do not know the difference, I will tell them that the grade "choice" is really a misnomer. We have four grades of butter, choice, first, second and pastry. What we call first-grade butter is in reality second-grade. All butter graded above 93 is regarded as choice, and that is our best quality butter. From 90 to 92 is first grade; from 86 to 89 is second-grade and below that is pastry butter. I was talking to somebody recently and I wish to mention this because he said, "Why be so particular? Who can tell the difference between 92 and 93 butter?"—in other words the difference between first-grade and second-grade butter. He said, "You cannot tell one point difference" That line of reasoning can be followed on in this way, that if one cannot tell the difference between 92 and 93 he cannot tell the difference between 91 and 92 or 90 and 91, and therefore 90 and 93 are the same. It is absurd. There must be some line of demarcation between the various grades of

butter and, having fixed these lines, we must follow them out.

When we talk of first-grade butter, we refer really to our second-grade butter. I wish to make it clear that I am not moving this motion with the idea of attacking the Department of Agriculture, the Dairy Products Marketing Board, the butter factories or any particular phase of the industry. I am moving out of a desire to secure a select committee to investigate the position thoroughly so that we can ascertain the best means of bringing the largest quantity of butter up to the highest standard. That is my only motive. I was impressed with a remark made by the member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. McLarty) when the Dairy Industry Bill was before the House a couple of years ago. He said—

The future of the industry depends upon our improving the quality of our butter.

No one can disprove that statement. In the report of the Dairy Produce Marketing Board for June, 1939, the following statement appears—

It will be noted that the ratio of export to local sales has increased considerably over the last three years, the reason being that the major portion of the increase in production has been exported. The significance of this lies in the fact that, assuming no corresponding increases take place in prices on the overseas and home markets, the return to the producer must tend to diminish.

That is a very important statement and one we should bear in mind. In other words, the more we export and the less we keep for the home market, the less the return to the grower, because our choice butter is exported and we get a lower price for it, and consequently have to bolster up the local price by stabilisation in order to give a satisfactory return to the producer. Undoubtedly during the past 10 or 12 years the quality of our butter has been improved very considerably. This can be seen from a perusal of the returns, but the improvement has taken place rather in raising the pastry butter to the second grade, or second grade butter to the first grade. There we seem to have stopped.

What evidence can be adduced to bear out the statement that the quality of our choice grade butter is not improving? I refer members to the report of the Dairy Produce Marketing Board. It is, of course, not the duty of that board to undertake the task of improving the quality of our butter. That is not its function at all; its

function is the successful marketing of the butter. Still, if it is to market the butter and get the best price, naturally it wants to adopt means that will tend to raise the quality of the butter. The board keeps records to guide us in this matter, and I wish to direct the attention of members to that part of the report wherein are given the percentages of the various grades of butter we export.

In 1935-36 we exported 40,296 boxes of which 1.21 per cent. was choice grade, 76.92 per cent. first grade, 18.8 per cent. second grade, and 3.07 per cent. pastry. In the following year we exported 29,555 boxes, of which 2.82 per cent. was choice, 83.06 per cent. first grade, 9 per cent. second grade, and 5.12 per cent. pastry. In 1937-38 we exported 64,377 boxes, of which 6.66 per cent. was choice—an increase from 1.21 per cent. in 1935-36—80.63 per cent. was first grade, 6.52 per cent. second grade, and 6.19 per cent. pastry. In 1938-39 we exported 73,180 boxes, of which 4.74 per cent. was choice—a decline of almost 2 per cent. on the figures for the preceding year—81.80 per cent. was first grade, 8.29 per cent. second grade, and 5.17 per cent. pastry. From those percentages we find that for the four years choice butter was improved from 1.21 per cent. to as high as 6.66 per cent., although it fell again to 4.74 per cent. First grade butter increased from 76 to 81 per cent., but unfortunately pastry butter rose from 3 per cent. to 5.17 per cent.

Those figures deal only with export butter. In the year 1938-39 we produced for local sales 188,013 boxes of butter, of which only 69,123 were above second grade. Of the 69,123 boxes, a total of 9,630 boxes or 5.12 per cent. of the whole were of choice grade. Both in the export and locally consumed butter, 5 per cent. seems to be the maximum amount of choice butter we can obtain. Adding the 73,180 boxes exported, and the 188,013 boxes sold locally, the choice grade represented 5 per cent.

This does not prove very much unless we make a comparison, and I propose to compare our figures with those of the Eastern States. In New South Wales the authorities are not satisfied with first grade butter. They aim at getting choice grade, and according to the "Australian Dairy Review," in 1940-41, 93.3 per cent. of choice butter was made. That is a remarkable difference.

Last year, in 10 factories of New South Wales, 90 per cent. of the choicest butter was made from the choicest cream. In Victoria it is compulsory to make over 65 per cent. of the choicest cream received into the choicest butter, and some of the factories there have been fined for falling below that percentage. The Minister for Agriculture—Mr. Hogan, I believe—warned the Victorian factories that if they were fined for failure to make that percentage of choice butter from choice cream, he would have them closed down.

Compare that with our Western Australian conditions! I quote from the report of the Director of Agriculture of November, 1939, which said—

So far as the production side of the industry was concerned, the farmers during the last 12 years had done a wonderfully good job, and he had hopes at one stage of a similar achievement on the manufacturing side. It was well for the farmers to realise, however, that, as the following figures showed, all was not well with the present quality of Western Australian butter.

In 1935-36, he pointed out, 15 per cent. of the butter manufactured was graded as choice. It is difficult for a layman to reach a satisfactory conclusion on the various figures that are given. The figures in the Dairy Marketing Board's report and the annual figures of the Department of Agriculture do not seem to be compiled on the same basis. Consequently, the percentage given by the Director of Agriculture, 15 per cent. of choice butter, does not tally with the percentage of the Dairy Marketing Board.

In the following year the figure rose to 25 per cent.; in 1937-38 it dropped to 18 per cent., and in 1938-39 a further decline to 9 per cent. occurred.

So there is no doubt that the percentage of our choice butter has been on the down grade. I mentioned a little while ago that in the year ended February, 1941, in New South Wales ten factories accounted for 90 per cent. of "choicest" butter from "choicest" cream. In Mr. Baron Hay's report several instances are quoted where factories were paying for anything up to 50 per cent. choice grade cream, but were not making anything like the same quantity of choice grade butter, and in some cases not even one pound of choice grade butter was manufactured. We have in this State a regulation under the Dairy Industry Act which stipulates that

30 per cent. of "choicest" cream shall be made into "choicest" butter; and yet, despite the fact that it is not being done, no action has been taken to enforce the regulation. There have been no prosecutions, so far as I can ascertain, in those cases. Not that I am particularly keen on prosecutions; but I think that if we have a regulation of that nature, aiming at the improvement of our butter, we should see that it is carried out.

Then the Director of Agriculture, referring to butter grading, points out that the Harvey factory had maintained the quality of its butter on the same level as for last year, and was the only factory to gain points for manufacturing more than 30 per cent. of its choice cream into choice butter. As a matter of fact, a competition was held, and I think it was pointed out that only five factories, out of 15 in the State, submitted butter for that competition. Some time back the Chief Secretary, speaking in the Legislative Council, mentioned that there were 800 boxes of butter in cool stores in this State which had to be classified as "unfit for human consumption," as "inedible fat." I do not see the use of putting butter of that description into cool storage. For that to happen, a screw must be loose somewhere; and one of my objects is to find out the source of the trouble so that this sort of thing may not continue to happen.

Again, the Superintendent of Dairying, in his report of this year, points out—

The figures showing the quality of the butter at grading for the six months ended December, 1931, were gratifying. No less than 91.3 per cent. of butter was found to be choice and first grade.

I do not know why the superintendent adopts the practice of not disclosing how much is first grade. There is every reason why we should separate choice from first grade, because it is essential to us to know that, and thus be enabled to mark carefully the progress of the production of choice butter. The superintendent states that 91.3 per cent. was choice and first grade, but I could not separate the first grade from the choice. Another reason why I want the record, with regard to quality of butter at grading, is that I have had complaints from the retailers that the quality of the butter at grading is not the quality of the butter when it comes to be sold.

That is a very important matter, and probably accounts for the amount of inferior butter marketed this year. Butter, I believe,

though I am not an expert, below choice grade deteriorates rapidly when turned out of cold storage. If that is so, the fact that the butter at grading is of a certain quality does not carry the guarantee that we would expect it to carry. Some years ago the Dairy Products Marketing Board introduced a system whereby one penny per pound premium was paid for choice butter. The board's report for 1939 states that in 1936-37 premium was paid on 24,589 out of 194,762 boxes, in 1937-38 on 25,038 out of 244,640 boxes, in 1940 on 8,000 out of 261,582 boxes, and in 1941 on 17,089 out of 251,349 boxes. The practice of paying a bonus was discontinued in the year 1941, and, instead, arrangements were made with the manufacturers for the voluntary grading of "choice" and "first" grade butter intended for local consumption. It was considered that this would achieve results similar to if not better than those from the payment of the premium. Such results have not been achieved.

Now, dealing with the question from the producers' point of view, I regret that the House did not carry a certain clause in the Bill of two years ago, which endeavoured to have all cream sent to the nearest factory. I have been struck by the fact that almost weekly, when coming down from Pingelly, I find a great number of cream cans consigned to the metropolitan area. On one occasion I found 19 cans of cream consigned on a train journey of 130 miles, whereas in a town only 30 miles distant from the place of production of the cream there is a factory. When the Dairy Industry Bill was before Parliament a few years ago, a clause stipulated that one's cream should be consigned to the nearest factory. I had several requests from different localities for the deletion of the clause, despite the fact that the cream from that locality had to pass through a town having a butter factory. I had my own experience from that aspect.

When I sent cream to the metropolitan area I got better results than by sending cream to the factory near me. Where that state of affairs does exist, it is only natural that if cream is sent away from a country district—and I understand it is sent from as far as the south of the State, from some place near Albany—to Perth for manufacturing, if it is sent only twice a week, and when sent in to the siding may have to stand there on a hot day, and if it is

conveyed in an ordinary truck instead of a refrigerated truck, the cream cannot be choice grade, or even first grade, when it reaches the factory. That matter requires thorough investigation with a view to discovering some means that will enable us to get the very best returns from our factories, because, as pointed out in this report, we have a wonderful opportunity from now to the end of the war for our products, particularly for our butter, to take the place of articles previously manufactured in, say, Denmark in the case of butter, or in some other European country. Those countries, I venture to say, will be out of butter production for many years, and this is our opportunity to secure their markets. We must, however, produce the best quality article. That is essential.

Another matter I desire briefly to draw attention to is that at the beginning of the war margarine was becoming a very serious competitor with our butter. A retailer, a week or two ago, told me that had it not been for the intervention of the war, margarine would have been sold very largely in this State today. We have to be on our guard against margarine. If it is manufactured in this State, it will probably spell the ruin of our butter industry.

Mr. Watts: A quota has been fixed for margarine.

Mr. SEWARD: I admit that but, if there is a demand for it, the matter will be a hard one to cope with. There is only one other point I shall refer to, and it is one that I think requires the very closest scrutiny. We are threatened with a shortage of cream and milk. Probably those members more intimately connected with the dairying industry will better be able to speak on this subject than I, but I understand that many dairy farmers are drying off their cows and giving up production. This might easily prove a serious matter to the State, and the proposed committee should give it the closest attention. That is all I have to say on the motion.

MR. DONEY (Williams-Narrogin) [4.37]: I desire to speak briefly to the motion. The select committee, if appointed, will be able to do a great deal of extremely useful work and therefore I am in favour of its creation. At the same time, I desire to point out that there are in existence already two or three bodies which, at this

moment, are working upon the several dairying problems that have arisen, largely on account of the war. It would seem that the usefulness of the proposed committee might, therefore, in some degree be affected and its intervention at this juncture be not completely opportune. It will be obvious to you, Sir, and to members that great care should be therefore taken to prevent wastage of effort by reason of duplication or overlapping, which is very much the same thing, as that would lead to endless misunderstanding and delays when, by and by the results of these investigations would require to be co-ordinated.

The dairying problems I refer to are these: firstly, there is the partial transition required of the butter industry from the manufacture of butter to the manufacture of cheese; secondly, the change from the making of butter to the manufacture of condensed and powdered milk; thirdly, the need for large increases in the retail milk trade, brought about by the pronounced predilection of our American visitors for milk as a beverage; fourthly, the problems arising—and there is a number of them—from the practically total suspension of our butter export trade; fifthly, manpower problems—these of course are obvious; and, worst of all, the cruelly low prices now being paid to producers for their second-grade and pastry cream. It is in respect of the low grade cream that the committee, if appointed, could do its most useful work. Without any prompting from me, members will reflect, I am sure, that we already have in existence an Act administered by the Department of Agriculture. That Act contains the necessary machinery for controlling factories and for penalising such factories as may inadvertently or wilfully offend against the need for cleanliness, against commercial probity, or against the interests and privileges of the farmers who supply cream. I hope the dairy experts of the Department of Agriculture will not regard the motion now being discussed as implying any mistrust of them or of their methods.

The Minister for Lands: I will defend them.

Mr. DONEY: I do not think the Minister will find there is any need to defend them. He could only defend them from attack and I imagine there is unlikely to be any attack on them. I say quite frankly that it would be a pity indeed if such a need did arise.

I have always regarded Mr. Baron Hay, Mr. Cullity, Mr. Cousins and the other members of the department as not only capable and zealous officers, but as men having a full appreciation of the point of view of the suppliers. The Minister will agree with me that I do not exaggerate at all when I say that the dairying section of his department is thoroughly helpful and highly efficient. On the other hand, I think the committee's work might best be regarded as an attempt to support the very excellent work being done by the gentlemen to whom I have referred. The committee's work would include an investigation of the ways and means of increasing the proportion of output of first-grade cream, and of narrowing the gap existing at present between the prices paid to settlers for first and second-grade butterfat. On the face of it, the second-grade cream business looks to be something rottenly managed by the Commonwealth Government. I admit that that may not be so, because there is much about the matter I do not understand; but, on the face of it, there does seem to be something in the nature of a ramp.

These are the facts as I understand them: 5 lbs. of butterfat can, I understand, be made into 6 lbs. of butter. That need not imply anything wrong with the manufacture of the butter. It simply means that quite properly and legally the extra 1 lb. has been infused into the butterfat per medium of moisture and salt. Anyhow that first-grade butterfat yields to the producers either 1s. or 1s. 1d. I am not sure of the figure but probably it is 1s. 1d. by now; whereas second-grade butter yields no more than 2d. It is in this tremendous gap between those two figures that there will be found work for the committee to do.

Mr. Warner: Could not that be got over if they refused to take second-grade cream?

Mr. DONEY: If who refused?

Mr. Warner: The factories.

Mr. DONEY: The conditions upon which a great deal of the cream from the country areas is produced and later sent to the factories are such that it is not always possible, particularly in the summer months, to make the type of butterfat desired. The cost to the public of the 2d. a lb. butter is at present something like 1s. 5d. or 1s. 6d. per lb., and the wholesale price is, or was

until a few days ago, fixed at 1s. 3d. So there cannot be a great deal of difference, from the point of view of the housewife or the consumer, between first and second-grade butter when it is put up in the form of actual butter for sale. That 1s. 3d., less something like 3 per cent. handling costs to the factory, goes to a body known as the Australian Dairy Control Committee. Of that 1s. 3d. about 6d., I understand, is handed back to the factory, which retains about 4d. for processing and hands the remainder to the farmer, and just that bare 2d. is all the farmer gets for his 1 lb. of second-grade butterfat.

The question arises whether it actually costs the factory 4d. to do the processing. The answer is that it certainly does; it may cost a trifle more. A further question is whether it costs the farmer 2d. to land a pound of butterfat at the factory. The answer, of course, is that it does cost the farmer actually something like $4\frac{1}{2}$ or five times that amount at the lowest. As to whether the Australian Dairy Control Committee needs the whole of the extra 9d. is a question that should be inquired into. That money is used—I do not know whether I have explained this before—to find new markets and new processing methods, and so forth. I do not know whether these exactions are exorbitant. They appear to me to be so, but if the Minister for Agriculture speaks on the motion I hope he will give us some little idea of whether the payment of that 9d. is justified or not by the nature of the work done.

The notice paper indicates that one of the matters to be inquired into by the committee, should it be appointed, is the management and control of butter factories. I do not grumble at that, but if the committee is appointed it should make due allowances for different types of difficulties to be met by the factories. The House will appreciate that largely for the same reason that the Eastern States can produce, apparently, a greater amount of first-class butter than can Western Australia, so the coastal area of Western Australia and the far south and lower south-west of the State do a great deal better in that regard than do the central Great Southern and outer areas. The climate accounts for that. Climate is a very hard nut to crack, particularly as it creates quite a number of difficulties additional to itself.

In my electorate I have in Narrogin a town with a factory which has allied with it two other factories, one at Albany and the other at Denmark. I want to make it quite clear that the Narrogin factory has done and is still doing very valuable pioneering work. No other factory in the State—since they are all nearer to the coast and therefore in a far better position to carry out the work of butter making—has played the useful part that the Narrogin factory has. I am not aware whether it is generally known that the factory is governed by a directorate of purely farming folk and that the work is done on co-operative lines. It operates, too, in a very much larger area than does any other factory; over very wide spaces, carrying relatively few cows. Consequently it has to bring a big proportion of cream over long distances and that, of course, means long delays and the shaking of the cream to an extent that damages it very materially; and it means also, especially during summer months, that the cream has to lie in the heat of the midday sun sometimes for a number of hours.

This point will be appreciated—and particularly do I want it appreciated by the committee when it is appointed—that all these difficulties have to be met in competition with factories nearer the coast, and that implies a need for shrewder and keener management on the part of the Narrogin factory. That factory is highly essential to the economic well-being of the district since it brings to the farmers in bad times money which they would not otherwise have.

I might also mention, whilst the name of this factory is in my mind, that about three weeks ago it submitted to the Minister for Agriculture a request that a committee should be elected to inquire into much the same questions that the proposed select committee will be expected to inquire into. I have here a cutting that I think might quite properly be read. It is quite apropos of the question we are discussing. The report deals with cream production and the question of improving supply and quality. It states—

The Under Secretary for Agriculture (Mr. G. K. Baron Hay) has made available a report from the Superintendent of Dairying (Mr. M. Cullity) relative to the possibility of improving cream production and quality in the Great Southern and Wheat Belt districts. The report states:—

“The serious position which has followed the loss of the export market for low grade butter—resulting in farmers receiving only 2d. per lb. for second grade cream—and the com-

plete loss of a market for any cream of a lower quality, requires that every precaution should be taken in an attempt to produce cream of a quality which could be utilised on the local market.

“References from time to time have been made to the need for care in the details of production, such as cleanliness of equipment, cooling and proper storage of cream. Full details regarding the best methods are obtainable in the various articles published by this department. Even when good cream has been produced, the most expeditious method of getting it to a factory must be adopted to avoid deterioration.

“A further possibility is open to farmers in the Wheat Belt and Great Southern areas which would assist them in producing more cream of good quality than has been possible in previous years. It has been shown in the grade-herd recording scheme throughout the South-Western districts, and with one unit which was in operation at Narrogin, that higher production was obtained when cows calved between the end of March and the end of July.”

That is the point to which I am anxious to draw the attention of the prospective select committee. The higher production was obtained when cows calved between the end of March and the end of July. The report continues—

“In the Narrogin unit the highest production was obtained for those cows which calved in the months of February, March, April and May, cows calving in those months giving at least 50 per cent. more than those calving in August and September.

“The number of cows which calved each month and the average production of those cows for this unit are shown in the following: January: nil; February: 5, 222.2; March: 10, 201; April: 27, 211.19; May: 43, 195.56; June: 45, 174.29; July: 55, 168.2; August: 12, 149; September: 8, 136; October: nil; November: 1, 82; December: 1, 133.

“It will be noted that the greatest number of cows calving in any month was in July and the average production was considerably lower than those calving earlier. Only 40 per cent. of the cows calved in the best period. It is obvious, therefore, that increased production can be obtained in those areas if the cows are brought in earlier. Satisfactory supplies of fodder would be required for feeding.”

I make no apology for reading this rather long extract. It embodies several helpful features that deserve the close attention of the prospective select committee.

MR. McLARTY (Murray-Wellington) [4.48]: I was hoping that some other members would have had something to say on this matter. I represent a dairying district. I support this motion because I feel that producers will have nothing to lose from the

investigations of a select committee, and some good will probably come of it. Again, it is many years since we have had any inquiry into the dairying industry. Since an inquiry was made other sides of the industry have extended enormously. I take it the member for Pingelly (Mr. Seward) in moving for an inquiry into the dairying industry includes all sections of the industry, and that it will not only embrace the butter aspect.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: What about milk?

Mr. McLARTY: The member for Subiaco refers to milk. The wholemilk industry has become a very important part of dairying.

Mr. Doney: This motion refers to butter and makes no mention of anything else.

Mr. J. H. Smith: You had better confine your remarks to butter.

Mr. McLARTY: If it simply refers to butter alone, we will have to keep to butter, but we should find out what effect the other branches of the industry have had upon butter. We are at present manufacturing a great quantity of cheese. Again, there is a greatly increased output of condensed milk. But if it is the wish of the hon. member who moved this motion to stick directly to butter we will have to agree to it. Had the Bill which the Minister brought down in 1939 been agreed to, as drafted, there would have been no need for this select committee. When the Bill, amending the Dairying Industry Act, was introduced I supported it wholeheartedly and had it been accepted the industry would now be better off.

The Minister for Lands: It was the Leader of the Country Party in another place who ruined it.

Mr. McLARTY: The member for Pingelly is complaining about inferior cream. When the Minister introduced his Bill he knew all about cream travelling long distances and going past factories only a few miles from the producer's home. He tried to compel producers to send their cream to the nearest factory. This Chamber agreed to the measure, but unfortunately another place did not. It is quite correct to say that the further cream has to travel the less chance it has of arriving in choice or first-class order. I do not know how we can obviate this position. We cannot force the producer to send his product to the nearest factory; he can

send it whatever distance he likes. In normal times a demand exists for all classes of butter. There was little difference in the price of the butter we used to export to England and that of choice and first grades. Even when the grades became lower there was not very much difference. The feeling was that it did not very much matter.

Conditions now have altered to such an extent that unless a farmer can produce choice or first grade cream he is in a hopeless position. A select committee might find out that the producer is told by the dairy experts and the factory managers that it is of no use for him to send in second-grade cream, and that if he does send it in he will receive 2d. a lb. for it. Owing to our transport difficulties, particularly in the summer, it is exceedingly difficult for the farmer to get a price other than that for second-grade cream. He, therefore, gets 2d. a lb. for his product which, of course, is useless to him. He would do better to give the milk to pigs or throw it away.

Mr. J. H. Smith: What he does now is simply to leave the cows unmilked.

Mr. McLARTY: It is much better that he should not milk his cows in the circumstances.

Mr. Doney: It is worth more than 2d.

Mr. McLARTY: I understand—the Minister will correct me if I am wrong—that the producer gets 2d. but that the factory gets 6d.

Mr. Doney: No, it does not. It gets 4½d.

Mr. McLARTY: But it is sold to the consumer at 1s. That is happening today. Scope exists for an inquiry from that point of view alone. There are reasons why it is difficult for the farmer to produce choice or first-grade cream. Transport is more difficult than ever before, and the farmer is suffering from a shortage of labour. Many farmers have to do the work themselves; their sons have gone into the Army and there is real difficulty in getting labour for dairying. I wish to say something about condensed milk, if I am permitted, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: No.

Mr. McLARTY: Then I need say little more. I believe that if a select committee is appointed, it will recommend that the Minister's Bill as introduced in 1939 should become law. At that time producers who had made a thorough study of the dairying industry commended the Minister for the

Bill. In fact, I feel safe in saying that the Bill was produced through the co-operation of experts of the dairy branch of the department and by the advice of members of the butter-fat section of the Primary Producers' Association. Yet it was not acceptable.

Mr. J. H. Smith: I am not aware that the Primary Producers' Association knows all about butter.

Mr. McLARTY: The Minister consulted men who had given much study to the question. Producers' representatives were elected to statutory boards, and evidently the producers had faith in them or they would not have been retained in those positions. I support the motion and hope the Minister will agree to it.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne) [5.8]: I intend to oppose the motion. It is obvious from the speeches already made that we have very short memories. The member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. McLarty) has recalled the introduction of a Bill in 1939. Amongst the many Bills that it has been my privilege to introduce in this Chamber, that one was the soundest. Looking back on my introduction of that Bill, I consider it was one of the best contributions I have ever made in this Chamber. The Bill was the outcome of a considerable amount of study. I spent many week-ends at home and in my office consulting with officers and with men associated with the trade in the endeavour to meet every difficulty we were then confronted with in striving to produce a larger quantity of the best quality butter. It is almost amusing to hear interjections from members who made speeches on that measure, because they know that the greatest agitation now is coming from districts that turned down the proposals then made. If members refer to "Hansard," Volumes 1 and 2 of 1939, and follow through their whole course, in this Chamber and in the Legislative Council, the amendments to the Dairy Industry Bill of 1939, I venture to say there is much in connection with this industry that they will learn.

At this time a select committee is wholly unwarranted. It would occupy a considerable amount of the time of officers who are successfully engaged in furthering the interests of the industry. After the committee had sat for many weeks, it could not get

very much further than the information already in the Department of Agriculture and in the hands of the officers operating under the Dairy Industry Act. The whole question of second grade butter is bound up hard and fast with transport difficulties and districts of production. If members refer to the Bill as introduced—it is to be found in the 1939 volume—and look at Clause 11 (b), the clause that was thrown out, they will find an answer to most of their questions and problems. The exclusion of that clause was achieved by a motion moved by the Hon. C. F. Baxter in the Legislative Council.

I recall that many people at the time commented on the Bill. There was a stampede to get copies of it and pass them to dairying districts of the State, and to confer with all sectional and district interests so that manufacturers, producers and transport men would study the Bill. All of them had been conferred with previously and, because of the trend of quality of butter in this State, the Bill was presented to the House with absolute faith that it would be accepted as presented, because it had been so closely scrutinised before being introduced.

If we take the percentages year by year of choice and first grade butter produced, it would be idle for anyone to suggest that there has not been a tremendous improvement in the quality of butter from every producing district. In 1913, when working in a very humble position—I hold perhaps one of the oldest milk and cream testing certificates—I knew full well the difficulties confronting distant producers of butter-fat in the Woodford district of Queensland. The difficulties that confronted the producers then are exactly the same difficulties that exist today. But when one finds a member introducing a measure in which is bound up quality, the necessity for quality in the nature of the commodity because of the markets, and one finds that the very crux, indeed the heart of it, is removed because of interests vested in the industry, it is very difficult to oppose placidly a motion of this kind, whilst three years' operation of the 1939 Bill would have done so much more than has been possible for us to do.

But if we take year by year what the department says has been done since that time in collaboration with the Commonwealth department, we find that the Department of

Agriculture has five more field officers and several more inspectors devoting their attention solely to the necessity for quality. Results have been achieved, no matter what those who would just skirmish around the subject would suggest to me. I am not referring to any comments made in the Chamber on this debate. Those who have not studied the subject and allege that the Department of Agriculture has fallen down on its job I can only describe as having very little knowledge indeed of the butter industry or of the circumstances attending it.

Mr. Doney: When was that said?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: By the member for Subiaco (Mrs. Cardell-Oliver). She voiced that sentiment as having been expressed to her by an organisation which contends that the difficulty as regards butter today is due to the failure of the officers of the Agricultural Department. Perhaps I had best refrain from making any comment on the hon. member's statement, because she did not anticipate being here during this debate. But I say very definitely that the statement of the organisation will not bear examination. I intend to have it examined and answered paragraph by paragraph, so that those who do not understand the position will desist from making comments on a subject they do not understand.

To get back to my point! It has long been the Commonwealth Government's desire to build up the quality of the butter available for export. A couple of years ago the Commonwealth announced that the proportion of second-grade butter compared with the total butter production in two States was a very serious factor indeed. The Commonwealth Government had formulated a definite policy to eliminate second-grade butter. Two seasons ago, as members from dairy districts will know, the Commonwealth Government began to eliminate from export any butter grading less than 83—pastry grade butter. In spite of that we had the interests of dissatisfied producers sponsored by members in this Chamber. There were also sponsored the interests of some factories which strongly contended that they should themselves be permitted to manufacture second-grade butter—pastry butter. Some members opposite strongly put up the case for the farmer who has never produced any other quality than second-grade. But the objec-

tive of the Commonwealth for several years has been to eliminate second-grade, and especially since the war began, when refrigerator space became so valuable; and the Commonwealth in its intense campaign achieved much.

For example, if we take State by State the figures of second-grade butter in 1940 and in 1942, they show—New South Wales in 1940, 261,000 boxes of second-grade butter, and in 1942, 2,800 boxes; Victoria in 1940, 11,930, and in 1942, 45,600; Queensland in 1940, 190,100; which figure in 1942 was reduced to 62,100; South Australia (always the worst State for quality of butter) in 1940, 92,100, and in 1942, 33,600; Western Australia in 1940, 17,600, which in 1942 was reduced to 4,600; Tasmania in 1940, 6,500, which figure in 1942 was reduced to 1,800 boxes. These are the figures of the Commonwealth Department of Commerce, which is in control of the dairying industry in a Commonwealth sense and to a degree in a State sense, and whose interest and desire are to build up not merely the reputation of Australian butter but also to remove from the market a commodity which is an embarrassment on the market. Our Department of Agriculture has endeavoured to live up to the desires and demands of the Commonwealth.

It is a fact that the bulk of second-grade butter has always been made from cream coming from the wheat belt and from the eastern districts. We were very worried because of some districts adjacent to those of members who have spoken to this motion. But when it came to the point of an endeavour to overcome it by legislative action—and I do commend members that they should read the clauses that were deleted, very lengthy and all-embracing—one excuse made for the rejection of those clauses was that they tied up the farmer and the producer to do this and do that, and that the farmer and the producer were not to be permitted to arrange to transport along the roads they desired. We did not get authority to override the overlapping of roads; but the Department of Agriculture has made tremendous improvements in dairying methods. The reason why second-grade cream comes from those districts is obvious; cream is a sideline in those districts. There never has been any objection from the South-West to this legislation, but there has been in the wheatholt.

There is still objection today, from the farm to the factory, because the provisions of the measure are so rigid.

Members opposite have recently asked me not to impose the provisions of the Dairy Industry Act because they would inflict hardship on producers of second-grade cream. So of what use is it to ask this House for a select committee to inquire into matters of which we know all the facts? If members will spend a week-end with me, a Saturday and a Sunday, I will produce evidence to show that with their co-operation they can in their own districts achieve all that they would hope to bring about by this inquiry which they propose. I am prepared to devote a Saturday and a Sunday to that purpose, and to make available all the files. We have had letters from farmers on the subject. I have endeavoured to be quite decent to those people with whom the butter factories were dissatisfied on the ground that their premises were not up to the mark. But I must say that I have been considered a tyrant by those farmers and considered unreasonable by their members in connection with bacterial growth in butter. With a commodity such as butter, in which bacterial growth is so rapid, in which every taint is perceptible, the greatest care is the least that is best in the interests of that commodity. I think something pertinent to that subject was said by the general secretary of the Primary Producers' Association, and said quite recently when commenting on the inferior butter problem of Western Australia. The following will be found in the "Australian Dairy Review" of the 19th December last. The writer is quoting from a broadcast by Mr. H. J. Prater. He says—

Those engaged in the industry are entitled to expect the co-operation of those outside the recognised dairying districts who produce butter-fat as a side-line to their major farming operations. Wheat growers generally would deprecate the production of inferior grain in quantities that would give this State a bad name for the quality of its wheat. Wool growers would not like to lose the reputation they have won for the production of fine wool. And so our dairy farmers are anxious that all their efforts to build up a name for the quality of their butter shall not be nullified by the carelessness or apathy of those who individually produce small quantities of butter-fat, but whose aggregate production can have a serious effect on the average quality.

With due deference to Mr. Prater, I say that that sums up the situation. If we are to be asked to sponsor the claims of all the outside

people, if we are to be asked to permit them to continue the production of an article the quality of which will lead to embarrassment, we should do our utmost to prevent it. That is what the Department of Agriculture is doing. The department does not meet with a very good response from many quarters; but I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that I do not intend to relax in any way. I intend that every factory should be expected to do its utmost; but, unfortunately, all the factories do not play cricket in that regard. The factories are anxious to produce second-grade butter, have expressed themselves so to be, but expect the department to police it. They expect the department, and the department alone, to approach the farmer in order to rectify the cause of the trouble.

I have mentioned that there has been an agitation very recently further to relax the grading of butter so as to permit not only of some of that quality to go into local consumption, but in the long run to permit of the reduction of quality. That approach was made to the department. Therefore, from the point of view of the department, it does not matter which way we examine this subject. I say very definitely that those highly qualified, interested officers have been the watch-dogs of this industry and that great credit is due to them. They did much to build up the 76 per cent. of choice and first-grade butter produced in 1933-34 to 91 per cent. in 1941-42, as was quoted by the hon. member opposite.

In regard to transport, it is not my desire to delay the House at this stage by quoting what I said in 1939 on this subject, but it makes very interesting reading.

Mr. J. H. Smith: I think you should read it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Some of the comments of the hon. member make interesting reading, too.

Mr. J. H. Smith: I remember the debate.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I refer members to Vol. 2 of "Hansard," 1939, and to my remarks on Clause 11 of the Bill then before the House. They will find that what I forecast is exactly what has happened today. Perhaps it would be wise to read my remarks.

Hon. C. G. Latham: We do not want you to read too much.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It will be found that when the Bill was returned to this Chamber I said there would be a

clamour for the re-introduction into the Dairy Industry Act of the very provisions that were deleted from the Bill. My remarks are there to be read; they are unequivocal. My meaning cannot be mistaken. With no intention or desire whatever to delay the House, I say that if, with the co-operation of members opposite, we can stimulate the farmers to better efforts in their dairy production, if by close contact with each other we can achieve the intense desire of the officers of the Department of Agriculture, we shall get much further than we would if the proposed select committee were appointed. The present is an unfortunate time to select, however, because of our circumstances today and because of the activities of those officers; but I repeat that if it will assist in any way towards better butter production in this State, I shall be only too pleased to confer with members opposite and produce the department's files and details. I oppose the motion.

MR. SEWARD (Pingelly—in reply) [5.31]: Summarised as I heard it, I should say that the Minister's objection to the motion can be stated as follows: "You did not do what I wanted you to do two years ago and I am not going to let you do it now."

The Minister for Lands: The hon. member cannot do it by legislation now.

MR. SEWARD: That may be so, but are we not to have an investigation to ascertain whether the provisions of the Act referred to provide for what is best to be done in the present circumstances? Cannot we ascertain whether an improvement can be effected in those provisions? I want to say quite definitely, as I think I said before, that I am not insinuating in any way that the Department of Agriculture has fallen down on its job. All I want is this proposed investigation. The Minister did not refute the figures I quoted showing the results of our grading. He gave us the figures for Australia, showing that second-grade butter had been reduced considerably in all the States. Of course, I might say that it has gone into the pastry butter.

The Minister did not show that it had gone into first or choice grade butter. I am not going to say whether it did or not. He inferred that an improvement had been effected and I accept his statement. But that does not say that the improvement took

place in our State. In 1940 there were 17,600 boxes of second-grade butter and this number has been reduced to 4,600 boxes, but whether the whole of that or the great preponderance of it went into choice or high-grade butter has not been made clear. The basis of my plea is to improve the quality of choice butter. The Minister has not quoted anything to prove that the figures I gave were wrong, and therefore I can only assume they are right.

The Minister for Lands: I could not anticipate what you were going to say.

MR. SEWARD: I obtained the figures from official records, of which I take it the Minister is aware. I know he is well versed in the subject and is able to say whether our choice-grade butter has improved only three per cent, or four per cent. If it has not improved, then I am warranted in asking for this committee. I do not for one instant wish to minimise the main object, which is to convince producers who are sending in second-grade cream that they should improve it to first-grade. That will be a big job, as I know from personal experience. I remember speaking at a meeting of butter producers some years ago, and I told them then that their major task for the next succeeding few years was to convince producers in their districts of the necessity for improving the quality of cream. How the butter producers were to do that, I left to themselves. I expressed the opinion that better transport facilities would be required.

I am not speaking about the South-West now, but about the wheat belt. We have not been able to get refrigerated trucks on the railways there; in addition, the railways only give many of those branch lines a service two or three times a week. It may be necessary, therefore, for the butter factories to provide other means of transport to enable producers to bring in their cream. However, I maintain that the Minister has not shaken the arguments I used. If we made this mistake two years ago—I think it was a mistake to strike out the transport clauses from the Bill he mentioned—surely it is not logical to say we must sit down now and simply wait for the thing to rectify itself, and not hold this inquiry. Consequently, I feel justified in asking the House to carry the motion.

Question put and negatived.

MOTION—PARLIAMENTARY ADVISORY COMMITTEES.

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [5.35]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House eight committees should immediately be appointed to inquire into and report upon and, where advisable, organise for the carrying out of any proposal—

- (a) referred to such committee by the Minister; or
- (b) decided upon by a two-thirds majority of the members present at a meeting of the committee.

Each such committee to be related to one of the eight Cabinet Ministers and its powers to be in respect of matters connected with his departments, and to consist of five members of the Assembly and three members of the Council, and be proportionately representative of all parties as nearly as possible. A majority of members of a committee to form a quorum and a meeting of any such committee to be convened by notice signed by any three members of the committee or by the Minister.

I move this motion because I believe that some such proposals as are contained in it would be of assistance not only to the Government of this State but also to the people whom it is our duty to help, especially in the present circumstances, as much as we possibly can. In the Legislative Council a motion was carried in general terms which had some reference—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! It is not permissible to refer to any debate in another place.

Mr. WATTS: In general terms I would have been satisfied with a motion that did not go into quite so much detail as the one I have on the notice paper. At the same time, in order to make oneself understood, it is necessary that some details should be given. Were this motion to be discussed to a conclusion, I should certainly hope, and indeed have made the necessary arrangements should the opportunity offer, to have deleted the words which provide that the committee, if appointed, should organise for the carrying out of any proposal, because I realise that those words are capable of misconstruction. The genesis of the idea behind the motion, which I do not propose to read because it has been on the notice paper for the best part of a fortnight, was, so far as I am concerned, the letter which has been referred to in this House, which came to members from the Premier, and which I think all members have read. It

may be desirable, however, to refer to one or two parts of that letter, which is dated the 27th March. The Premier said—

In these stressful days, however, there is a keen desire for the State further to avail itself of the services and energies of members in various ways most of which have a direct bearing upon or some connection with an increasing war effort.

Then there was attached a list of items in which the Premier was of the opinion we might interest ourselves, but only, it appeared, as individuals or by means of such co-operation as we might, as individuals, arrange. The list started off with the words—

All phases of activity in connection with air raid precautions.

I submit to you, Sir, and to this House that had there been a committee such as is suggested by the motion attached to the Minister for Civil Defence, to which he could have referred certain questions that have been dealt with in this House during the last few days connected with civil defence, it is extremely unlikely that the situation in which the Civil Defence Department finds itself today, as a result of certain disallowances of regulations, would ever have arisen. I submit that the co-operation of and inquiry by a committee which consisted of members of both Houses, and as nearly as possible was representative of all parties, would have prevented the position in which the Civil Defence Department stands at present in regard to black-out and other regulations.

It is our duty as members of this House to assist the department to bring into being regulations that are desirable and that are in the interests of the community, and are unlikely to be so ill-considered that immediately Parliament meets they are attacked on all sides. I contend, therefore, that in that regard a committee such as I suggest would have been of inestimable value; and as our Constitution, unlike the Federal Constitution, sets its face against the payment of members attached to such committees, that assistance could have been rendered, must have been rendered, at no expense to the State. I will now turn to the next item in the Premier's communication. He suggested—

That members might carry out valuable work in their constituencies in connection with the evacuation of women and children from target areas, both metropolitan and country members assisting with both evacuation and billeting.

What sort of co-operation can we afford in matters of that kind as individuals? Along what lines, to what patterns are we to work? I frankly admit that while I believe much planning could be done in order to prepare for the worst eventuality, I am not, as an individual, in a position, minus authority, to do very much along the lines that the Premier suggests. I might, it is true, make suggestions as to what premises could be used or what action could be taken in order to be prepared for the evil day, hoping that those preparations would be entirely wasted. But as an individual I am by no manner of means in a sufficiently strong position to obtain the active co-operation of other members of Parliament whose advice and experience taken in an official capacity, and with some official standing, would undoubtedly be of tremendous value, and who could, without much question, draw up plans which, generally speaking, would apply to any district in the State, and with a little local preparation would serve every district that might require such services. In Item No. 3 the Premier went on—

An intense departmental campaign is being promoted for increased production of perishable foodstuffs and vegetables, also dairy products, pork and bacon, and other commodities which will have a tremendous local demand. Close attention is being given to all factors, including prices which are fair to those using the commodities and remunerative to the producer, and members could, after fully acquainting themselves through department channels, with all aspects of the situation, render considerable service in country districts.

Some of us were afforded an opportunity of acquainting ourselves with the requirements of the State as communicated to us through departmental channels, and we realise that demand for certain commodities, that is for certain foodstuffs, was not endless. There was a definite limit to what was required. We will imagine that an extra 150 acres of vegetables were needed and could be grown in a certain portion of the State. Let us then suppose that each individual member got to work in his own district. Perhaps five or six know that portions of their district will grow this particular item in abundance, so they get to work and each finally manages to have planted a total of 150 acres. Each member then finds that four or five other members have done the same thing. I ask: where is the producer, the hard-work-

ing owner of the land on which this product has been grown when it comes to putting the product on the market? He would find that the market was over-supplied and that the prices obtaining would be unremunerative or, if not, a large quantity of the stuff would be wasted, with the net result that he would be inclined to call the member for his district a fool.

Where there is some co-ordination of effort—and the great majority of members, if not all, of both Houses are prepared to lend their assistance at no expense to the State—these things would be dealt with on a proper basis, and only reasonable requirements would be likely to be grown, and the possible difficulties to which I have drawn attention would not arise. The Premier then dealt with other items into which at the moment I will not go in any detail because members have already read the statement. The suggestion was that State members should work as individuals. The State member is not in a position successfully to work as an individual. He is faced with disadvantages of one kind and another which cannot be avoided. It seemed to me that the only thing to do was to suggest that the efforts of members should be directed to the various channels requiring consideration and assistance, so that each section of members would know what its particular department was and would extend its efforts along the lines most calculated to assist that department.

It is well known that the Federal Government has appointed certain committees. I do not propose to go into that system because it is not by any means the same as what I suggest should be used in this instance: nor are the circumstances the same, but there is one resemblance between the two proposals, and that is that the Federal Government has thrown some responsibility on its private members, which it would not have done during peace time. It is justifiable to do that, and it is not unreasonable for us to do it. Exception was taken by certain parties to a proposal such as this on the ground that it was revolutionary. I am desirous of having the words "advisable, organised for the carrying out of" struck out of the first paragraph of my motion. Members will then find that it becomes a matter of making inquiry and report and taking action authorised by the Minister, which is in no sense revolutionary but extremely

reasonable in the circumstances in which we find ourselves at present. I was looking at last year's Federal "Hansard" in regard to the committees to which I have referred and I came to a statement made by Mr. Makin. He is now Minister for Munitions. His remarks struck me as being particularly applicable and statesman-like in regard to these matters, and so I propose to read them. The following remarks were made on the 3rd July, 1941—

In these unprecedented times it is most desirable that Parliament should acquaint itself as fully as possible with the details of administration. Each hon. member appointed to one of these committees will have a special opportunity to examine matters that could not be brought to debate in this Chamber and obtain information that would not be available through ordinary channels. That policy is in keeping with our conception of responsible government.

That is quite a reasonable proposition, and in keeping, I should say, with your conception, Mr. Speaker, and mine, of responsible government, that members should be in a position to acquaint themselves with the circumstances and facts that surround all departments, and assist as far as possible in alleviating the difficulties of those departments, and in bringing such intelligence as they possess to bear upon the problems existing. I have every respect for the civil servant, but, as was mentioned here yesterday in the course of debate, he is naturally bound by years of departmental experience and what is now commonly known as red tape. It is extremely hard to get away from these factors. In addition to that, many departments are rapidly becoming understaffed and overworked. Also there are many minor problems which should not be confined to departmental inquiry or action, but which might very satisfactorily be submitted to committees which would inquire into them and suggest means by which they might be solved.

I have written down one or two items which might be referred to such committees. For example, how to make the best use of the labour available for this year's shearing and for the saving of fuel for shearing purposes! Suggestions have been made in the Press to the Agricultural Bank Commissioners that there should be an alteration in the shearing periods. Great exception has been taken to that by primary producers' organisations. It is well known that a considerable amount of fuel—liquid

fuel—is usually required for the shearing. It is also known that there is a shortage of shearers and that the wool clip of Western Australia is worth, on present prices, over £4,000,000. It is, therefore, an industry which cannot be neglected. It is an industry which finds itself terribly short-handed. It requires expert men and we, I take it, have to find some way whereby the shearing can be done in a reasonable period of the year and in a manner which will save fuel, because by the time the shearing is due fuel may be more difficult to get than it is now.

Much could be done in country districts to organise other types of power and to make use of central depots for the purpose of shearing, and generally to ensure as far as practicable that the wool clip is taken off at the proper time or times with the least possible upset in the industry and a greater saving of fuel. That is one matter which a committee appointed for the purpose could put on a satisfactory basis in a short time, and also recommend how it should be organised.

Then there is the question of supply of agricultural labour, and the question of the employment of women in industry—not only in agricultural industry. Can women be satisfactorily employed in other industries? Mr. Dedman, the Federal Minister for War Organisation, is, as far as I can read from the Press, considerably concerned by the fact that he has to get a certain number of men out of industry in order to meet the requirements of the war effort. I do not know that we have taken any action as yet in this State to assist him in that direction by substituting the services of women in industry for those of men. If all that Mr. Dedman says has to be done, I am afraid we shall have to give consideration to that point in the very near future. Who are better equipped than the elected members of the people to deal with matters of that kind and advise the Ministers in charge of the particular departments?

One could also deal with foodstuffs. Then consideration should be given to costs and prices as affecting the quantity and quality of primary production. So far we, as a State Parliament, have done nothing to ensure that our primary producers will be able to carry on and make a "do" of their production this year. I know we are handicapped by Federal restrictions in many

directions, but we are entitled to complain if they are too severe or excessively bad for our producers. But what is going to happen if the primary producers turn round and say, "We cannot carry on; we have to shut up shop"?

Mr. Cross: It is about time action was taken to protect consumers.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. WATTS: I find action being taken allegedly to protect the consumer by all this price control, but I do not find that it is achieving very much for the consumer. I was going to deal with this question. I believe it would be within our province to suggest to the Commonwealth and State Governments what might be done to afford the necessary protection. As I have reiterated many times in this House, it is not what the producer gets for his product that makes it hard for the consumer; it is what takes place in between. To this question we must give our attention in order to satisfy my demands for the producer and the reasonable demands of the member for Canning for the consumer. We should be allies in this matter. There is somebody else to be dealt with who lies between Canning and Katanning.

We might also be of assistance in investigating the use of our natural mineral resources for war purposes and how best to prevent an increase in living costs, and matters allied to that. I do not propose to enter into any greater detail there. This afternoon the Minister for Railways has advised us how difficult it is to provide rolling stock or keep rolling stock in repair because of the heavy demands that are being made upon it. If I were satisfied upon inquiry by a committee of this nature that it was necessary from now on to restrict the service being offered to the public, in order that time and opportunity might be found to put a greater proportion of our rolling stock into better condition, I would be quite prepared to join in a recommendation that restrictions should be imposed. How much stronger would the Minister and his officers be if they had the support of a substantial committee of members of Parliament asserting that they were convinced, after due inquiry, that something must be done to minimise and reduce the facilities offered by the train service to the public, and saying that, unless this is done now, we may be in greater difficulty at some

future time, and if it is done now, we shall have greater efficiency later on. Therefore I suggest that very valuable work could be done along those lines.

There is no need for anyone to fear the presence of any revolutionary ideas behind this motion. It might have some evolutionary ideas behind it, but no reasonable man in these days could take exception to ideas of that sort. It might even be possible for a committee such as I suggest to recommend to the State Government how it could carry out the wishes of Mr. Scully, the Federal Minister for Commerce, in regard to a letter I have from that gentleman dated the 6th March, 1942. It was in regard to the Commonwealth proposals for the creation of a mortgage bank. The letter reads—

I have read carefully and with interest all you have said upon this point and agree with you entirely, but I would point out, however, that the formation of the proposed mortgage bank is not to write off debts at present owing to State instrumentalities, but merely to assist primary producers in the provision of long term loans.

I thoroughly agree that a number of farmers would be bad propositions even for a mortgage bank, but I feel sure that you will concur that such cases are ones for the State Governments concerned, who are the only authorities capable of writing off the present huge burden of debt under which primary producers are obliged to labour.

The writing off should take place before the bank begins operations, and I do trust that the State Governments will give this matter the fullest co-operation, as it is the intention of the Commonwealth Government that the proposal to establish the bank should be fully debated at the next general sitting of the Federal House.

There Mr. Scully opens up a very wide subject as to what ought to be done in order to enable the mortgage bank, which apparently he as Minister for Commerce is intent upon pressing on with, to function. He makes the suggestion that there is a large number of farmers whom the mortgage bank in no circumstances could take in hand. He says the State Government should consider ways and means whereby they can be put into a position to enable them to be assisted by a mortgage bank. So, there is another subject to which we could well devote time and consideration.

I have a copy of the report of the Western Australian War Industries Committee, of which Senator Collett was chairman and the members were Mr. Curtin, the present

Prime Minister, and Professor Mauldon, of the University of Western Australia. It is just a year yesterday since this committee came into being and held its first sitting. I do not find that anything very much has arisen from the deliberations of the committee. One finds amongst the recommendations, which are very lengthy, proposals of all kinds—ship-building, shell-making and production of ore down to matters of very much smaller importance. I feel that members of this Parliament should take a hand in assistance of and in co-operation with the Minister for Industries—I do not charge him with slackness in this matter; quite the contrary—the question of bringing to bear such pressure as is possible on the Commonwealth Government, now headed by one of the members of that committee, so that it may carry out in quick time some of the recommendations made.

On motion by the Deputy Premier, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE DEPUTY PREMIER (Hon. H. Millington—Mt. Hawthorn) [6.4]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn to a date to be fixed by Mr. Speaker.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [6.5]: I do not know whether I am in order in discussing this motion, but I would like an undertaking from the Government that this House will be called together at a very early date. There are two matters of vast importance confronting us today. Undoubtedly the war is pre-eminent, but the position in which we find ourselves owing to the Commonwealth Government's insistence upon uniform taxation, without the Legislatures of the respective States having any say at all in the matter, is of vital importance, and cannot for a moment be treated lightly. It must be dealt with at the very earliest opportunity by this Chamber. I do not know what the outcome of the proposal may be, but it may take away from us our sovereign rights, which cannot be maintained unless we have control of our finances and have the right to impose taxation.

Again, there seem to be grave doubts about the Commonwealth's intentions regarding our goldmining industry. That is one of the most important factors in the

economic structure of our State. Although I am an agriculturist I know that when agriculture failed, mining came into its own, and that when mining failed, agriculture came to the rescue. Our mining industry is so important that we cannot possibly neglect it. We want to be behind the Government in preparing the case for submission to the Commonwealth Government. The time has not yet come when Canberra can refuse to heed the Legislatures of all the States. Accordingly I ask for an undertaking that the House shall be called together at a very early date after the Premier's return.

Mr. McDONALD (West Perth) [6.7]: I think it is imperative that this Parliament, if it is not to stultify itself, should meet again on a fixed date to consider certain movements in Federal circles which may result in the diminution of the sovereignty of Western Australia, and which may also result in very grave disturbance of our State's economic structure. These are matters, if ever matters have arisen in the last decade of Parliament, which call for the attention of the elected representatives of the people in this House. I think I need not say more, because I feel also that all members are thoroughly seized of the importance of this condition of affairs. I move an amendment—

That the words "to a date to be fixed by Mr. Speaker" be struck out, and the words "to Tuesday, the 12th May, 1942" inserted in lieu.

THE DEPUTY PREMIER (Hon. H. Millington—Mt. Hawthorn—on amendment) [6.9]: I agree that the two subjects mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition are of transcendent importance. However, when the Government was requested to call Parliament together, it did not demur in any way. It was understood that Parliament was to be called together if emergency measures or other business of sufficient importance were in the offing. That was the understanding upon which Parliament met. If the Government had shown any reluctance to call the House together, this amendment would have been justified. I think the reply I gave to the Leader of the National Party, when a requisition for the calling together of the House came from an outside body, a body that would not meet this House, was that if and when the elected re-

representatives of the people asked that Parliament should be called together, the Government would give the fullest consideration to such a request. And when that request was made, Parliament was called together.

In this instance the urge does not come only from the Opposition. Private members on this side of the House have also asked that Parliament should be summoned. Therefore the matter rests with Parliament. Though the Premier is not present, I am quite satisfied to state that when another request is made as previously, it will be considered. We are not afraid to face Parliament. The statements we have made are quite straightforward, and although the Ministerial bench has been a target area it can be said that straightforward replies have been given and that ample opportunities have been afforded to all members. Not very much time has been taken up by Ministers during these sittings. We did not even introduce legislation, although that has been attempted by members of the Opposition. The Opposition has taken to itself more than the Government desires to take to itself. I do not know whether Opposition members should adopt the attitude of another place, which took the business of the House out of the hands of the Government. I do not see why that example should be followed here.

The motion I have moved is the usual motion. If it could be shown—and it has not even been suggested—that the Government is loth to call Parliament together and would not respond to a definite request of members of Parliament to meet, there would be some reason for the amendment. I suggest that the Government can be trusted thus far, that when the need for assembling Parliament arises we shall not hesitate to call Parliament together. I still adhere to my motion that, as is usual in these circumstances, Parliament shall be called together at a date to be fixed by yourself, Mr. Speaker. I think that the section in front of me, and that to my left, and the section just behind me can rest assured that the Government will not demur to meeting Parliament.

Mr. McDonald: This is not a usual time.

The DEPUTY PREMIER: I object to the amendment.

Amendment put and negatived.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford-Midland) [6.12]: The motion conveys that further notices of motion cannot be dealt with until Parliament re-assembles. I have no objection to that; but I think it would have been more equitable had the House adjourned before any motions were moved, rather than that some members should have the privilege of going on while others should not. In regard to one notice of motion, referring to brown-out and black-out, the Deputy Premier is reported in the "Daily News" to have made a statement that he would take into account, when reconsidering the regulations, the reasons advanced in the Legislative Council. There are many other reasons which have to be taken into account, and I wish to point out that I cannot now have the privilege of moving the motions standing in my name. I do appeal to Ministers to realise that it is not those privileged to drive motor cars who are interfered with, but the general community. I believe the Deputy Premier and members generally will take into consideration all that are suffering as the result of the regulations.

MR. THORN (Toodyay) [6.14]: I also hold the opinion expressed by the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson). It would have been far better if the House had adjourned when the debate on the Premier's statement had concluded. That some motions were dealt with was, I consider, most unfair to members who, having notices on the paper, were not privileged to move them. I could quite easily have discussed various topics yesterday when I addressed the House; but I refrained from doing so because I had had an assurance from the Premier that I would get an opportunity to discuss my motion. He gave the House that assurance. Now I am to be denied the privilege. I feel that I am definitely letting the public down.

Mr. Fox: The regulations have been disallowed by another place.

Mr. THORN: The hon. member is the narrowest-minded rat in this House.

Mr. Fox: I ask for a withdrawal of that remark. I will knock the hon. member's head off.

Mr. THORN: The hon. member cannot do so.

Mr. Fox: You wait!

Mr. SPEAKER: What does the hon. member wish to be withdrawn?

Mr. Fox: The offensive remark made by the member for Toodyay.

Mr. SPEAKER: I did not hear it. The member for Toodyay, however, must withdraw.

Mr. THORN: I withdraw.

The Minister for Labour: And apologise!

Mr. THORN: It has been made public that I would deal with this question, and now I am denied the opportunity to do so. I resent it very much indeed, but still I must bow to the will of the Chamber.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 6.17 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 12th May, 1942.

	PAGE
Leave of absence	3260
Motions: Obituary, the late Hon. J. J. Holmes,	
M.L.C.	3260
Taxation, as to deduction of A.L.P. expenditure	3263
Uniform Tax proposal, as to submission to State	
Parliaments	3265
Goldmining Industry, as to manpower proposals	3280

The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 11 a.m., and read prayers.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by the Honorary Minister, leave of absence for the remainder of the session granted to Hon. G. Fraser (West) on the ground of his enlistment in the R.A.A.F.

On motion by Hon. H. L. Roche, leave of absence for six consecutive sittings granted to Hon. A. Thomson (South-East) on the ground of ill-health.

MOTION—OBITUARY.

The Late Hon. J. J. Holmes, M.L.C.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [11.6]: Before we proceed any further with the business on the notice

paper, I desire the sanction of the House to move, without notice, a motion, which I feel it my duty to place before members, and which I certainly submit with the deepest regret. Since we last met, one of our colleagues has passed away. Therefore I desire to move—

That this House desires to place on record its sincere appreciation of the public services rendered to this State by the late Hon. J. J. Holmes who, at the time of his death, was a member for the North Province, and expresses its deep sympathy with the members of his family in the irreparable loss they have sustained by his decease; and that the President be requested to forward the foregoing resolution to the members of his family.

The late Mr. Holmes was one of the oldest members of Parliament, both in regard to years and length of service rendered to the State in that capacity in Western Australia. Although he and I very frequently differed in our political viewpoints, and while we often had marked differences of opinion, nevertheless I always held him in the highest esteem. I appreciated the fact that he was conscientious in the viewpoint he expressed, and I also appreciated the fact that no member could have been more consistent in his advocacy of a particular matter than was the late Mr. Holmes. He was a remarkable man in many ways.

For practically the whole of his lifetime he was associated with the public life of the State. He was not only a member of Parliament, but was also, on two occasions, a member of the Ministry. In the business life of the community, during the whole of his lifetime, he played a very prominent part, and he was also associated with financial institutions in this State, which no doubt reaped the benefit of his very wide knowledge. So while one might have differed from the views of our late colleague, one must admit that he did play a very prominent part in the public and business life of the State. For those reasons it is with very deep regret that I move this motion.

I feel sure the House will agree with me when I say that, notwithstanding the differences of opinion to which I have referred, in all these various activities he played a very great part in the development of Western Australia. He was a very strong advocate in support of the interests of the north-western section of the State, a part that is particularly prominent to-