

the 1914-18 war we stored millions of bushels of wheat and lost millions of bushels, but it was not altogether an economic loss. I urge upon the Government the need for bringing the agriculturists of the State to a reasonable standard of living and profitable expectation for the future.

On motion by Mr. J. H. Smith, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 8.57 p.m.*

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## Legislative Council.

*Wednesday, 13th August, 1941.*

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

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Fifth Day.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**HON. H. V. PIESSE** (South-East) [4.33]: At the outset, I desire to congratulate Acting Wing Commander H. J. Edwards, D.F.C., upon his winning the Victoria Cross. That is a great honour to the Forces from Western Australia. I desire also to commend our worthy Mr. Fraser for the attitude he is adopting towards the war. We shall all be proud of the work that he will do, and we hope he will return at an early date. We cannot help but be proud of the Prime Minister of Australia, who lately has travelled the length and breadth of the Empire and placed Australia's case before the people. It seems unfortunate that he should be continually attacked by people who really are in a position to know better and ought not to be interfering with Australia's war effort. The Prime Minister's appointment of Parliamentary committees will be of great assistance to the war effort.

I regret that our own Government did not take steps to co-opt members of Parliament on similar committees here, as I feel they would be able to do much good work in that capacity, particularly country members who are connected with patriotic efforts and with bodies endeavouring to establish munition works here. The assistance of country members is being directed to the retention of our primary producers on the land during the war. We can have nothing but admiration and praise for the way in which Britishers are taking the war; but I have often studied people in this State whose sons have gone oversea and are missing. The parents do not know whether the sons are prisoners, whether they are casualties or whether they have paid the supreme sacrifice. The strain upon the parents must be very great indeed, and my heart goes out to them. I know of many who two or three months ago had news that their loved ones were missing and so far have not had further word of them.

Referring to the Lieut.-Governor's Speech, I desire to touch upon the wheat position. I was interested to hear Mr. Wood speak on this subject and also to hear Mr. Bolton's references to the Railway Department. I am not one of those who consider that Mr. Bolton is no friend of the farmer. On many occasions both he and Mr. Dimmitt have in this House done their best to assist the farmer.

Hon. H. Tuckey: Mr. Bolton is a farmer.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: Of course. Legislation introduced into this Chamber to benefit the farming community has not always received the support of Mr. Bolton, but he has given his reasons for not supporting it. He has, however, always given the farmer a fair deal. I have been a member of this Chamber for the past eight years and have always expected to hear severe criticism of the Government by my friend, but on this occasion everything in the garden appears to be lovely. It may be, if one takes a metropolitan viewpoint; but I cannot speak with personal knowledge of the metropolitan area. I can, however, speak with knowledge of the country districts and many things there are not, in my opinion, right. I shall touch upon them later. A few days ago I received a letter from Senator Johnston in which he said that the question of the selection of a site for a building to manufacture power alcohol would

be left practically to the State Government. That should be so, because the State Government has an opportunity to co-opt people to assist in any inquiries necessary and can obtain all possible information to ensure that when the final selection of a site is made, the best procurable will be chosen.

When this matter is under consideration I urge the Chief Secretary to bear in mind the position of Albany. It may be suggested that an adequate water supply is not available there. For the information of those who may be thinking along those lines, we have the Lime Burner's Creek, which has been proved to have available 300,000 gallons a day. In addition, there is the water scheme and the small pipe at present laid down could be duplicated at very small cost in order to serve work of such importance. Then there is Lake Sepping, which is contiguous to Albany and has an abundant supply of water. To my mind there is no argument against the suitability of the district from that particular standpoint. The re-grading of the Great Southern Railway would bring Albany within practical range of all centres from Wagin southwards. A large proportion of the wheat grown in that particular area has been classified as "soft" and is not considered as valuable or saleable as the harder wheats grown in the northern areas. That estimation is made on the flour-making capabilities of the grain, but nevertheless the softer varieties are extremely valuable for the manufacture of power alcohol. One deficiency of Albany may be in respect of electric power or coal supplies. From that standpoint, Collie might be more advantageously situated, but members should bear in mind that when the authorities at Bunbury were providing additional power, Collie coal was not used but diesel oil.

Hon. J. Cornell: You would not bank on that, would you?

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: No, but if the use of diesel oil was good enough for Bunbury, it may be good enough for Albany. With the harbour already available, Albany would offer great facilities for shipping alcohol supplies if they were required. In addition, the port is served by main roads, railways and so on.

During the course of his Address-in-reply speech, Sir Hal Colebatch referred to the educational advantages provided in Western Australia. I was particularly pleased to

hear his references to the provision of high schools which have been of great advantage to young people in the rural areas. Throughout the Great Southern districts we always understood that the next high school erected was to be at Narrogin, but we cannot object to Geraldton having obtained that privilege. I understand, however, that years ago a promise was made that Narrogin would be the next on the list. No doubt the high schools have carried out excellent work in the interests of the rising generation. I was surprised to hear Mr. Thomson's references to the school-leaving age. In that regard the position should be corrected because when some business houses advertise for assistants or office boys, the stipulation is made that the lad must have passed the junior public examination or have obtained his leaving certificate. If the lads cannot secure their necessary qualifications during their attendance at State primary schools, the position should be rectified. To my mind, the school-leaving age should be raised. A few weeks ago I employed an office boy for my business at Katanning. He is one of the brightest lads it has ever been my pleasure to engage. He is full of keenness and desirous of learning what he can. He is 14 years of age. To me it seems a great pity that he did not have an opportunity to remain at school for another 12 months or two years because, with his natural ability, I am positive that the extra tuition he would have received would have been greatly to his advantage in his future life. I may be asked why I employed the lad. Had I not done so, quite a number of other firms would have been only too pleased to engage him.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: If you teach him all you know, he will be all right!

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: I thank the hon. member for his complimentary remark. When Mr. Thomson referred to the school at Boddington, the Chief Secretary interrupted him with an interjection. I visited that school during my electioneering campaign when I first entered Parliamentary life. It was the only school in the South-East Province at which I called and addressed the children. I did so at the request of the school master who also urged me to take steps to have the conditions obtaining there altered as soon as possible. That was eight years ago, and the

school was in an extremely dilapidated condition. The member for the district in another place (Mr. Seward) has been continuously requesting alterations and increased facilities. I shall read a small extract from the Narrogin "Observer" of the 7th August last dealing with a statement by the Minister for Railways (Hon. E. Nulsen). He said—

His visit to the school had astounded him and he could truthfully say that he had never seen worse conditions in any school. To the best of his ability he would give every assistance to get the Education Department to remedy this position.

I do not wish to criticise the Education Department because, generally speaking, the country schools in the main centres such as Katanning, Wagin and Narrogin, have been well maintained.

Hon. J. Cornell: Most of the blame lies with the Public Works Department, not with the Education Department.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: I may be speaking out of my turn, but I do not think the blame lies with the Education Department nor yet with the Minister. The Public Works officers should report on such a terrible building and on the poor equipment; and those things should be altered. Many outback schools are in a very similar position. When Mr. E. H. H. Hall read Mrs. Hamersley's statement, my mind reverted to a letter I received last year stating that the children attending an assisted school had to take to school in bottles the water they required to drink. Now, it would have cost about £10 to erect a 2,000 gallon tank there, and this would have been more than sufficient to supply the school with drinking water.

Next I shall refer to a letter I have received from Mr. Stewart McKay, of Lake Grace. He is a well known pioneer of the district. Unfortunately his wife died some few weeks ago. I wrote expressing my sympathy, and his acknowledgment included the statement that one of his greatest worries was that he had three young children and did not know how he was going to obtain the best education for them. These are a few remarks I wish to place on record, being wholeheartedly in agreement with them. I feel sure that anyone hearing them will agree with Mr. McKay, who writes—

I would draw your attention to the appalling educational facilities afforded to the country children of Western Australia. The townies seem to get it all along the line. It cannot

last if the State is to be prosperous. Perth is getting too big, the country areas are becoming neglected. The wealth of the State is following the wrong direction—Perthwards. Each and every type of Government seems bent on keeping it there, but a day will dawn when the reverse must be the case. A large capital city with more than half the State's population and producing no real wealth is a parasite, and the present-day system of bolstering it up at the expense of the country areas will inevitably crumble to pieces. It is my view that any and every child who is not a nitwit, who has fair ability and who shows promise of being able to absorb something more substantial than the three R.'s, should not be denied a secondary school education simply because his parents have not the wherewithal to board him out from home. Some day some Government will wake up. Scholarships do not fill the bill.

May I remark here that before the depression which began in 1929, the amount paid for Government school scholarships was £34 or £32, but was reduced to £24. This amount is barely sufficient to enable a farmer to send his child to a high school.

There are not enough of them (scholarships) to start with—10, I think, outside the metropolitan area—and the grant in each case is so low that few country parents to-day could take advantage of it even if a child wins it. Surely the nation's first care should be our future citizens; and where will you find better material than the boys and girls of the open spaces, born also close to Nature, with initiative, self-reliance and spunk in every corpuscle? In my opinion, townspeople should find it fairly easy to give their boys higher education, should they so desire, because no boarding-out is necessary. That's what cripples the Cocky.

Those remarks are made by a practical man who for many years has struggled on the land and who states the position clearly from the outback parents' point of view.

While on the subject of education, I wish to refer to the death of Mr. F. M. Reedy. For 16 years Mr. Reedy was in charge of the Albany High School, and he has left behind a monument of efficiency. He was a marvellous man for the way in which he attended to the various works connected with the school. I remember when he started, years ago, to create and complete a recreation ground. From its appearance one would scarcely believe that it could have been made at hardly any expense to the Government. The work was carried out voluntarily by students and townspeople, with the occasional assistance of sustenance men. The cost is estimated to be in the vicinity of £1,000. The ground is a marvellous effort. The reforestation there is an example to the

rest of Western Australia. I grieve to think that the district has lost the services of so efficient an officer as Mr. Reedy. Pupils from the Albany High School are now holding important positions in the Public Service of Western Australia and elsewhere, although the institution has been in existence for only 16 years. There is Mr. Leslie Hodge, the assistant conductor of the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra and latterly conductor of the Portland Orchestra, California; Mr. W. Cole, M.Sc., lecturer in Physics at the University of Western Australia; Mr. Wilson Forte, M.Sc., lecturer in charge of Physics at the Adelaide Technical School; Mr. Paul Forte, B.Sc., Assistant Government Entomologist in Western Australia; Mr. B. Naughton, LL.B., and Mr. D. Thomson, LL.B., who are now, or soon are to be, barristers here in Perth; Lieutenant Brian Dawson, in charge of the 1st Australian Engineering Unit; Mr. Stan Evans, M.Sc., Research Officer in Animal Nutrition, who is at present on loan from the Adelaide University to the University of Western Australia; Miss Ivy Bennett, B.Sc., research student in Child Psychology at the University of Western Australia, who is shortly proceeding to America on a travelling scholarship of £150 a year; and Miss C. Lewis, B.A., Assistant Lecturer in History at our University, who was studying for the degree of Doctor of Literature in Paris when that city fell. Those are all students of the Albany High School who have to-day taken up their positions in Western Australia or elsewhere, and are holding high Government appointments, assisting in the secondary education of young people requiring it.

His Excellency's Speech refers to the liquid fuel position, and the hardships that have sprung from it. In the country those hardships are being borne by the people in a spirit of sacrifice. I wish to thank Mr. Millen and his staff for having dealt with a highly difficult task. Truly they have had their hands full. All the members of the staff are most courteous, and have assisted by responding to inquiries made by members of Parliament, and also by farmers and others, in connection with the work of the board. If the farming community is not to have petrol, it will not adopt an attitude of demanding petrol. When we read in the Press some weeks ago the regulations ap-

plying to persons who had petrol stored, requiring them to send returns to Melbourne, it occurred to me to ask the Government whether those returns could not be supplied through our local board, which knows the conditions of every person who has stored petrol, and what business he is in. Those people had been asked to store petrol to the best of their ability, so that they would not have to draw excessively on board rations later on. Many of them have made strong efforts to purchase and store petrol. Reading between the lines of the regulations, one must realise that the main object is to ascertain where petrol is to be found all over this State and Australia generally, from a war supply point of view I would like to see the returns sent through our own local board office because I think it would be helpful to the various cases sent to the Eastern States.

I commend the Public Works Department for the splendid achievement in connection with the Katanning water scheme, which was completed under the supervision of Government officials, the work being done by a large number of sustenance workers. The engineer in charge of the scheme, Mr. Bateman, has rendered excellent service and the sustenance workers must be given credit for having done a marvellous job. They worked almost up to professional standard. The Katanning people are very satisfied with the completed project, although the capacity may not be sufficient. The local residents have always worked on the principle of not asking the Government to do everything for them. They were able to put £14,000 into the scheme from a sinking fund on a previous undertaking, which greatly assisted in providing sufficient money for the venture. We are still controlled by a road board, not a municipality, and our water rate is 2s., which I suppose is one of the cheapest in country areas.

Hon. J. Nicholson: It is far cheaper than the city rate.

Hon. H. V. PIESE: That is an indication of the thrift of the people responsible for the cheap rate.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: They received some assistance.

Hon. H. V. PIESE: They have had very little assistance. The Government granted £5,000 odd and contracted to carry

out the work at a cost of £28,000 to the road board, which raised money in the Eastern States at 4 per cent. The catchment comprises 60 odd acres of bitumen. Mr. Holmes had the pleasure of seeing the scheme and we were very glad to have him in Katanning. When he left the town he said to me, "There is no doubt that you and Mr. Thomson have a lot to be proud of, and I can quite understand why you always keep Katanning under the notice of Parliament."

Hon. H. Tuckey: That 2s. would be on the annual valuation?

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: Yes. Mr. E. H. H. Hall referred to the unfortunate position of half-castes in the Geraldton district. For many years I have witnessed the increase in the number of half-castes in Katanning and the Great Southern generally, and have realised to what an extent this great menace can grow—because it is a menace if efficient control is not exercised. While I realise the splendid work the Chief Secretary did when he was the Minister controlling the Department of Native Affairs, I must give credit to the present Minister, Hon. A. A. M. Coverley, and his departmental officers for the work that is being carried out at the Carrolup settlement. In the past I have been rather sceptical. I do not suppose a day goes by without some native or half-caste calling at my office in Katanning to submit requests to me concerning his welfare and living conditions, or to ask me to approach the department on his behalf. Consequently, the other day I decided to visit the settlement and my inspection convinced me that a marvellous work is being accomplished there. Some people say, "Why spend money on these natives?" The answer is that this country belonged to them before we took it from them, and amongst the half-castes in the Great Southern today are many valuable men. I have a large property under my control belonging to my father's estate. I refer to Riverdale. Previously I had never employed natives or half-castes or it, but recently the three men working on the property enlisted and I have had half-castes in charge of the sheep. To their credit let it be said that the losses in lambing this year have been infinitesimal, though admittedly the season was good. Those men are good sheep men and are excellent for farming work, but they must be under control. At the settlement the control of the

natives, and particularly of the children, is magnificent. I distributed the prizes at the school and I was struck by the fact that although there is only one teacher in charge of 60 children, the work done would be a credit to any school. The children are remarkably clean. Whether they put on their Sunday clothes because I was making a special visit, I do not know, but everything I saw at the settlement was a credit to the department and the Minister controlling it. I sincerely hope other settlements of the kind will be established at various centres, as was suggested by Mr. Hall. Until effective control is exercised over all the native children, there will be some who will not do well. Today some children are still living with their parents in native camps, and although it may seem hard that they should be shifted from their parents, it is necessary for the department to be seemingly hard in order to be fair and kind to the State's future citizens.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: You think that in the long run separating the children from their parents is for the best?

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: Yes, I am sure of it. Some time ago I went to the department on several occasions to object to children being taken from their parents. At that time Mr. Neville was in charge of the department and he drew my attention to the fact that one of these half-caste children had become a school teacher and another a nurse. After visiting Carrolup, I had a conversation with a half-caste woman. She has a very fair child who was removed from Carrolup to Sister Kate's Home. I said to her, "Would you not be proud one of these days to see your daughter become a nurse, or take some other position in this world that would be a credit to her and to you and the country?" When I had finished speaking to her she said, "You are quite right." I told her she could see her daughter perhaps once or twice a year and as the child grew she would become very proud of her and the girl would become a good Western Australian.

I notice that the management of the Agricultural Bank has in many instances withdrawn the fallow subsidy. There have been many schemes relating to the production of wheat and, as Mr. Bolton said, 12s. an acre would be a princely sum for a farmer to receive as recompense under a satisfactory stabilisation scheme.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: I said that 12s. clear profit would be a princely sum.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: That is not too much when it is realised that interest has to be paid. The point is that a tremendous debt structure has been created by many people. The same thing applies to the North-West, as was made clear in the report of the Royal Commissioner on the pastoral industry, Mr. Fyfe. I was delighted to hear Sir Hal Colebatch say that the first great need in this country was a reduction of the debt structure in the North-West and agricultural areas. Such a reduction is one of the first and most important reforms that must be given effect to in the new order of which we have heard so much. I was referring to the fallow subsidy. Suppose that that small advance were allowed and men then decided not to plant any wheat! Surely the production of oat crops and various grass crops and fodder crops would be of great advantage. Consequently I hope the Government will recommend to the bank—for it is not too late—that the advances be continued. Without them the people who have tractors have no possible chance of carrying on with their fallowing. In many instances those that have horses are the only occupants of their farms and cannot afford to pay for labour.

I was travelling to Narrogin the day before yesterday and on the way I picked up a young man on the road who said he had come from Newdegate. He was fairly well dressed, wore a rejection badge and was carrying a suit case. He was walking from Wagin to Narrogin. I asked him why, and he said he had no money. He declared that he had been working at Newdegate but the farmers had no money to pay for the clearing he had done. He said he did not blame them. I told him that if he had gone through Katanning and made inquiries, he would have obtained employment there because men were wanted all over the district. He told me that the Lake Grace district had had a dry season and there was no possible chance of employment there. The fact has to be realised that as the result of unfortunate seasons in past years many farmers are in adverse financial circumstances.

I feel sure I would disappoint hon. members if I did not mention the subject of potatoes. For the past four or five years I have taken a keen interest in the industry mainly because of my acceptance of a posi-

tion to the Federal Advisory Board. My colleague, Mr. Burvill, and I have represented Western Australia at meetings of the board and have done our best at all times to represent all sections and all districts interested in the potato industry, without any thought of payment or bias in favour of our own particular district. Many requests have been made by growers, not only in the Albany and Denmark end of my Province, but also at public meetings in the South-West, for legislation to regulate the industry. The time has arrived when the Government should introduce a licensing measure and give members an opportunity to decide whether it should become law. That such legislation should be passed is a recommendation of the Australian Agricultural Council, which is representative of all the States. New South Wales has passed such legislation and during the present period of serious glut, it has been very helpful to the growers of New South Wales. When the Bill was passed the Government advanced £600 to provide for the organisation of the growers, and I understand that the registration of growers has since taken place. Those growers can now speak with one voice in making their requests.

Many people seem to imagine that legislation along these lines is associated with marketing. I hope members will rid their minds of that idea. Marketing proposals are not involved in the desired legislation. The sole object is to permit the growers to organise the industry so that they may speak with one voice for the benefit of the industry. If each State had a law of this kind, the industry would have an opportunity to become one of the most important in Australia, and Western Australia would certainly have a chance of becoming one of the largest producers of potatoes in the Commonwealth. Admittedly we have to find markets for the crop, and potatoes are a commodity that cannot be stored. Recently a large quantity of potatoes was exported to Malaya. The price of potatoes to-day is £7 15s. per ton and the surplus thus taken off the local market enabled growers to obtain a reasonable return for their labour.

Three weeks ago I walked into a Perth shop and bought 1 lb. of potatoes. They were exhibited and advertised at 3 lbs. for 6d. The price I paid was equal to £18 13s. 4d. per ton, but had anybody looked at the quotations in the paper that morning he

would have found that the wholesale price was £5 to £5 10s. a ton. That price included the cost of bags, the labour of digging, freight to Perth and the cost of inspection. If the potatoes were not of first-class quality, they would be sold as second-class, but I do not know what the price of second-class potatoes was on that day. There is no regulation to prevent any shopkeeper from selling second-class potatoes as first-class. The customer has to judge the quality for himself. That is one reason why regulation and grading should be introduced. When I made my small purchase there was a lady in the shop with a large suit case. She was buying fruit, and she remarked that she always did her shopping on Saturday afternoon. After I had made my purchase, she said to the shopkeeper, "Give me all the potatoes you have got. I have never seen them sold so cheaply." She was paying 2d. per lb. for them and was of opinion that she was getting a bargain.

Why should the growers receive so little for their product? Why should not the producers benefit from the big prices being paid by consumers? A few weeks ago the quantity of potatoes in excess of requirements in Australia was 105,000 tons. That is a tremendous quantity and naturally the price in the Eastern States has fallen considerably. The Prices Commissioner has endeavoured to introduce some regulation; probably it has already been put into operation in Victoria. The Government of that State has announced its intention of introducing a licensing Bill for the industry. The regulation will help to keep prices at a more payable level. I believe it is impossible for Victorian growers to get more than £5 a ton at sidings.

I do not claim to have a knowledge of potato growing. I have a knowledge of the marketing of various products, and I have collected information for the benefit of growers; but I am not a practical grower of potatoes and have never claimed to be. A member asked me the cost of sowing an acre of potatoes, and my colleague on the board, Mr. Burvill, has informed me that in the Grassmere district to plant and harvest one acre of potatoes costs approximately £25. The return in that district averages six or seven tons, unless the season is poor or the crop becomes flooded, as happened a couple of years ago. The potato is the most risky

crop of all. Over night it might be ruined by frost; moth and disease have to be combated. The record crop grown by Mr. Burvill in the Grassmere district was 22 tons per acre or, with the use of minor elements, 18 tons.

I congratulate the Department of Agriculture on the service it has rendered to the industry. Undoubtedly Mr. Morgan and his staff have been outstanding in the attention they have given to growers. Western Australia, in my opinion, is the greatest producer per acre of any State in the Commonwealth, and much of that success can be attributed to the work of the departmental officers. The regulations governing the use of certified seed have improved the crop wonderfully. At a conference I attended in Queensland recently, the Director of Agriculture said, "What I cannot understand about Queensland is that when it receives seed from Victoria, the smaller the potatoes the further they will go and the bigger the area they will plant." Queensland has been drawing its seed supplies from Victoria, but the seed is not certified. New South Wales has a Certified Seed Act. On my return to Western Australia, I arranged with Mr. Burvill and several of his fellow growers in the Albany district to send samples of seed to Queensland, and eight or ten tons were sent. The chief district growing certified seed is the one I represent. The legislation I am asking the Government to introduce involves nothing in the shape of party politics. It is designed solely to benefit the industry. It does not matter whether the grower is a Calathumpian or of some other brand politically; our whole object is to put the industry on a good footing. I hope the Chief Secretary will request Cabinet to agree to the introduction of the desired measure.

In referring to the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Department, I must speak of the late Director, Mr. W. A. White. My sympathy goes out to his wife and boy. The son is serving in New Guinea. I think I am voicing the opinion of the primary producers of this State when I say, "Thank you, Mr. White, for the work you have carried out while controlling the department." Undoubtedly he rendered excellent service. Businessmen had many arguments with him in his capacity of Prices Commissioner, and I was as critical as anybody. I had his private telephone number and not a week passed

without our getting into argument about pricefixing, debt adjustment and so forth. Mr. White had a very difficult job and carried it out with credit to himself and his department.

Coming to a personal matter, I wish to thanks members for their kindness to me during my illness last session. I appreciate the fact that pairs were arranged for me. On practically every vote of importance, my colleague was able, through the courtesy of the Honorary Minister and Mr. Fraser, to secure a pair for me. Therefore my electors were not disfranchised through my absence. I am pleased that I am once more able to take trips East and travel through the country. The kindly sentiments expressed and the kindly actions of members helped me greatly to recover my health.

I was pleased to see His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor in such perfect health on the opening day. In all that His Excellency is doing he has the fullest support from Lady Mitchell. We know the wonderful work Her Ladyship is doing, in association with Hon. J. Nicholson, in connection with the activities of the Red Cross Society. We also know the manner in which that society is working for the good of soldiers. Country people are always delighted to see His Excellency and Lady Mitchell. I do not suppose that any people in this country are more warmly welcomed than they are. I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

**HON. H. SEDDON** (North-East) [5.30]: I would add my quota to the good wishes that have been extended to those members of the Chamber who are placing themselves at the disposal of the country for military service. I extend to them the best wishes for their safety whilst engaged in that work, and for their return to these shores at the conclusion of hostilities. My remarks in connection with the Address-in-reply may be opened by a reference to the very necessary defence of our Parliamentary system that has been put forward on one or two occasions. We pride ourselves on our Parliamentary constitution, but I suppose that at no time in the history of the country has the Parliamentary system itself been so strongly criticised as has been the case of late. Everywhere are found derogatory references on the part of many people to the efficiency of Parliament, whilst very few,

only those who have studied the system of government, are prepared to stand up and put forward the other side of the question. There are one or two features noticed by those who have had a long association with Parliament, which have proved very disturbing. Sir Hal Colebatch said the other day that no one could contend that Parliament had control of the finances, especially this portion of Parliament. That is true. This House has very little say in the finances of the country. Its function, short of taking action that would bring about a state of disorganisation, is restricted to that of criticism of the financial policy of the Administration.

The most disturbing feature of the matter is this. During the years that I have been associated with the House two men came in to it who were leaders in the commercial life of the city. Both were here for a short time and ultimately resigned. They were men who had made a success of their own business. Both expressed the same opinion. One thing they found most irksome with regard to our Parliamentary system was that after a considerable amount of experience the only feeling they experienced was one of futility. That is serious. If men who are accustomed to running a business successfully can, after some experience of Parliamentary life, say that as a result of all their efforts they have only a feeling of futility, there must be need for an alteration of, and improvement in our Parliamentary system. I will go further. Men who enter this House frequently undertake a certain amount of study concerning the welfare of the State and their own district. As a consequence of that study they form certain opinions, but only too frequently they have the same experience as that of those two gentlemen to whom I referred. There is a tremendous waste and inefficiency in such a state of affairs. We have to realise that the administration of the country rests in the hands of a few men. Whilst members of Parliament as a whole are supposed to be critics, and there are 80 of them associated with this Parliament, it is a great pity their efforts could not be made more use of in dealing with the serious problems with which we are confronted today. I raise the point because, associated with the criticism of Parliament outside, the general



impression exists that we are going to have a new order. When we track that down we find that the idea is a vague one, that no one seems to know what the new order will be like, or what will come about as the result of it. The impression abroad is, however, that we are going to have a new order, whatever that means.

Hon. L. CRAIG: A new state of chaos.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Probably that impression has gained ground because people have very little comprehension of the conditions under which we are working and of what is confronting us. The general result is that someone who is more violent-minded and can command a certain amount of support, will be inclined to make himself particularly effective. That may be the beginning of a new order. A great deal of criticism has been indulged in. Any one who expresses the hope that there will be a new order is ignoring the obvious results of this war. It will mean the destruction of a great deal of wealth, and what is more, the destruction of a great deal of the machinery of production. That is a very serious aspect. Whilst we may have many disturbances, and much loss of life, so long as the means of production are not seriously affected it will be possible to bring about comparatively quickly the replacement of many of those things which have been destroyed. Many people say that as a result of those happenings there will be a lowering of the standard of living and a great deal of impoverishment, that such things must be looked for as a result of war. Unfortunately history suggests that there is a lot of support for such an argument. I consider, however, that is a policy of despair.

If that is all we have to offer to people who are looking for a new order, and if that is all we have to offer to the men who have gone oversea and who will eventually return, we had better look out. They will not be satisfied to sit down and allow things more or less to right themselves. They will be looking for leadership, for a man who will tell them which way they have to go, whether he is right or wrong. Such a man will get a following. That is what occurred in Germany and Italy. The dictators got their following because they did things. I read an illustration of that the other day. A German had been taken prisoner, and his captors questioned him

as to why he was fighting. One of them made a derogatory remark about Hitler. The German stopped him and said, "I cannot allow you to make a remark like that concerning my leader." After further conversation he told them why he made that answer. He said, "The reason why I will not listen to anything against Hitler is that during seven years my father was out of work, and for seven years we kiddies were battling along, eking out the miserable existence that was open to us, and deriving such assistance as we could get from people who were no better off than we ourselves. When Hitler came to power, he found work and food for us. Because of that and of the manner in which he came to our assistance, I cannot allow anything to be said against him."

There is one factor people are losing sight of. It would be a sad commentary upon the boasted advancement of our civilisation, and particularly upon the ability of our industrial system to produce to the degree that it is producing to-day, if we did not realise that the main factor will be the tremendous number of young and vigorous able-bodied men, possessing young and active brains, who will be available, to make good the damage done and to start new avenues of production, provided they find a man with brains to lead them in the right direction. If Parliament is going to recover the position to which it is entitled, that of serving the best interests of the State, it devolves upon every member of it to study these problems, and do his best to provide that wise leadership, and the organisation necessary, in order that when these young men come back we shall be able to direct their energies and abilities into the right channel. As a result of that policy, the standard to which we can attain after the war should be much higher, not lower, than the standard we had before it.

Although much of the destruction to which I have referred has been productive of evil, it has swept away a lot of rubbish. When we reconstruct a workshop that has been demolished, we are not going to instal old-fashioned machinery, but we shall put in the best and most efficient machinery that can be found. There is another side to the story of destruction that has come as a result of the war. Inertia, stagnation and

prejudice are the greatest obstacles to recovery and advancement. We are justly proud of much of our war effort in Australia. On the other hand there is much to complain about. Many aspects of that activity can only be described as wasteful, and certainly inefficient. People must agree with me when I say there has been quite a lot of stoppages of work, especially of war work, which has a bad effect upon our Australian effort. In my opinion, one of the big factors in the loss of Crete was the coal strike in New South Wales of seven weeks' duration soon after the commencement of the war. At that time, Australia was getting into its stride with war production. We were manufacturing planes, guns and ammunition, and that seven weeks' stoppage slowed down our production. The men who have come back from Crete tell us that if only they could have had the planes, the guns and the ammunition, they could have held Crete. It would indeed be disastrous if at some future time our country was invaded, or even raided, and we did not have sufficient equipment to supply to our defenders. That is what should concern us and confirm our resolve to combat such stoppages. There are men in the Eastern States who would not hesitate to hamstring Australia's war effort, but their designs will be thwarted only by the community and vigorous action by the workers themselves.

What I think the world is really looking for is economic freedom. When the only prospect before a man is to be kept in a certain groove, he becomes discouraged, especially if he is a young man, for our young men have ambitions and dream dreams. To day they are restless and finding fault with our present social system. The best prospect we can offer them is economic freedom, freedom from the system under which their fathers worked and spent their lives. That freedom can be achieved by a tremendous increase in production, and this can be brought about by the application of science to production and by sane and efficient management of our industries. But all this means a reversal of public policy. Nobody who has studied the development of the Australian social system as it has existed for the past 40 years, can fail to observe that the objective in the past has been to assist the wasteful and improvident person and to save him from the consequences of

his folly. The object has not been to help the thrifty who, by their savings, are building up our country. To achieve economic freedom, we must support the ambitious man, the man who is thrifty; conversely, we must penalise the man who is wasting his substance. Without such a policy, the proposed new world will be nothing but a dream. Too much publicity is given to some events occurring in the Commonwealth. Much of the trouble that has arisen has been due to the prominence given by the Press to those events.

Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. H. SEDDON: Had the Press exercised discretion and not given these people the publicity they were seeking, their activities would have ceased and we should not have had the disturbances that have occurred.

Hon. A. Thomson: Quite right.

Hon. H. SEDDON: This war has given our Government one of its great opportunities. While we were more or less on the fringe of the war effort, the Eastern States established more factories. Now, there are many goods required for our local consumption, the manufacture of which could have been started in this State. During the Address-in-reply debate a year ago I referred to one such industry. This State uses a larger quantity of explosives in its industrial life than does any other State of the Commonwealth; yet the factory making those explosives is situated in Melbourne. The materials required must be imported, but there is no reason why they should not have been imported into Western Australia and the explosives made here. That is an avenue that could have been explored; the establishment of the industry here would have helped not only our war effort but would have proved extremely useful to our mining industry at the conclusion of the war.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Is not that a matter for private enterprise?

Hon. H. SEDDON: It is immaterial to me whether or not the explosives are manufactured by private enterprise. If private enterprise will not undertake the manufacture of explosives, then the sooner the public know, the better. The fact remains that a strong case has been made for the manufacture of explosives in Western Australia.

I have always contended that there is a field in a new country like Western Aus-

tralia for young men to work in. I refer to industrial chemistry. Some works that are now being carried out indicate that I am correct in my opinion. In old-established countries, it has been found possible to utilise the by-products of manufacturing processes owing to the application of science to industry. Last week I asked the Chief Secretary a question with regard to the activities of the department of which Mr. Fernie is the head. I received a smart reply, in which it was pointed out that this Chamber refused to pass a Bill providing for a Bureau of Industry and Economic Research, with statutory responsibility to present a report to Parliament each year. That is all right, but it is not good enough. Public money is being spent upon the activities of this board, and I contend that Parliament is vitally interested to know just exactly what work it is carrying out. Notwithstanding that paragraphs dealing with the activities of the board appear in the Press from time to time, in my opinion the least the Minister in charge of the department could do would be to place on the Table at the beginning of each session a report on the work done by the board. I merely made a reasonable request that such a report should be made available.

I asked another question relating to damage done by troops and trainees to railway coaching stock. The reply I received was that the damage amounted to £107 11s. 1d., but that amount did not include the cost of repairing damage to coaches used by troops for which responsibility could not be definitely fixed on individuals or groups. Surely the Minister, having partly replied to my question, could have supplied the additional information. That, however, is an illustration of the way in which departments carry out their work, and the way in which members' questions are answered. There are many different jobs in the railway service, but one I would not care to undertake at present is that of the conductors. They have much to contend with. The sooner the Military Department and the Railway Department get their heads together to deal with the situation that has arisen, the better it will be for everyone concerned.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: The matter is being dealt with. Military police are now travelling with the troops.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Very good. An organisation is operating in Perth today

which has the advantage of being charged a cheap freight rate by the railways. The organisation acts on behalf of the Camp Comforts Fund and has done wonderful work. I have nothing to say against it, but I would draw attention to a case of deliberate discrimination by the Railway Department, as to which an explanation is required. In Kalgoorlie a voluntary committee is working on lines similar to those of the organisation I have referred to. It consists of men who were engaged in the same class of work during the 1914-18 war. These men have collected much discarded material for which a ready market can be found. If they could obtain the same concession as that enjoyed by the Perth committee, they would be in a position to deal profitably with the material they have collected. However, the best rate they can obtain from the Railway Department is 21s. or more above the rate charged to the Perth committee. The Kalgoorlie men are working without pay and all the money they raise is distributed among the various patriotic funds. I want to know the reason for this discrimination. The matter has been brought under the notice of the department, which replied to the effect that the Kalgoorlie foundry was prepared to take all the scrap metal that could be collected in Kalgoorlie, and that consequently there was no necessity to rail it to Perth; but the Kalgoorlie committee collects other things besides scrap metal. It has collected huge quantities of paper and bottles, and has had offered to it several tons of wire rope. A market exists in the Eastern States for wire rope, but if the committee is forced to pay the freight the Railway Department is asking, it could not secure any return if it despatched the wire to the Eastern States. What we complain of is this: Why is discrimination made in favour of a committee in the metropolitan area which is drawing supplies from all over the State, as against a goldfields committee doing exactly the same work but yet penalised regarding railway freights? I hope the Minister will make a note of that matter and furnish me with an answer to it in the course of his reply to the debate.

Next I shall refer to the Goldfields Water Supply Department. That branch of the Government service has been operating for 30 odd years and last year was the first occasion when the people on the goldfields were asked—in fact, regulations were enforced to achieve the end—to restrict the

quantity of water they used. Not many people there indulge in the use of excess water because the price alone makes such a course expensive. This year we were told that water was not available. In its endeavour to meet the shortage, the Government constructed a pipe line from Canning in order to supply a certain volume of water to Mundaring. Members will remember that an extended inquiry was undertaken regarding water supply matters in 1924. During the course of that investigation the Goldfields Water Supply undertaking was brought under consideration and as a result quite a lot of information was made available to the public. At that time one of the most important points made public was that on an average 8,800,000,000 gallons were wasted every year in the overflow from the Mundaring Weir. While the capacity of the reservoir is 4,650,000,000 gallons, the quantity I have indicated was lost each year. During the course of the investigation, we asked why the engineers could not consider conserving the water that was wasted by this means. In my opinion it was definitely up to those engineers to show sometime between 1924 and the present day, how that wastage could be avoided and the extra supply made available to the people.

During the course of our inquiries we were told that Mundaring was only one of eight sites that had been selected as possible locations for reservoirs within the catchment area. It was pointed out, however, that owing to the nature of the run-off, many of the sites were not economic propositions and the present location was selected because it was considered it would impound the greatest volume of water, having regard to the run-off from various parts of the catchment area. I understand that engineers are considering a proposal for raising the height of the wall. I think the suggestion is somewhat similar to a scheme advanced in 1924, when it was asserted that by placing shutters on the wall, it could be raised by 5 feet and thereby a much greater volume of water would be held. Incidentally, the position regarding the Mundaring Weir is that the top 14 feet impound more than half the volume stored in the reservoir, while that retained by the wall below that 14 feet holds less than half the water impounded. However, the scheme I have mentioned was seriously questioned by the engineers in 1924, and one expressed him-

self emphatically in opposition to it.

I ask the House to consider whether we could not, with advantage, have another inquiry into the activities of the Goldfields Water Supply Department, first from the technical standpoint and secondly with regard to financial considerations. The fact is not generally known—it caused considerable surprise to goldfields people when they were so informed—that the Goldfields Water Supply Department owes this State £1,750,000 as a result of losses sustained in the operation of the scheme. In my opinion that result is due to the policy adopted. The object of the scheme was to provide water and the cheaper such a commodity can be sold, the more will be consumed and the better chance there will be of working at a profit. Therefore, if the policy of the department throughout the years had been to develop a market for the water available for consumption, and so increase the turnover, instead of £1,750,000 being owed to Consolidated Revenue, a considerable profit would have accrued. That aspect requires investigation because during the last few years members will note, if they peruse the tables placed before them when the Treasurer delivered his Budget speech, that a considerable surplus has been recorded.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Would the reconditioning of the pipe line account for any of that loss?

Hon. H. SEDDON: Reconditioning of the pipe line has been undertaken in recent years, but that involves a charge against capital and there has been a considerable surplus from revenue.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The point you make requires investigation—reduction in price and increased turnover with a view to securing a profit instead of continuing losses.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Exactly. Another point I wish to stress is that, according to a return submitted to Parliament at the commencement of the session, although a considerable surplus running into five figures was shown in the Budget tables, only £92 was recouped to Consolidated Revenue in reduction of the accumulated deficit. I want to know why? If there was a surplus running into five figures, why was it not used to reduce the liability against the undertaking? Surely that is a matter that requires investigation. A small committee ap-

pointed by this House might undertake such an inquiry in the interests of the general public and of the department itself. I am certainly not satisfied with the present position nor with the policy pursued. When we realise that out of the water drawn off from Mundaring, there was at one time a loss of 40 per cent., consisting of water that in some instances had been pumped five or six times and then lost, members will appreciate that there was certainly ground for an investigation regarding the efficiency of the departmental operations.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I think the taxpayers of this State carried the scheme to the tune of £100,000 a year for many years.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I have already mentioned that the debit against Consolidated Revenue amounts to £1,750,000. Reference has been made to the position on the goldfields. The fact that Britain had to go off the gold standard has been of considerable advantage to the gold mining industry, but there is one matter that justifies mention in this House. I refer to the position of the Great Boulder mine. One point that emerges from the discussion on the position of that undertaking is that the base year adopted by the British Government for computing estimates of profits was the very worst that could have been chosen from the standpoint of the Great Boulder mine. It was the year during which the company had undertaken a large plant reconstruction scheme and much developmental work. The company saw a good many years' life ahead in consequence of the improved plant and looked to better operating figures. The base year adopted by the British Government was one in which returns were much lower and the company has been penalised considerably. It appears to me that there are grounds for the Government to submit a case to the Imperial authorities urging that some other base year should be adopted instead of the one I have referred to. It could be pointed out that the circumstances associated with the operations of the Great Boulder constituted a special case, and therefore by agreeing to extend consideration it would not mean establishing a position of which other people might take advantage. I am convinced that the Government would experience no difficulty in establishing the fact that had the year 1939 been adopted as the base year, instead of that which was chosen by

the Imperial authorities, it would have been much more fair to the company and would enable the mine to be operated on a more efficient basis.

Hon. G. W. Miles: I understood the Commonwealth and State Governments did approach the British Government.

Hon. H. SEDDON: If that is so, small results are apparent. In any event, the matter would be dealt with on its merits. Consideration extended to the Great Boulder would not leave the door open to any evasion of taxation, but it would enable the company to operate on a basis comparable with that enjoyed by other companies operating in Western Australia and in other parts of the Empire.

Reference has been made to the statement that there are too many members of Parliament. I shall close my remarks by saying that the issue involved is not that there are too many members of Parliament so much as inability or neglect to make use of the knowledge and experience of those who are in Parliament. I suggest that the Government could well explore avenues whereby better use could be made of the ability and energy of members to assist in the work of the State and in the administration of Government departments. I support the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply and express the hope that we shall soon see improved opportunities for the activities of the State, and an extension of the productive capacities of our people. That can be achieved by means of the application of science and energy, and wise direction of the tremendous number of workers we have in our midst. They are good workers and could be properly trained and utilised if the right direction were available.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

**HON. E. M. HEENAN** (North-East) [7.30]: I was indeed pleased to observe that His Excellency opened his Speech with a well worded reference to the passing of the late Mr. G. J. Lambert, who gave so many years of his life to the political service of Western Australia. George Lambert, as he was known, will be affectionately remembered by all who knew him, especially by the old brigade on the goldfields; and on their behalf I join in paying a tribute to his memory.

I have learnt with surprise mingled with pride that Mr. Gilbert Fraser has joined up with, and been accepted for service in the Royal Australian Air Force. Mr. Fraser will be greatly missed in this Chamber, but his specialised training and general capacity will find a useful sphere for service in the direction he has chosen. He is setting a splendid example at a time when it is needed most. I join with other members in congratulating Mr. Fraser and wishing him the best of luck.

As a goldfields member I was very interested in His Excellency's reference to the goldmining industry. Its importance is stressed by the fact that last year the value of its production was £12,000,000, an all-time record in this State. Some idea of this large revenue will be gathered when it is pointed out that the amount is more than double the revenue received from the wheat and wool industries combined. Thus it is no exaggeration to say that the goldmining industry is carrying Western Australia, and that it will probably have to do so for many years to come. It is therefore of the utmost importance that the industry be fostered in every way, with a view to maintaining and, if possible, increasing the present output. In this regard the Government is to be commended for its recent announcement that an amount of £9,400 is to be advanced to Ora Banda United Mines. The company has a large low-grade mine at Ora Banda, which good authorities claim has every prospect of becoming a good producer.

An integral part of the industry is prospecting. It is the prospector who, year in and year out, ventures into the outback, and as a rule lives and works under the most trying and difficult conditions. It is the prospector who locates new shows, and paves the way for mining companies. Without him no new mines will be located, no more Golden Miles will be discovered. In these difficult times, therefore, let us see to it that the prospector is encouraged and assisted in every conceivable way. At the present time the industry is passing through a most difficult period. Most of the younger men engaged in it were among the first to enlist, and those who are left have been greatly handicapped by the water shortage and petrol restrictions. Cars and trucks are not luxuries with these men, but essential parts of their equipment. They are not used for attending race meetings or foot-

ball matches. I therefore urge the authorities to show the prospectors special consideration in the matter of petrol supplies. I also urge the Government to formulate some scheme whereby producer gas units can be made available to prospectors under generous conditions.

The Government prospecting scheme has been of great assistance to the industry, as the following figures indicate:—

Since the inception of the scheme in June, 1933, 8,713 men have been assisted with ration orders and equipment.

At the present time, 253 men are being assisted with ration orders and equipment.

To the end of June, 1941, the expenditure on ration orders, equipment, explosives, and supervision amounted to £270,927 17s., which included £80,904 16s. from the Commonwealth grant.

The expenditure from 1st July, 1940, to June, 1941 on rations, explosives, supervision, equipment and rail fares amounted to £21,806 11s. 4d.

The total amount refunded since the Scheme started to the end of June, 1941, £52,642 0s. 11d. (State £36,389 18s. 7d. and Commonwealth £16,253 2s. 4d.)

During the past 12 months £6,062 has been refunded.

Assisted prospectors have reported having crushed 77,339 tons for 37,698 ozs. since July, 1933.

Since the outbreak of war the number of men has decreased, a great number of the younger ones having enlisted and others have been fortunate in obtaining employment. The majority of men now being assisted are men that are too old to enlist or to obtain employment on the mines.

The time is not opportune to ask for increased assistance under the scheme, but I trust the Government will continue to foster it and to encourage and assist prospectors in every way possible.

A good deal is being said and written about the new order which will evolve when the present world conflict is terminated. Great changes will undoubtedly take place, and it is our bounden duty to ensure that these changes are for the better. At the present time, therefore, it is opportune to say a word of warning about the exodus of people from the country towns to the cities. Most of the small centres in my district are languishing, and yet in the cities one sees evidence of luxury and spending on all sides. This is a most unhealthy state of affairs, and we will undoubtedly reap the whirlwind unless some remedy is applied. I hope the time will come when people are given more encouragement to live in the country. People

in places like Laverton, Cox's Find, Leonora, and Menzies, just to mention a few goldfields towns, should be provided with more of the conveniences of life in the way of better schools, railway facilities, housing accommodation, and means of having an annual holiday at the seaside. It is the lack of these things which makes life in such centres a burden, and induces people to seek the easier life in the cities. The problem is a serious one, and an immediate effort should be made to attempt its solution.

A change, too, is needed in the matter of providing facilities for people to own their own homes. In New South Wales a scheme has been drawn up for the building of 40,000 houses for sale to the basic wage earner, without deposit, at a maximum rental of 17s. 6d. per week. Such a huge scheme is obviously above our requirements, but a similar scheme on modified lines should be part of our conception of the new order. It should not be beyond our capacity, and it would put an end to the unfair and unjust system which permits landlords to charge rents far in excess of what anyone can claim to be a fair thing. This is one way in which we could make a tangible contribution to the new order.

On the goldfields we have a large percentage of old-age pensioners and turned-down miners, most of whom in their day played a not inconsequential part in the establishment of the great goldmining industry to which I have already referred. And not only the mining industry, but the State in general owes a lot to these men and women, the majority of whom have nothing in the way of wealth to show for their life's work, except their pensions or allowances. A trip to the seaside is quite beyond their means, and it has often occurred to me that the State could well afford to give them an annual pass over the railways.

Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: The beneficial results of such a concession need no stressing, and it is something which in my opinion could and should be done. I also hope that the Government will give some consideration to introducing legislation to regulate the activities of a trade or calling which has grown up in recent years, known as divorce detectives. At the present time there is no law to regulate these individuals, and they are at liberty to make their own rules of conduct and to charge whatever

fees they like. One frequently hears of charges that amount almost to extortion, and something should be done about it. I also hope the day will come when newspapers will be prohibited from publishing all the salacious and sordid details that are given in evidence in the divorce courts. There is something radically wrong with a state of society which permits and even encourages the publication of the filth which is regularly served up in certain week-end papers. Surely our new order will do something about this tragic state of affairs.

I will conclude by saying that it is the bounden duty of everyone to stand behind the Government during this most critical time in our history. It is a splendid testimony to the Government and to the leaders of the community in general that here in Western Australia we are free from the industrial troubles which continually mar the war effort in the Eastern States. Our future is fraught with perils and tribulations, but if we put on a brave front and pull together, and have faith in ourselves and in our cause, the result will not be in doubt. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

**HON. J. CORNELL** (South) [7.43]:

There are many phases upon which one could dilate in connection with the address delivered by His Excellency, and other subjects peculiar to these times. But, as I said to the Chief Secretary this afternoon, we are now living in a period when it is probably better to stop sitting down and stand up. Tonight I intend to deal with only a few phases of the present-day situation as they present themselves to me. First of all, I desire to congratulate our armed forces both here and abroad on the work they have done and the work they are doing. In congratulating our armed forces, I couple with them Mr. H. S. W. Parker and Mr. Gilbert Fraser. Those two hon. members in their way will also play a part in the conflict which will be creditable to them, to this House, and to Western Australia.

One cannot let the occasion pass without again complimenting the citizenship of the British Isles. It is astounding how British citizens have stood up to the dangers and vicissitudes of this war. Every war is a different war. The wars that preceded every "last" war have often been referred to as

mere bow-and-arrow wars, but the present conflict has had a greater adverse effect upon civilian population than upon the soldiers, sailors and airmen who have taken an active part in it. The losses amongst the civilian population of Great Britain as a result of air raids have been greater than those to which the British Army itself has been subject on the field of battle. It is one thing to stand up to the heavy going on active service and to be able to retaliate, but it is an entirely different thing to have to "sit down and take it," as the people of the British Isles have had to do. I will give an illustration of the courage of the British people. Not long ago I went to a place 50 miles south of Southern Cross, and there I met a dear old "pommy" woman with a burr in her voice. She is nearly 70 years of age and has two sons in the Air Force. She typified the spirit of the women of the British Isles when she said to me, "Mr. Cornell, if I were 20 years younger I would go Home and fight the b—— Germans myself."

Much has been said about the great part Australia has played in this war. To some that may appear surprising, but to others it is not. If members will cast their memories back to the 1914-18 struggle they will remember that the Australian soldier went away from this country and arrived overseas more or less misunderstood; and when the war was over he returned to his homeland much more misunderstood. Hundreds of thousands of Australians had an opportunity to see what big industry could be like. Never before had they seen what they witnessed in England and Scotland during the last war. Every Australian soldier thought that if we had the facilities to progress in the same way, we could have done just as well here as they did in the Old Country. However, we lived in an age, a quarter of a century ago, when it was thought impossible to bring our industries to the pitch of those in older countries. It has been said and accepted the world over that the Australian sailor, soldier and airman may have their equals as a fighting force but they are not excelled. I go further and say that the Australian workman, whether he be engaged in a professional capacity or whether he be an artisan or whether he be just a humble manual worker, is the equal of any other human

being on the face of God's earth. Given the opportunity and the tools, he can do just as well as others have done.

Much has been said about the petty dislocation in industry in the Eastern States. It is all very well to criticise from a distance and to say that such things are not happening here, that the circumstances prevailing in the Eastern States do not obtain in Western Australia. I venture to suggest that if the whole situation is viewed calmly and dispassionately, it will be found that there is not as much in the story about "fifth column" activity as some people would lead us to believe. When I think of the trouble that occurred in industry during the last war, I am led to the conviction that the trouble taking place now is infinitesimal by comparison. It was only to be expected that with the sudden and rapid transition into a highly organised industrial State that has taken place, such things must happen. I have only one fault to find with the authorities who are running our war effort. One group leans too much to the old school tie brigade and the other group leans too much to the fully and properly organised side of industry, but both groups put together do not form a quarter of the real Australian people. Recent writers in the British Isles have indicated that the old school tie spirit was entirely hopeless and obsolete when it came to picking up the remnants and reorganising a bombed London. Douglas Reed in his latest book points out that the situation regarding rehabilitation was deplorable until the matter was placed in the hands of Mr. Greenwood and Miss Wilkinson. They understood the conditions of the great masses of the people of London and gave sympathetic help and attention where it was needed. From then on things improved out of recognition. Those governing the Commonwealth today have not taken into their counsels on the industrial side sufficient of the men in industry—I refer to the workers—who have a thorough understanding of the working man's psychology. From the inception of the war I have looked in vain for a lead to be given in that direction. Rarely do we find men from the trade union side seconded to anything like the higher positions of authority. That was not the case in Great Britain. One of the first to be given authority there was:



Mr. Bevin, a Labour leader who was given powers almost equal to those enjoyed by Mr. Churchill. That did not happen in this country. It may not be the fault of the Government, but I think the Government is much to blame, and I hope that it is not too late for the situation to be improved by a greater dilution of the controlling bodies with men who have spent a lifetime studying the workman's side of industry. I hope that men of that type will be called to the higher councils that dictate Federal policy.

There is another phase of the war situation upon which no hon. member has touched. I have congratulated the fighting men and women who have gone overseas, but while I have so far been silent on another aspect of the situation, I have my own opinions, as I had them a quarter of a century ago, as to whether voluntary or compulsory service is the more fitting for fighting a war. The people of Australia, or at least the politicians of the Federal Parliament, have practically agreed that they will send out of Australia for service overseas only men who have volunteered. That policy is all right up to a certain point, but if it is laid down that only men who volunteer to fight for their country outside of it shall be given arms and paid to serve, there is a certain obligation on the powers that be. That obligation is that when they send men away, either those men should be adequately reinforced or not left there. I often wonder why the protagonists of the voluntary system do not look back and discover what happened during the last war. We were wedded to the voluntary policy at that time. But we sent 320,000 men out of Australia—men who had volunteered for service. What happened to them? On the 8th August, 1918, Australian and Canadian divisions made a momentous advance. What did we find? We found Australian battalions that should have been 1,000 to 1,100 strong only 300 to 400 strong, and Canadians that should have been only 1,000 to 1,100 strong were over-strength. Consequently in the middle of October the Australians were drawn from the line. Brigades were abolished and battalion was merged into battalion because of the fact that our men had no reinforcements. If that is going to occur again it is absolutely criminal, and the people who are responsible for it ought to be charged before a criminal court. The

Canadians guaranteed Britain five divisions, four in the field and one in reserve all the time. The reservation was made—though a similar reservation in regard to the A.I.F. did not become an accomplished fact until April, 1918—that the whole Canadian Corps was to be commanded throughout by a Canadian. Colonel Tom Hughes began the command, and General Currie took it over. The Australian Corps, however, was never under an Australian commander until April, 1918, when General Monash took over. Who chased Fritz out of France and Belgium? The only corps that was kept up to strength—the Canadian corps. Canada sent 600,000 men overseas, and had fewer casualties than the Australian forces, which numbered only 320,000. That is what I wish to point out to the powers that be. If we allow men to go away and fight for our country, the obligation is on us to do one of two things. Either we must adequately reinforce them so as not to decimate them, or we must withdraw them from the field of battle.

I leave the war situation and come nearer home. A deputation recently waited on the Minister for Lands regarding the future of marginal areas and the settlers in those areas. The Minister was sympathetic. Subsequently he gave a long statement to the "West Australian" to the effect that those settlers would gradually go out of wheat-growing, the holdings would be merged and stock would be made the main source of income. I reiterate what I have been saying in this House for nearly 30 years, namely, that it is not the slightest use to endeavour to run stock only or to mix stock with cereal-growing unless there is an adequate water supply.

Hon. J. J. HOMES: That is a matter of rainfall.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The hon. member knows the difficulty. When budgeting for a dam system, as has been done for nearly a hundred years in New South Wales, we should ensure that if the rain falls short, there will be sufficient water for one winter and two summers. Unless the water problem can be solved and a reasonable supply can be provided for stock, I for one would advocate cleaning up those areas entirely. Though the mallee has been settled for about 25 years, the position today is that the settlers around Salmon Gums are still carting water for their stock.

Only last March I journeyed from Lake Grace to Karlgarin and Hyden, out to Newdegate and down to Ravensthorpe, and I saw dams being sunk on the same lines as they were sunk 30 years ago. To advance £50 for a dam that allows as much space as possible for evaporation, instead of providing for a suitable dam, becomes a snare and delusion unless rains fall every three months. The only dam worth while in dry areas is the longer, deeper and narrower type with steeper sides. The Agricultural Bank is simply throwing money away by making advances for dams of the present type. I agree with Mr. Charlie Mitchell's remarks after he had been through the eastern marginal areas. He said he did not know there was so much good land in Western Australia, but if we were not prepared to give settlers adequate water supplies, we should abandon those areas.

Reference was made to petrol rationing by Mr. Heenan. This rationing has had a very serious effect in the Yilgarn and northern goldfields areas. There are more small shows in the Yilgarn-Coolgardie area than in almost all the other goldfields combined, and the life of those small shows absolutely depends upon the prospector's ability to get his stone to the battery. I know that the Liquid Fuel Control Board deals with every case on its merits, but it is very difficult to get every man affected to write and explain the merits of his case. One man held up his show until he could conserve enough petrol to run his truck. The biggest mistake made in regard to petrol rationing was that it was not applied twelve months earlier. But with us Britishers it is always a case of wait and see. We waited and we saw, and instead of the restrictions being imposed gradually, there was a sudden limitation, and an endeavour was made to work out the good and injurious sides in almost impossible circumstances. Another grievance I have against petrol rationing is that had private car-owners in the metropolitan area and larger towns of the State played the game fairly, there would have been practically no necessity to ration the man really deserving of first consideration—the man outback.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: They should have been forced to play the game.

Hon. J. CORNELL: In all my experience I have never come across a more selfish section of the community than the private car-

owners. If they wanted petrol, they made a noise about it and deprived of this necessity the man who depended upon it to earn his daily bread. However, we have to make the best of existing conditions. I have met men located far from the metropolitan area who have been hard hit by the petrol rationing, but they are taking the matter philosophically. One of them said, "If the enemy was within our gate and not without, we would be in much greater trouble."

There is one phase of the administration of the law to which I wish to direct the Minister's attention. I know I shall be treading on dangerous ground because my remarks refer to his province. I have in mind the decisions of the court at Fremantle as against the courts in Perth, Midland Junction and elsewhere, in cases of shop betting. What is worth £75 at Perth is worth £10 at Fremantle. That sort of thing will not work. At Perth the magistrate tries the cases. In a part of Western Australia which is considered to be a law unto itself—Kalgoorlie—there would be as much chance of getting a justice of the peace to sit on the bench to deal with certain offences as there would be of finding ice in hell. Justices have told me that the trial of betting offences is a job for the magistrate, just as much as are charges of gold-stealing or sly grog-selling. The position at Fremantle appears to be that justices of the peace overrule the magistrate. For months I have followed the decisions in Perth and Fremantle courts with a view to comparing their consistency. The same two justices of the peace sit in Fremantle every Monday morning. One of them, if not both, could not sit as a police magistrate even if qualified to do so because of being in excess of the age at which a police magistrate is required to retire. What could be a greater travesty of our law or a greater absurdity in the administration than that two justices should be able to overrule a magistrate whereas, if they were magistrates, they would not be permitted to adjudicate through being over age. I hope that for the sake of consistency—

Hon. J. J. Holmes: And decency.

Hon. J. CORNELL: —this will be cleared up. I have no knowledge of any greater travesty in the administration of the law than that two justices, who could not act as magistrates by virtue of their age,

can act as justices and override a magistrate. What is fair in Fremantle for the s.p. bookies should be fair for Perth and Midland Junction.

The future is obscure. I have heard suggestions that we should be planning to meet post-war problems. What has troubled me since the outbreak of this war is not what we shall do when we have won it; the first thing is to be sure of cooking our goose and preventing the other fellow from getting it. One may say that this or that ought to be done and get no further. After the war has been won, I hope the dual control that prevailed after the 1914-18 war will not be repeated. There should not be two partners to the civil re-establishment of the soldiers, namely, the Commonwealth Government and the State Governments. The civil re-establishment of our men after the war should be as much a responsibility of the Commonwealth as is enlisting men in the army. I speak from 21 years' experience of soldier questions. Where the sole responsibility for matters such as pensions and repatriation has been thrust on the Commonwealth, there has been some system and some correlation, but under dual control where the Commonwealth provides some of the money and the State provides the land, there have been chaos and dissatisfaction from the outset. If certain phases of the re-establishment of our men are the prerogative of the State and not the Commonwealth, the State should unreservedly surrender that much to the Commonwealth and allow it to assume full responsibility.

As I said after the collapse of France, if we in Australia have vision there is obviously only one thing for us to do. We have to be courageous enough in the various Parliaments of Australia to do what the British Government did, namely, declare a political truce until we get out of our present jamb and win the war. That would be infinitely better than numerous elections, changes of Government, recriminations, and a host of other things. It is not yet too late to follow such a course of action. The war is closer to us than it has even been since it first broke out. Who knows but within the next few days a particular force that we have been watching in the Pacific for so long may either declare war on us, or we may declare war on it?

The main problem that confronts the people of Australia to-day is our safety, and the preservation of all those things that have taken 150 years to develop. Party bickering and party cock-fighting are not going to improve our position one iota. We can derive a sound lesson from our armed forces. I venture to say that 95 per cent. of the members of those forces who have gone oversea have dropped altogether such questions as States of origin, political views and the like, and are standing foursquare to the enemy no matter what State they came from, just as they did in the 1914-18 war. They are the hope of Australia. We must be of good cheer. Up to date I have been a true prophet, but henceforth I hope I shall prove a false one as far as the duration of the war is concerned. Whether or not I prove a false prophet, I maintain there is only one thing for us to do. We must face the situation calmly and sensibly, hanging on to the end, inspired by the knowledge that he who hangs on longest will either succeed or else place the other fellow in such a position that he cannot win.

**HON. W. R. HALL** (North-East) [8.20]: Since this House rose last session, events have placed Australia in a serious position. I take this opportunity to pay a tribute to those who have enlisted in the oversea forces, the men of the Navy, the Air Force and Medical Services, and the nurses too. All of them have gone to fight for Australia and the British Empire. I also offer my deepest sympathy to the relatives of those who have paid the supreme sacrifice when fighting for this country and the British Dominions. I have listened intently to what members have had to say. They have made some remarkable speeches that have been of interest to us all. One of the great problems that is affecting the people is that of fuel. I venture to say that most members of Parliament receive more complaints under that heading than regarding anything else. That is to be expected seeing that the Liquid Fuel Control Board was brought into existence some 12 months ago. I admit that the restrictions that have been imposed are essential as a means of assisting the national war effort. The step taken was in the interest of Australia and the Empire and everyone should do his best to back up that effort. If by such a small thing as using less petrol we can help in this vital matter,

it behoves us to observe the instructions given.

I congratulate the chairman of the Liquid Fuel Control Board and the members of his staff upon the work they have done. The staff is a large one, but all engaged in it are overworked in trying to cope with the appeals from people who have been forced through the restrictions to cut down their car mileages. I have had dozens of interviews with the board in respect to the applications of my constituents on the subject of petrol allowances. In every case the board has come to a good decision and done its best to help those concerned. The activities of the Federal Government in this matter have probably put hundreds, if not thousands, of men out of industry. That is very hard upon the sufferers, and I can imagine their feelings. I think it was the Minister for Lands or the Deputy Premier who persuaded the Liquid Fuel Control Board to visit the goldfields in the interests of the gold mining industry. That industry is of vital importance to our war effort because we must have gold. It seemed that it was about to be very seriously affected through the curtailment of supplies of petrol and Diesel oil. Members of the board visited Kalgoorlie, where they did not have 10 minutes to themselves. As the result of the representations made to them, the cut of 45 per cent. was abolished, and the industry was given as much as 85 per cent. of its normal requirements to enable it to carry on. That was a great effort on the part of the board, and meant a great deal to the life blood of the industry.

I have a word to say about the action of the Federal Government in declining to appoint a representative for Western Australia on the Commonwealth Liquid Fuel Control Board. Because of the vast industries we have in this State, it is essential that we have a representative on that tribunal. I understand from the latest communications I have received that the Government declines to reconsider its decision and refuses to appoint a Western Australian representative on the board. In all fairness to this State, it should have agreed to do so. We in Western Australia have to play our part, but should not be obliged to do so without some voice. The goldmining industry, as well as the pas-

toral industry, is very seriously affected by present conditions. It is only right that on the Commonwealth board there should be some Western Australian representative who could enlighten it, as well as the Federal Government, concerning the many conditions appertaining to this State. At present Western Australia has no voice whatever on that tribunal.

We have heard a good deal about the claims of private motorists, and I have gone thoroughly into the matter. I realise that many motor vehicles may have to go off the road, and the owners will to that extent be assisting the national effort through the consequent saving in petrol. Where, however, private owners of motor vehicles are affected by the severe rationing of fuel, I would be in favour of motor licenses being reduced. Particularly would I be in favour of that in respect of any person holding a Class 2 consumer's license. Consumers coming in Class 2 and owning a 10 h.p. car are allowed two gallons a month, but if it is a 20 h.p. car the allowance is five gallons per month. Because of the quality of the petrol now in use, the mileage per gallon is not as great as it was. It has dropped considerably since the war. People who have to pay the fee for a 20 h.p. car have to find £8 or £9 per annum, but the amount is less in the case of the smaller h.p. car. Those people are entitled to some relief.

I read in the "Kalgoorlie Miner" that the Government intended to bring down a Bill for the reduction of licenses in the case of those whose petrol allowances had been restricted. I do not know what the Bill will contain, but I would be in favour of a reduction in the license fees of motor vehicles, especially those falling into Class 2 and one or two other classes, because the vehicles will not use the roads to the same extent and the same volume of repair work will not be required on the roads. In fact, the roads will be used much less than formerly, but the owners will still have to provide for the depreciation on their vehicles and for insurance, etc.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: In many instances the cars are being put on blocks.

Hon. W. R. HALL: One could hardly expect anything else to be done in some cases. Reference has been made to-night to the goldmining industry and to the petrol re-

quirements of prospectors. I am glad to say that the Liquid Fuel Control Board has considered the case of the prospectors and allowed them approximately 80 per cent. of their requirements. Further, an imprest system has been installed at the State batteries under which prospectors can obtain sufficient fuel to cart the ore to the batteries. That is extremely fair treatment by the board. I am pleased that at present matters are proceeding so smoothly for the prospectors. Although the board has more work than it can cope with, it is doing a wonderful job.

Regarding gas producers, I have seen several types and venture the opinion that few are efficient and will give good service. Of course, the human element has to be considered.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: That is the biggest point of all.

Hon. W. R. HALL: If motor vehicle owners will not devote the time necessary to clean the gadgets in the producer, of course the car will deteriorate and the owners will suffer financially. The State Government should do something to educate motorists in the use of gas producers. For instance, the State Implement Works should take upon themselves the duty of advising motorists as to the best type of gas producer. Producers could be manufactured at the works.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Why the State Implement Works?

Hon. W. R. HALL: They should take a lead, in my opinion, because private firms cannot at present supply the demand.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: They have had no experience and are not in the business yet.

Hon. W. R. HALL: As I said, there are many gas producers on the market, but not many are efficient. Some are home-made and will doubtless prove detrimental to the vehicle itself.

Hon. G. B. Wood: You are quite right.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: I agree with you this time.

Hon. W. R. HALL: I think Mr. Bolton is seized of that point, because he thoroughly understands gas producers. He manufactures them himself. The hon. member knows more about them than perhaps does any other member in this Chamber, but that is beside the point. I understand the demand is greater than the supply. It is a pity

that the Commonwealth Government, which is encouraging motor vehicle owners to instal gas producers, cannot see its way clear to do something to put the producers on the market at a reasonable price.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: The price is all right.

Hon. W. R. HALL: A gas producer is likely to cost the average motorist from £40 to £70 or £80. Not many car owners can put their hands into their pockets and draw out that amount. Unless something is done in the matter, I am afraid that many motor vehicles will—as Mr. Piesse said—have to be put on blocks. These vehicles are an asset to the State, provided the owners do not contravene the regulations of the State Liquid Fuel Control Board. Their use would be of assistance to local authorities and also be the means of providing much employment. The problem is a serious one, affecting thousands of people, and something should be done to solve it. I trust the time is not far distant when we shall get back to normal conditions. Although the prospect at present is not bright, I hope for the best. A matter dealt with by Mr. Seddon was the water supply to the goldfields and its cost. I am fully in accord with Mr. Seddon's views. For some time past, the Water Supply Department has deemed it advisable to restrict the supply of water to goldfields residents. Now that both our dams have lately received an immense quantity of water I hope the department will see its way to remove those restrictions.

Another matter mentioned to-night was the new order, about which I do not know much. I think it is mythical, and would like to see the man who can usher it in; he will be hard to find. However, I realise that something will have to be done. Mention was also made of the work upon which Parliamentarians could be engaged to assist our war effort. It behoves us all to do what we can in this direction.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: One hon. member overlooked the fact that you have been in camp for quite a long while.

Hon. W. R. HALL: That is beside the point. Of course, many members are not suitable for actual war service, but there is other work that they can do, upon which I have no doubt they are engaged. We sit for four months of the year; during the other eight months we are attending to our Parliamentary duties, interviewing various depart-

ments, and that takes up a considerable amount of our time. However, many ways will present themselves by which we can assist the war effort, and that is plainly our duty.

A real grievance exists on the goldfields with regard to developmental roads. A very small amount of money is set apart for the repair of this class of road on the goldfields. I can name many places that have a promising future and in time will no doubt be thriving goldfields towns, such as Mt. Monger, Celebration, Ora Banda and Edjuidina. These places can be reached only by vehicles that must pass over indifferent roads. The boards controlling the various districts have not sufficient funds to enable them to construct and repair these roads, and they have received Government assistance only to the small extent of £1,500 during the past few years. At the same time we are paying the Commonwealth Government £1,000,000 in gold tax; we should therefore be entitled to a little more money to develop these roads. I have nothing further to add. We are passing through strenuous times, but I sincerely hope that soon the dark clouds overhead will disperse and allow the sun to shine once more. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

On motion by Hon. W. J. Mann, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 8.42 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Wednesday, 13th August, 1941.*

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

### QUESTION—AGRICULTURE, WHEAT.

Mr. FOX asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Is he aware that there is considerable infestation of weevils in the wheat stored in bulk in Fremantle? 2, Has any difficulty been experienced with the Australian Wheat Board in respect to issue of Government wheat certificates because of weevil infestation? 3, Is the Government taking steps necessary to cope with the situation? 4, Is it a fact that Commonwealth authorities have reported adversely on Western Australian wheat? 5, If so, will he make this report available?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, It is known that weevils are present in some of the wheat stored in bulk at Fremantle. A reliable estimate of the extent of the infestation is not known. 2, No certificates for weight, quality and condition for bulk wheat from Fremantle have been requested by the Australian Wheat Board from the Department of Agriculture since December, 1940. Prior to this, inspectors did reject some wheat for export on account of weevil infestation. 3, The Government Entomologist, as far as he is able, has carried out investigations and advised remedial measures, but, as the wheat is owned by the Australian Wheat Board and controlled by their agents, Bulk Handling, Ltd., the Department is unable to take executive action. The Australian Wheat Board—in an endeavour to prevent or minimise weevil infestation—requested the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research to undertake an investigation into the problem in Australia. As a result a visit was paid to Western Australia by a Senior Research Entomologist of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research. Subsequently a local committee was formed consisting of a Specialist Officer of the C.S.I.R., the Government Entomologist (Department of Agri-