

entirely from a non-party point of view, but amongst the Federal members to sit on the convention I should fear most the member who is the National Party leader, Mr. Hughes. He is a more out-and-out unificationist than Dr. Evatt himself. I question whether among the Federal representatives attending that convention there will be one who will stand up for the rights of the small States. Our Prime Minister will no doubt feel himself bound by the proposals put forward by his Attorney General, and we shall have a solid block against the recognition of any of the rights of the States. And then, when we come to the States, we know, from what we read in the Press, that in the majority of the States one out of the two representatives will most probably be found supporting the ideas put forward by Dr. Evatt. We can rely upon it that Western Australia will present a solid front against them, but looking at the representation of other States I venture to say there will not be one other State that will put up a solid front against the proposals. For that reason I do not like giving any recognition whatever to the convention.

My greatest fear is this: I do not think for a moment that Dr. Evatt will press these particular amendments. It is a very old scheme when wanting half-a-crown to ask for ten bob! One knows that one is not entitled to the half-crown, but if one asks for ten shillings one might obtain half-a-crown as a compromise. These amendments are so extreme that the Commonwealth Government itself would be afraid if they were carried. The Commonwealth Government knows that they will not be accepted by the people. I think that if they were accepted by the people, they would invite a crash, because they are of such an extreme character. Is it not obvious that the convention will water them down, so that they will perhaps be more acceptable, though in their final application they will probably be just as dangerous as the proposals now put forward?

Hon. H. Seddon: It is the Hitler process.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: Yes. This convention is invited in much the same spirit as Hitler invited the Austrian Chancellor. Personally I would sooner see Dr. Evatt's proposals adopted by the Commonwealth Parliament and submitted to the people than see a compromise arrived at as

the result of the proposed convention. Some members of the public might possibly be persuaded to accept something which in its operation would be just as fatal to the interests of Western Australia, and those of the Commonwealth as a whole, as are the present proposals. I think it well that this Parliament should, as far as it can, adopt an entirely non-party attitude on the matter. Personally I should be quite satisfied with the first portion of the amendment suggested by the Chief Secretary, but I regret that for the reasons I have given I cannot possibly support the second part, which seems to give some recognition to the convention and some sort of undertaking to have in mind the decisions that the convention might arrive at.

On motion by Hon. L. B. Bolton, debate adjourned.

BILL—LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL (POSTPONEMENT OF ELECTION).

Returned from the Assembly without amendment.

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to the Legislative Assembly Duration and General Election Postponement Bill.

House adjourned at 4.23 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 19th November, 1942.

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

QUESTIONS (2).**RAILWAYS.***East-West Express and Westland Speeds.*

Mr. NORTH asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is there a difference of fifteen miles per hour between the normal scheduled speed of the East-West express and the Westland? 2, If not, what are the scheduled speeds of the respective expresses? 3, Is the reason for this disparity solely a matter of expense, or what? 4, Is there any reason why the Western Australian section of the East-West express should not equal the Kalgoorlie-Port Pirie speed schedule when the broad gauge is completed to Fremantle?

The MINISTER replied: 1, No. 2, East-West express 37 miles per hour. Westland express 25 miles per hour. In each case these are the overall speeds, including stops. 3, Reasons for the disparity are wider gauge, heavier rails, bigger and more powerful engines, easier grades, fewer stopping places and less work en route on the Commonwealth East-West line. 4, There is no reason why, under similar conditions, the actual running speed between Kalgoorlie and Fremantle should not equal that between Kalgoorlie and Port Pirie.

RUBBER.*Protection of Flotsam.*

Mr. WILLMOTT asked the Minister for Industrial Development: 1, Is he aware of the large quantities of baled rubber washed up along certain portions of the coast of this State? 2, If so, what steps are being taken to patrol the coast to prevent pillaging?

The MINISTER replied: 1, Yes. 2, Action has been taken by the Commonwealth Supply and Customs Departments to salvage the rubber and prevent pillaging.

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT
(No. 2).

Introduced by the Minister for Health and read a first time.

MOTION—GOVERNMENT BUSINESS,
PRECEDENCE.
THE DEPUTY PREMIER AND MINISTER FOR WORKS [2.20]: I move—

That on Wednesday, the 25th November, and each alternate Wednesday thereafter, Government business shall take precedence of all

motions and Orders of the Day on Wednesday as on all other days.

This is the usual motion generally introduced early in November. During this session, private members have had full opportunities to discuss private members' matters, and a good deal of time has been devoted to them. On two or three occasions we have made time available on other sitting days so that important questions introduced by private members could be discussed. It is not proposed unduly to limit private members' business for the remainder of the session. Should occasion arise, full consideration will be given to it. That is quite usual. There is never any sharp practice in connection with this motion. There has always been an amicable understanding arrived at between members opposite and the Government. We hope to finish this session within the next three weeks. The Government has still a good deal of business to get through. The Estimates are not completed. The important Agricultural Estimates have yet to be dealt with, and they will take time. Full consideration should be given to them. The Loan Estimates are not yet finished and several continuance Bills and other matters have still to be dealt with, so it is necessary that we should push on with Government business. The usual motion which has been moved and agreed to in previous years is now before the House. For the reasons I have outlined, I move the motion standing in my name.

MR. PATRICK (Greenough): This is the usual motion brought down about this time each session. In fact, it has come down this year a little later than usual. I have no intention of opposing it, but I still think that proper time should be given to the consideration of private members' business. That time should not be sufficient simply to allow such matters to go to a division, but time in which to discuss them. Most Governments tend to minimise the work of private members in the Legislative Assembly. It must be remembered, however, that many motions in this House have been carried against the Government, and many motions brought forward by private members have actually initiated legislation. In different British Parliaments, motions of great importance have been carried by private members. For instance, there is one which the member for Subiaco, at least, would consider to be im-

portant, and that is the motion dealing with women's suffrage, which was carried by the private members in the first place in the South Australian Parliament. A private member brought it up year after year before it was finally carried, and so set the standard in that respect for other Parliaments. Another important piece of legislation, namely, compulsory voting, was introduced by a private member, not only in the Commonwealth Parliament but in every State Parliament. Members opposite, therefore, will see that private members can initiate legislation of considerable importance. Some private members' business of importance still remains, and I hope time will be given not only to vote on these matters, but to discuss them.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth): I am prepared to agree to the motion, which is couched in the usual terms. With the Deputy Leader of the Opposition I agree that reasonable time should be allowed for the consideration of private members' business on the notice paper, and any further business they may deem it their duty to bring forward. I feel sure that private members will not at this stage introduce fresh matters unless it is thought essential that the House should consider them. It is important that we give these matters full deliberative consideration. At this time in particular we should guard against any rushing through of business on the last day or night of the session. It does not tend to raise the confidence of the public in this legislature, if measures are passed through so rapidly that obviously full consideration cannot be given to them. Doubtless the Deputy Premier appreciates the importance of this. Even if the session has to extend over a few days more, I hope it will be completed with the consideration and time that the subjects deserve.

MR. STUBBS (Wagin): Before casting my vote in favour of the motion I should like to know from the Minister whether private members' business on the notice paper is to be put into the melting pot. If there is any intention of so doing, I enter a most emphatic protest. Some of the items deal with matters of a nature very important to a large number of people in this State. Will private members who have introduced such motions be given a fair go? I am aware that the Government introduces a similar

motion at about this stage in each session, but I wish to make it clear that the Government will not have my support unless an assurance is given that reasonable opportunity will be afforded to discuss private members' business.

THE DEPUTY PREMIER (in reply): I believe that the assurance sought by the member for Wagin is always given. This is a motion to expedite business, not to penalise private members' business. There are important matters standing in the names of private members and they can be discussed on alternate Wednesdays. We are not in such a desperate hurry that we cannot complete the business on the notice paper. At the same time we wish to push ahead with Government business. I feel sure there will be ample opportunity to discuss the matters referred to particularly by the member for Wagin.

Mr. Doney: If you propose to conclude the session in three weeks, there will be only one day available for private members' business.

The DEPUTY PREMIER: Then the hon. member might remind me in three weeks' time if the motion by the member for Wagin has not been considered.

Mr. Doney: No; that is a matter for you to attend to.

The DEPUTY PREMIER: Ample opportunity will be given to discuss private members' business.

Question put and passed.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. North and Betting Motion.

MR. NORTH: I wish to make a personal explanation regarding the vote cast yesterday on the motion for the closing of S.P. betting premises. The mover had arranged with me to get the item postponed in order that the wording of the motion might be made more intelligible to the general public, but the debate was continued and the vote was rushed through, making postponement impossible. I wish to point out that the motion hardly makes sense, and the voting is therefore useless.

MOTION—STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION.

THE DEPUTY PREMIER AND MINISTER FOR WORKS [2.32]: I move—

That during the remainder of the session the Standing Orders be suspended so far as

to enable Bills to be introduced without notice and to be passed through all their remaining stages on the same day, all messages from the Legislative Council to be taken into consideration on the same day they are received, and to enable resolutions from the Committees of Supply and of Ways and Means to be reported and adopted on the same day on which they shall have passed those Committees.

This also is a motion invariably introduced at about this stage of each session for the purpose of expediting business. While we have a great respect for our Standing Orders, which insist upon business being conducted in a very deliberate and orderly way, a period is reached when very much time can be saved if, with the consent of the House, Standing Orders are suspended so that third readings of Bills may be put through and messages between the Houses may be dealt with expeditiously. There is no suggestion that important matters will be rushed through or that opportunity will not be given for proper discussion. Neither is there any suggestion that requests for adjournments will not be granted. With the suspension of Standing Orders, however, we can expedite business, if so desired, and when the time arrives, clean up the notice paper. If the Leader of either party opposite desires an adjournment in order to examine Bills, it will be granted. The motion is necessary to expedite the business towards the close of the session, and there will be no disadvantage if the motion is passed.

MR. PATRICK (Greenough): This also is a customary motion foreshadowing the end of the session. I am glad the Minister has given an assurance that reasonable time will be allowed for discussion of the remaining business. I should like to know how many more Government Bills will be brought down.

The Deputy Premier: There will be some continuance measures and, I think, one or two others.

Mr. PATRICK: This motion should not be used to rush legislation through. Reasonable adjournments should be granted. This has not always been done, in the past. I can recall one Bill having been rushed through on almost the last night of the session, and no adjournment of the debate was permitted. That was the time when the Leader of the Opposition was suspended. I do not think that will occur again.

The Deputy Premier: I think that on that occasion we brought the Leader of the Opposition back again.

Mr. PATRICK: Nevertheless, that Bill was passed without our being given a reasonable adjournment to consider its merits. After that experience, I hope we shall secure any reasonable adjournment we may require.

MR. SEWARD (Pingelly): There is only one aspect of this motion to which I desire to draw attention. Frequently an amended Bill is sent down from the Legislative Council and we are called upon to consider the amendments on the same day as we receive them, without being given the opportunity of having them printed and circulated, so that members might fully appreciate their import. That almost invariably happens towards the close of a session and it is a big disadvantage to private members. There is one such amendment on the notice paper today that involves the turning up of five volumes of the statutes. Had we to consider such a message on the day it was received, without its being properly circulated among private members, it would be almost impossible for them to turn up the statutes in time. I ask the Deputy Premier to have the amendments printed so that members can see what they contain—especially this year, when the Government Printing Office is so short of staff.

THE DEPUTY PREMIER (in reply): There is merit in the remarks of the member for Pingelly. In the case he mentioned time would be given to consider the amendments; but simple amendments could be disposed of on the day on which they are received. No attempt will be made to rush business through. The business of Parliament should be properly conducted. The motion is not aimed at rushing business through in a manner not creditable to the House. No difficulty will occur in regard to the point raised by the member for Pingelly, because members would have the opportunity to study involved amendments, which are sometimes highly important.

Question put and passed.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Wilson, leave of absence for the remainder of the session granted to Mr. Raphael (Victoria Park) on the ground of military service.

BILL—MARKETING OF EGGS ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Council and, on motion by Mr. Sampson, read a first time.

DISCHARGE OF ORDER.

The following Order of the Day was discharged:—

Health Act Amendment Bill (No. 1).

On motion by the Minister for Health.

BILL—LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL (POST- PONEMENT OF ELECTION).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 17th November.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [2.39]: This Bill is supplementary to the measure for the extension of the duration of the Legislative Assembly that has passed both Houses of Parliament. Normally, the elections for the Legislative Council would take place in 1942, 1944 and 1946. By this Bill these elections will instead take place in 1944, 1945 and 1946. Members who would retire in 1942 will retire in 1944; members who would normally retire in 1944 will retire in 1945; and members who would ordinarily retire in 1946 will retire in that year. The principles involved in prolonging the life of Parliament have been fully debated recently in this House, and I do not think any good purpose could be served by a repetition of what was said then, at all events as far as I am concerned. I advanced in the course of that debate reasons which induced me to vote in opposition to the Bill for the extension of the duration of the Legislative Assembly. The same reasons appear to me to be applicable to this proposal to extend the duration of the Legislative Council. For the reasons which I advanced on the previous occasion, this Bill does not meet with my support. I was and am of the opinion that the election should be held in the normal course.

Question put and the House divided.

MR. SPEAKER: As there is an absolute majority in favour of the Bill, and there being no dissentient voice, I declare the second reading carried.

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Third Reading.

THE DEPUTY PREMIER AND MINIS- TER FOR WORKS: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

Question put.

MR. SPEAKER: I have counted the House, and assured myself there is an absolute majority of members present. There being no dissentient voice, I declare the question duly passed.

Question thus passed.

Bill read a third time and *passed*.

BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS [2.47] in moving the second reading said: This is a very short measure which proposes to extend the purposes for which an overdraft may be obtained by a road board pending the collection of rates. At present a road board can legally obtain an overdraft only for the commencing, carrying on or completing of works. The restriction contained in Section 286 which it is now sought to amend, has been found impossible to work to. For many years the departmental audit inspectors have taken no exception to overdrafts being utilised for the temporary payment of urgent loan commitments. Subsection (4) of Section 245 of the Road Districts Act, provides that if in any year the proceeds of a loan rate are insufficient for the purpose of meeting interest and proportion of principal falling due, the board shall make good any deficiency out of its ordinary revenue. This facility is rendered inoperative by reason of the restriction in Section 286 when there are insufficient funds in the general revenue account temporarily to assist the loan account.

Subsection (1) of Section 245 provides that a board shall impose in every year such loan rate on all rateable land in the district as may be necessary to enable the board to pay the interest on money lawfully borrowed, and also such percentage of the principal sum as is named in the debentures. This section has been interpreted legally to mean that the loan rates to be levied in any

year must be sufficient only to meet the commitments within that year, notwithstanding that Subsection (3) of the same section provides that if in any year the proceeds of a loan rate are in excess of the sum required such excess shall be kept in hand toward the payment of next year's interest. The departmental audit inspectors have urged that the commonsense practice which has been permitted for so long should now be placed on a legal basis. It has come to the notice of the department recently that some road boards, which have become rather apprehensive of their legal position for the reason that they have been striking loan rates sufficient not only to meet the commitments within that year but also those falling due early in the following year, have this year followed the strict interpretation of the section and have levied rates sufficient only to meet payments due within the year.

In one instance a total amount of £1,000 becomes due in the months of July and August, 1943, before it is practicable to strike the rate and issue the rate notices for that year. It is clear, therefore, that unless provision is made as suggested in the Bill such boards will default in their loan repayments. This unsatisfactory legal position would be largely met by the amendment now suggested to Section 286, and would be a particular benefit to those boards which will not be in a position to create reserve funds under the provisions of another Bill which is now before Parliament. In any event, it is very undesirable that there should be any confusion at all or haggling on such fine points in regard to these matters, and the Bill is therefore recommended for the favourable reception of members. It will be noticed that the proposal is to add after the word "works" in the section defining the purposes for which loan moneys shall be used, the words, "or of meeting urgent commitments of the board in respect of loans." In times past, boards have raised overdrafts and used them for the purpose of paying interest on loan commitments. Now it has been suggested that they have not the power to do so, that they have been acting illegally. The Bill puts the position right.

Our auditors, who have to audit the road board accounts, have directed attention to this position and consider that the proper way to put things right is by amending the Act and making it legal for road boards to

raise overdrafts to pay interest on loans. The road board which will be faced with the payment of £1,000 in July or August of next year will not have collected the money by that time. That is something on which the bank would willingly lend money, because the rate is struck and the money will be coming in, though it will not be available at the time. This is the only way to overcome the difficulty, by permitting overdrafts to be used to pay interest on loans or for the repayment of loans. That is the sole purpose of this Bill, which has been asked for by the Road Boards Association. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Doney, debate adjourned.

BILL—INCREASE OF RENT (WAR RESTRICTIONS) ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR [2.55] in moving the second reading said: This Bill aims to make three alterations or additions to the existing Act controlling rents in this State. The first alteration deals with land or premises first let after the 31st August, 1939. It will be remembered that the 31st August, 1939, was the day on which rents in this State were pegged. No rent that was in operation on that date could be increased following the passing of the parent Act. The provision in that Act regarding land or premises first let after the 31st August, 1939, was that the first tenant should have the right to approach a tribunal for the purpose of having a fair rent established. If the first tenant did not approach a tribunal within the first three months of occupancy the rent fixed by the landlord became the standard rent.

Because of the wording of this particular provision in the Act, there has been considerable legal doubt whether any application could be made in respect of such land or premises if the first tenant had not made an application within three months of occupancy. The amendment proposes that any tenant shall have the right to approach a tribunal for the purpose of having a fair rent fixed for any land or premises first let after the 31st August, 1939. Therefore, if the first tenant did not within three months make the necessary application for

a fair rent to be fixed by a tribunal, any succeeding tenant can make an application. This will mean that the doubt on that legal point will be cleared up, and also that the court may be approached to fix a fair rent where one has not already been fixed.

I want to emphasise that this part of the Bill deals only with land or premises that had not been let prior to the 31st August, 1939. Where premises or land were let on that date, there was a rent already in operation and that became the standard rent. But there is some land and there are some premises which were first let after that vital date, and where the tenant concerned did not make an application within three months for the fixing of a fair rent, the rent decided upon by the landlord stands legally, even though a succeeding tenant may consider the rent charged to be excessive. The alteration proposed will give the tenant to-day occupying such land or premises an opportunity to make application to a fair rents court for a fair rent to be fixed if it is considered that the existing rent is excessive.

The second proposal in the Bill aims at making it illegal for any landlord to refuse to let premises on the ground that the prospective tenant has a child or any number of children who would be in occupation of the premises. Members will know that a practice has developed over many years for landlords to refuse to let houses to tenants if it was likely that children would live in the house. The Government feels that if tenants with children are to be refused the right to occupy houses simply because of the existence of those children, it will be detrimental to the life of the community. It would mean that we were content to allow families which included children to be penalised by having the right of occupancy of dwellings denied them.

If there is any sincerity at all in the talk we hear about a new order, I think one of the major principles of any such new order will be that families with children shall not be denied the right to obtain dwelling-houses simply because of the presence of those children. It may be as well to point out that this matter is already provided for in the Commonwealth Government's National Security Regulations, which deal with the relationship between landlords and tenants. Therefore this particular proposal already operates in several

States that have no legislation dealing with this matter. Those States operate completely under the National Security Regulations. The Commonwealth Government has asked this State to apply the regulations here, but the State Government prefers to pass its own legislation as against accepting in their entirety on this point the Commonwealth National Security Regulations. Did I understand the member for Nedlands to say something?

Hon. N. KERNAN: No, I was simply smiling at this sudden belief in the State Parliament!

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I thought from the hon. member's appearance that he was developing an interjection. In this matter the State Government took very early action. Legislation was passed dealing with rentals before there was any suggestion of the Commonwealth National Security Regulations being promulgated. From experience, we know that our Act has worked effectively and the Government desires to improve it by the addition of the suggested amendments. If the Bill is passed, it will mean that Parliament accepts the State legislation as being quite as effective as the Commonwealth regulations. In those circumstances we would be much happier to continue operating under our State legislation as against the Commonwealth regulations which, if adopted here would over-ride the State Act. Moreover the regulations then would continue to operate for the duration of the war and 12 months afterwards. The third proposal will if accepted by Parliament, compel a landlord or his agent to keep a record of the rent that was charged for his premises at the 31st August, 1939, and of any alterations legally allowed in that rent subsequent to that date. In other words, the landlord or his agent will be required to have a written or typewritten record of the rentals charged for a particular property or dwelling on the date mentioned, and of any alterations in the standard rent legally allowed since that time.

The Government regards that as a necessary addition to the State legislation because, under existing conditions, it is not easy for a tenant to know whether the rent he is called upon to pay is the fair or standard legal rental, or some rental above that standard. He has to take the word of the landlord or his agent as to the rental. Several instances have been tracked down

and it has been found that the incoming tenant has been charged 2s. 6d., 5s., or even as high as 10s. a week above the standard or fair rental. If the landlord or his agent is compelled to keep a record of the fair or standard rental, the tenant will have an opportunity to study it, and will immediately know whether the amount he is being called upon to pay is correct or represents a sum in excess of the standard rent. If the tenant finds he is called upon to pay an excessive rental, it will be an easy matter for him to have action taken to adjust the position.

The most beneficial result likely to be derived from the alteration to the principal Act will be that landlords and their agents will know that they must keep this record, which the incoming tenant can peruse, and this will mean that the opportunities to charge more than the standard rentals will be diminished. In fact, the opportunities to charge more than the standard rental will be very limited. If the landlord or his agent should interfere with the record by making false entries, he will incur a grave risk of prosecution, and this will render him liable to a heavy penalty. I feel sure that the proposals in the Bill will commend themselves to members, and I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. North, debate adjourned.

BILL—MEDICAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 12th November.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [3.10]: The Minister told the House that the Medical Act is very old, and doubtless some of the amendments embodied in the Bill are therefore justified. Others, I think, will be subjected to some criticism. I notice that the Minister said that the board is to consist of not more than seven members, of whom six shall be medical practitioners. There may be some justification for what may be regarded as a reflection on medical practitioners in that it is suggested there shall be one member of the board who will be a layman—in other words, not a medical practitioner.

Mr. Patrick: But the medical practitioners will have a good majority.

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes. I do not know of what use a person who is not a medical practitioner will be on a board that deals with professional matters and which, it is reasonable to believe, may meet for the purpose of discussing questions relating thereto.

The Minister for Health: He may be a good watch-dog.

Mr. SAMPSON: If the implication is that the medical practitioners need a watch-dog, I am a little doubtful whether that view is justifiable. When I say I am a little doubtful on the point, I express my sentiments politely to the Minister. I am not by any means convinced that one other than a medical practitioner should be so appointed, and I am firmly of opinion that such an appointment would be unjustified. The Minister made some reference to reciprocity being permitted. I take it that refers to degrees conferred in foreign countries which, under normal conditions, would be recognised by the Medical Board. That postulates a proper viewpoint in most instances, but I am very doubtful whether we would be justified in approving of reciprocity, inasmuch as there is always the possibility of an influx of foreign medicos, thereby causing some anxiety to those who have secured their degrees from universities in British communities.

The Minister for Health: The Bill refers only to reciprocity agreed upon by Great Britain, not by us.

Mr. SAMPSON: I realise that.

The Minister for Health: It has to be accepted by Great Britain.

Mr. SAMPSON: I realise we have no power in the matter. I do not know that I am favourable to doing anything that would have the effect of making it possible for the Western Australian authorities to recognise the degrees, or whatever the qualifications of medical practitioners may be termed, to the possible detriment of medical practitioners in this country. So I say there is great need for care in this matter, or there will be danger in it. Of course it is a good thing to encourage the spirit of brotherhood—"When man to man the world o'er shall brithers be" and so on. Nevertheless, the sentiment does not always work out quite as well as one would like. There is opposition possibly coming to our own medical practitioners, and I am most anxious that they should not be injured by

any legislation passed here. There is in Clause 4 of the Bill—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must not mention clauses on second reading.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Bill contains a clause as to which I am doubtful whether it should stand. May I, Sir, read the clause?

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, I think the hon. member may read clauses.

Mr. SAMPSON: The clause as to the usefulness of propriety of which I am doubtful reads as follows:—

No matter or thing done or suffered by the board or by any member or by the registrar bona fide in the execution or intended execution of this Act or by the exercise or discharge, intended exercise or discharge, of any of its or his powers or duties, shall subject the board or any member or the registrar or any other person or the Crown to any liability in respect thereof.

That of course gives such freedom, or perhaps I should say such absence of responsibility, as to cause one to wonder that the Minister is prepared to take that power. I am not in favour of any organisation being permitted, possibly through carelessness, to do something and incur no responsibility for the doing of it. However, the matter is one which can be dealt with better in Committee; and that remark really applies to most of the clauses. It would certainly be of advantage to include with the word "infamous" the words "or improper;" because whilst in the old days all those in control were exceedingly serious and severe, such is hardly the case today. I have looked up the word "infamous" in Webster's dictionary and there find it defined as "having a reputation of the worst kind, publicly branded with guilt, notoriously vile, disgraceful." A very bad and exceedingly wicked member could with fairness be described as infamous; but the same dictionary defines the word "improper" as "not suitable, unfit, incorrect, wrong." I could almost on occasion refer to a member or two as "improper," and they might equally respond by applying that word to me. The amendment provides an improvement. The fact that registration is to be effected annually is a good thing. It will certainly keep the list of medical practitioners more up-to-date than has been the case previously. Hitherto, I think, 10 guineas has been the fee, and that meant membership for as long as a person lived provided no advice to the contrary reached

the Medical Board. In the absence of notification of a member's decease, his name remained on the list.

The Minister for Health: Even if he remained here only for 12 months.

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes, and even if he practised for a briefer period. No one can tell when a doctor will die. If the Bill passes, the annual registration fee will be three guineas, which seems to me satisfactory and reasonable. Certainly the amount is not unreasonable. There is a feature of the Bill which I think will require a little careful consideration by the Minister before it is enacted. I refer to the tail of a proposed new subclause which sets out what no person other than a medical practitioner may do or may not do. He must not do a variety of things, and he must not practise medicine or surgery in any one or more of its branches or give or support any medical or surgical attendance or advice; and then these words are added—

or any service, attendance, operation or advice which is given or performed by a medical practitioner.

Now, we all know how useful are the words "et cetera." They cover a multitude of possibilities. Or the word "including" might have been used, thus making it possible to cover all and sundry, or the draftsman might have included the words "without limiting the generalities of the foregoing." I do not like "generalities" of the drag-net "et cetera" contained in the provision. For the first time, so far as I know, the Minister, who is usually most circumspect in what he brings forward, has on this occasion done something which savours of a partial viewpoint, really State trading. The Bill sets out that the board shall keep a proper account of all receipts and payments. I suggest that this advice contained in the Bill is not necessary in order to secure the end. But the clause goes on to state that accounts of all receipts and payments shall be kept, and that such accounts shall be audited by the Auditor General. Shades of our Accountancy Institute! What justification is there for the Minister's effort to unload the probably simple little accounts of a Medical Board on to the Auditor General? And further the clause provides that the Auditor General shall have all the power in respect of such accounts as are or may be conferred upon him by any Act now

or hereafter in force relating to the collection and audit of public moneys and accounts.

I may prognosticate that when the Minister meets some of his accountancy friends they will want to know why this reflection is cast on the private accountant, and why this little organisation, which I do not suppose has an income of £1,000 a year and may not have half of it, should be required to submit its accounts and all receipts and payments to the Auditor General. That unfortunate public officer who, time after time, though not during the last three or four years, has been blamed in this Chamber because he has been unable to submit his annual report promptly, is to have this additional burden placed upon his shoulders. Members in those earlier days to which I refer considered they had occasion to complain that the Auditor General's annual report did not come promptly to hand. What are we going to do? Are we going to have all bodies authorised by the Legislature of this State called upon to submit their accounts to the Auditor General? I fear that provision was a slip of the typewriter. Such a very disturbing instruction will, I trust, not be persisted in. I support the second reading, and am very hopeful that some clauses of the Bill may be amended in Committee, much to their advantage.

MR. NORTH (Claremont): I am solid on this Bill. It contains, however, a clause dealing with advertising which provides that advertising cannot take place except in certain ways, and which confines the process to medical practitioners. Then the clause defines by certain words "medical services," which might be taken to mean that no dietician may advertise, or recommend over the air, his diets to his various followers. I do not quite know whether the Minister intends to go so far as that. I do not even know whether doctors have agreed with modern diets. Many dieticians, we know, are laughed at as cranks. We know, too, that what may suit one patient may not suit another. I am anxious on behalf of the lady applicant—who saw me and the member for Swan, who did not refer to the interview in his speech, perhaps leaving it to me to do so—lest the Bill, if passed as now constructed, should prevent health radio talks from taking place.

Mr. Sampson: I referred to the staggering power of the words "et cetera."

Mr. NORTH: I do not wish to throw any names at the Bill, the need for which I understand; but I think the time has come when we should find out whether it is the medical profession's intention to run the dieticians off the market, or whether the medical profession intends to bring them into the fold and establish some standard of competence. I do not know even whether dietetics have reached the level of a real science. There is certainly a great deal of radio instruction on this subject. I noticed that we had from the B.M.A. every morning of the week a quite involved lecture on diet. I trust that when the Bill is in Committee it will be clarified in such a way as not to prevent this class of professional experts from doing their work in such a manner as will not be harmful to the public.

The Minister for Health: Every hospital has its dietary scales. The Bill will not interfere with them.

Mr. NORTH: That is really the issue. I understand that so-called dieticians claim that the medical profession is trying to catch up, and that it has not yet reached its goal in that respect. I support the Bill.

MR. HUGHES (East Perth): I hope no attempt will be made to stamp out the dieticians. I admit they are cutting the ground from beneath the feet of the medical profession. With the rapid advance that is now being made in the United States and other parts of the world in respect to correct eating, and eating food of the right quality and in the right quantities, these people are likely to do great damage to the medical profession. They will produce so much better a standard of living in the community by the spread of knowledge as to what to eat and when to eat that the people will not be satisfied in future if this information is not allowed to be as freely disseminated as is being done in the United States, where that sort of thing is making such great strides. There is no doubt that many people become sick because they get too fat. They do not exercise and their fat accumulates. If they followed the correct diet they would reduce their fat, and by so doing acquire good health. I speak from personal experience, because I took off 13 lb. in weight in quite a short time.

I believe there is a great deal of jealousy amongst members of the medical profession against the doctrine of these people who

provide good health by this means. If anything is imported into the Act that tends to restrict these people from doing a public service—they are doing this by means of natural foods, whereas the medical profession is doing it by means of drugs which very often are harmful—the public will be dissatisfied. If we put anything into the Act that will allow the medical profession, which is a very close monopoly and unfortunately is, to a large extent, commercialised, to prevent the dieticians from doing their work, the matter will be taken out of our hands. Some court may decide that this valuable source of information must be dried up and kept from the public at large. I am glad the Minister has assured us that there is no danger of that happening.

The Minister for Health: If there is, we will soon stop it.

MR. HUGHES: I take it the Minister will have another careful look at the matter to make sure there will be no risk in that direction. His assurance satisfies me.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to the Public Authorities (Postponement of Elections) Bill.

BILL—STATE (WESTERN AUSTRALIAN) ALUNITE INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 10th November.

MR. STUBBS (Wagin) [3.35]: The very interesting address given by the Minister for Industrial Development was of great importance to every member of Parliament. Important statements have been made to the Minister by responsible officers whose duty it is, as experts and geologists, to supply him with information concerning the alunite deposits from which it is hoped to obtain vast quantities of potash. As we know, potash is of vital importance in the production of wealth from the soil. I do not think it is possible now to secure an ounce of potash in this State, nor has it been possible to do so for some considerable period. The Minister has told us—I do not like to use the term “fantastical stories”—about the enormous quantity of potash that

will be derived from the Lake Campion deposits. He said he had been advised that there were 15,000,000 tons of this valuable commodity in sight. He also told the House that the Government had entered into a contract with two brothers for a period of ten years.

I hope the Minister will not mind my mentioning the point I am now coming to. I have had considerable experience in this Chamber over the years, and have heard of the wonderful things that were going to happen if certain industries were established in this State. I recollect a long debate that took place in this Chamber concerning the establishment of freezing works in the North. Private enterprise said that those works could be built for £100,000, but I venture to say that they cost the State more nearly a quarter of a million. I do not think the works have ever paid a dividend or any interest on one penny of the outlay made upon them. I mention this matter in the hope that members will give attention to the points made by the Minister in regard to the cost of establishing one unit to deal with the alunite deposits. I understand that considerable headway has already been made with that plant. I was very interested to know that it would be possible by means of the enterprise that is being launched to provide primary producers with superphosphate at a cost not greater than £15 per ton. Not many years ago £30 a ton was the lowest price at which it was possible to purchase that commodity in Western Australia. It will be a wonderful thing for this State if the Minister's statement turns out to be correct, and it is possible to supply producers with potash at that price. If everything turns out well the Minister will go down in history as a public benefactor. Nevertheless I ask the House to bear in mind past experiences concerning certain State trading concerns, in which category this particular venture will be placed.

The Government is finding the greater part of the money involved in the establishment of the industry, and naturally will control the working of the deposits. The Minister has endeavoured to convince the House that the commodity in question can be produced at £15 per ton. I hope there will be no strikes or lock-outs, and that when the balance sheets come to be produced they will indicate that the concern

is proving profitable. I point out that it will be the taxpayers' money that will be at stake. I have no desire to indulge in carping criticism. If the Bill is passed—I intend to vote for it—I hope when the time comes for us to see the second balance sheet, we shall be able to congratulate the Minister upon what he has done and upon having brought this Bill down for approval. I am sure no one will congratulate him more than I on behalf of the people of my electorate. The opportunity that seems to be offered to obtain vast quantities of potash for the use of primary producers warrants me in saying I hope the Bill will be passed, and that before long those people to whom potash is such a vital necessity will be able to obtain it at a price not greater than £15 per ton.

HON. N. KEENAN (Nedlands): I do not propose to address myself to the Bill from the point of view of those members who have indicated that they intend to comment on the partnership arrangements which this measure is designed to validate. No doubt certain individuals were overlooked when the arrangements were made to acquire the right to work certain areas, but I do not propose to deal with that question for two reasons. Firstly, I know nothing about the matter except from hearsay, and secondly, it would be unjust to make any comment before the Minister had an opportunity to explain why he dealt in a certain manner with some individuals and left others out. There is, however, a feature upon which I desire to comment, and that is that this is an industry for which apparently it is impossible to obtain support from private individuals or companies. It is not difficult, especially in Australia, to get support for the development of any chemical or mineral industry if there is a market in Australia for its products. Apparently in this case, although it was hawked in the Eastern States, it was not successfully hawked.

The Minister for Industrial Development: It was not hawked in the Eastern States.

HON. N. KEENAN: I have in mind the statement made in this House when another matter was being discussed. The original prospector who found this deposit went to the Eastern States but, unfortunately, was not successful in getting support. This scheme, if it is to be justified, will be justified as a war measure. At the present mo-

ment there is a scarcity of potash in Australia.

The Minister for Mines: It is very scarce, too!

HON. N. KEENAN: Yes. That scarcity is almost certain to continue if not become accentuated for the duration of the war. Therefore this may be described as a war measure. Unfortunately the State is putting a lot of money into it. On the present Loan Estimates £89,000 appears. I saw an estimate in yesterday's newspaper, which I assume was inspired, that an additional £125,000 would be required. It often happens that one goes hopefully into a matter and then having taken the first plunge is obliged to go on. In the long run this scheme may cost many hundreds of thousands of pounds.

The whole question depends on the accuracy of the estimates, what the product will cost to produce, and what the market is for it. This particular deposit in Western Australia would be a hopeless proposition if it only had this State for a market. We must have the Australian market. I do not know that the Minister particularly emphasised that point; he apparently took it for granted. If the two units are working and producing what it is expected they will produce, it is obvious that unless we have the Australian market we will have a lot of it left on our hands—probably 80 per cent. We must, therefore, be assured of an Australian market, and what grounds have we for that assurance? I do not know what the position is in the Eastern States. I do not know whether deposits have been discovered there, and if they have whether they have to any extent been worked. The Minister did mention that there were certain producing centres in the Eastern States.

Mr. Patrick: That was raw material for aluminium-bauxite.

The Minister for Industrial Development: That was raw material for aluminium, not for potash.

HON. N. KEENAN: Is it alleged that we are in the happy position of being the only State with a deposit of this character?

The Minister for Industrial Development: The only large deposit.

HON. N. KEENAN: What does the term "large" govern? We have not apparently heard of a deposit to the same extent anywhere else. Assuming that there is a pro-

fitable market in Australia as a whole, it depends entirely on the fact that there is no similar industry started in any other part of the Commonwealth. This industry has a limited, almost a small field, for the sale of its produce. The market can be easily supplied even by this one deposit in Western Australia.

Mr. Thorn: A lot will depend upon the price of it, too.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The price will determine the matter. If anywhere in the Eastern States, a similar deposit to or one anything like the deposit at Lake Campion—or as we are told now it should be called Lake Chandler—is discovered, what will happen? The mere success of the industry in this State will immediately be followed by the starting of the same industry in the Eastern States in order that they might have supplies close at hand and have them under their own control. It is possible also that they might think they can produce it at a lower cost. All these factors will endanger our investment. It is easy to rush into this. I am not at present prepared to object to our attempting to start this industry, but we must be careful about the amount of money we venture. We are commencing with a very big sum, and if anything like that amount is put in again and again, as might well happen, we will soon find ourselves in the position of having a very expensive failure to nurse.

If there was anything like an undertaking, as we could well claim there should be from the Commonwealth to facilitate the sale of this product—not as an exclusive sale, as it is not possible under the Commonwealth Constitution for the Commonwealth Government to grant that to any one State, but some kind of trade arrangement which would create a reasonable prospect that the sale of the Western Australian product would not be challenged provided it is marketed at a reasonable figure—then we might go into this venture in a much calmer frame of mind. If our entry into it is successful we will almost certainly receive a challenge—and with the knowledge that we will be able, in no way, to meet it except in the course of ordinary commercial rivalry—to capture the Eastern States markets. If we do not get these markets this will be one more lesson in a ruinous State venture. However, I do not propose to oppose the second reading.

MR. PATRICK (Greenough): I do not propose to oppose the second reading of this Bill, because I do not think we have any option but to support it. The Government, moreover, has gone so far already in spending money that it would be useless to oppose it. At the same time I propose to offer a few observations on the matter. I hope the measure fulfils the great expectations that the Minister and the Government appear to have for it, but I am not too enthusiastic on the facts put forward by the Minister. It seems to me that it might be a case of the Government rushing in where private investors fear to tread. We have certainly had very little information given us by the Minister, and none at all in the pamphlet and memorandum, on the estimated results. Most members will be aware that it is customary, when a company puts out a prospectus, for an estimate of the costs and so forth to be given. I am not referring altogether to mining companies. My experience of them is that they are inclined to be a little romantic in their claims. In an ordinary solid business proposition these estimates are given. If a scheme were proposed by the B.H.P. for more capital, it would state what it proposed to do and give the actual costs of working and the balance that would remain. We have had no estimates of that sort at all.

I am not surprised that the keen businessmen who started this company got out, and got out at a fair figure. If the facts in this memorandum were put to the investing public by the Minister, he would be lucky to sell a single share. I would not be inclined to take any shares on this prospectus. The memorandum and the Minister's speech contain some rather misleading statements. After reading these remarks, I have come to the conclusion that the Minister is not a mathematician. The average import of potash into Australia for the five years ended 1937-38—1938 was the year quoted—was 9,300 tons, and the value in Australian currency was £83,035. In the year when the facts were said to be ascertained by Mr. Fernie—and anyone could obtain them by consulting the Commonwealth Year Book—10,615 tons were imported into Australia and the value was £97,989, in Australian currency. Actually, the production of 11 tons a day would supply a third of the Australian requirements on that basis. On the figures stated and on the

basis of a six-day week, 40,000 tons a year will be produced, but the whole of the Australian consumption, over an average of five years, is only 9,000 tons. I do not know where the Minister's calculations have gone astray. When he gets his full unit into operation, he will produce 120,000 tons a year to supply a market requiring 9,000 tons, taking the average of five years' importations.

Potash, of course, is not a large factor in Australian agriculture. In the same year, 1938, 777,000 tons of rock phosphate were imported at a cost of £894,000. I can remember when a "Potash Syndicate" was in operation some years ago. It spent a great deal of money in opening up the Australian market for its product. Any wheatgrower who elected to get a 1 cwt. bag of superphosphate and mix some 20 lbs. or 30 lbs. of potash, would get a similar bag of superphosphate made up to the same weight and mixed with sand. Many farmers were induced to believe that it would yield great results, and they gave it a trial. I had a number of bags given to me free, but we got no results because it is a manure not suitable for wheat. This was a German industry, and I cite the following instance to show the mentality they exhibited then, and what they are exhibiting today.

A previous professor of agriculture in Western Australia told me this interesting story. He had an exhibition of grass plots showing the differences in the uses of certain manures. The syndicate to which I have just referred supplied potash for a certain plot, and the professor was asked to watch this plot closely and see that there was no interference with it. It did not seem to produce much in the way of results. One day the German representative came to him and asked what it would be worth to put a pinch of nitrate into the plot. The professor told him to get off the premises, and he maintained a stricter watch afterwards. That shows to what lengths these people will go to develop their industries. There is no doubt that after the war they will make a big fight to retain them.

Although potash is not a big factor in Australian agriculture, it is very valuable in connection with certain classes of plants. In my young days, the botanical term of solanaceæ included potatoes, tobacco and tomatoes, for which potash was very beneficial, and it is also used a good deal in the case

of vines and fruit-trees, but that is about the limit of its uses. There is no doubt that there is a certain market for potash but, as the member for Nedlands pointed out, we would want some undertaking from the Commonwealth Government that we would be able to retain this market after the war. I think Western Australia would get the market in the Commonwealth. I do not know of any other deposits of the kind in Australia, but I do not think we could compete with the big natural deposits in Germany and Alsace-Lorraine, which are much richer and from which muriate of potash can be extracted with little refining.

Mr. Hughes: Would we trade with Germany after the war?

Mr. PATRICK: After the war, Alsace-Lorraine may not form part of Germany; it may again become part of France. I do not know whether the Government has any arrangement to protect this industry, as some other Australian industries have been protected, when the war is over. I think the Minister said the value of the potash was £15 per ton, but the average price of the commodity landed here in the last five years was about £9 in Australian currency. Therefore the industry will require a certain amount of protection. It is not a big industry, and it is important now only on account of the war, because these requirements cannot at present be imported.

Taking the Minister's figures and the small importance of potash in Australian agriculture and as an industry, I think we should have been given more information as to what the by-products are going to yield. We have heard a lot about by-products, but no information has been given as to what will be the cost of producing aluminium from the alumina, which will be one of the by-products. I doubt whether we shall be able to compete in the manufacture of aluminium after the war if the Atlantic Charter is to be carried out. It is well known that aluminium is produced where there is very cheap water-power. In the United States of America, the Niagara Falls produce electricity at a very low cost, and that is the largest aluminium-producing country; so there is not a very bright prospect ahead for aluminium.

I deplore the lack of information given by the Minister, and also in the memorandum. The memorandum states that the Government Analyst prepared a report which

showed that the yield of potassium sulphate would be 240,000 tons. That was based on tests carried out at Lake Campion to a depth of three feet over an area of 300 acres. The Minister mentioned 1,750,000 tons, but gave no information as to how that quantity was arrived at. Evidently the Government Analyst tested the deposit to a depth of 3 feet only. While I have considerable doubt about the industry, I hope it will be a success. This will be an unusual industry in that it will be away from the coast. We have not too many such industries in the country districts, and it should do something to attract population from the coast. Most of the great industries of Australia are at ports, and I for one hope that, in spite of my fears, the Minister will make a success of the enterprise.

MR. J. H. SMITH (Nelson): I realise that there is no possibility of successfully opposing the passing of the second reading at this late stage. Before the Government rushed into this enterprise involving an expenditure of a vast amount of money, the Minister should have introduced the Bill. In fact, it should have been brought down last session. The second reading was moved only last week, and we are already committed to a vast expenditure of money. The Premier has rushed on his Loan Estimates and the spending of the money has already commenced. This seems to be a peculiar attitude for the Government to adopt to an important project of this sort, especially as the Commonwealth Government has made no monetary advance and is accepting no responsibility as to whether the venture is successful or otherwise. If the Martin brothers and the influential gentlemen concerned with them, whom the Government has seen fit to buy out without consulting Parliament, had been the pioneers of these deposits, one could understand the position, but it must be two or three years since a man named Joseph told me of the deposits at Lake Brown. It was Chandler who discovered the deposits at Lake Campion. These men have been scrapped; nothing has been done to recognise their efforts as the original prospectors. The Martin brothers did not come into the picture till 1940. The memorandum circulated by the Minister states—

Some 3½ years ago the Martin Investment Co., of which Messrs. M. and E. J. Martin are

the principals, made a preliminary survey of some of the mineral resources of this State for the purpose of ascertaining whether there were any mineral deposits available that would warrant commercial exploitation.

Were these gentlemen out for the commercial exploitation of the minerals of this State? It seems like it! The small syndicate to which I have referred came into the picture a long time ago. It consisted of three brothers named Dunn, and a man named Joseph, and they made considerable investigations. They selected under a prospecting area a place at Lake Brown about two miles from Lake Campion. They did not stop at making investigations; they obtained many reports, and they claim that their reports and analyses are much better than are those of the Lake Campion deposits. Yet they have been overlooked in every way. This was a syndicate of small men, who spent out of their own pockets £2,000 or £3,000. Yet under this Bill Mr. Jackson, Mr. Brisbane, Mr. Thorn and others are given £2,000 by the Government to get out. Chandler, who was interested as far back as 1928, is entirely ignored. The other syndicate I have mentioned will not receive a penny piece by way of compensation. What possible hope have those men of competing against the State Government? How could they get anyone to invest in their small syndicate when the State is prepared to throw in perhaps £200,000 to develop the Lake Campion deposit? I suppose the products of these deposits are wanted for war purposes, but before the war sulphate of potash was imported from overseas. Alsace-Lorraine supplied all Australia's requirements at £8 or £9 (Australian) per ton landed cost. The syndicate wrote to the Minister for Industrial Development on the 16th April, 1941, as follows:—

For the past three years we have been occupied in endeavouring to treat the alunite deposits of the Lake Brown district in this State.

We are pleased to report that we can now recover from these deposits potash alum $K_2SO_4 \cdot Al_2(SO_4)_3$, potash K_2O , and aluminum oxide Al_2O_3 .

You will appreciate that so far all our operations have been conducted on a small scale, but on commercial lines, and we have no doubt that equally favourable results will be obtained from a large commercial plant operated on similar lines.

We would like to stress the fact that up to date all expenses in connection with this research have been borne by our small syndicate, but at this stage, owing to the obscurity of

the marketing position, we do not feel justified in taking any steps to obtain privately the capital necessary to place the production of K_2O and Al_2O_3 on a commercial footing.

We therefore propose making such application as will enable a Government grant to be made for the purpose, and we should appreciate your advising us of the procedure to be adopted.

The syndicate did not receive a reply to that letter. Then it wrote to the Commonwealth Department of Supply, on the 29th April, 1941, as follows:—

For some years past deposits in the Lake Brown area in this State known to be rich in alunite have been the subject of research at their own expense by a private syndicate composed of the following:—H. F. Dunn, Perth, W.A.; J. G. Dunn, Nedlands, W.A.; Dr. J. D. G. Dunn, Melbourne, Victoria; L. J. Joseph, Bridgetown, W.A.

Then particulars are given. The reply from the department was as follows:—

I acknowledge your letter of the 29th April. No doubt you are aware of the work being done under the direction of Professor Bayliss of the University of Western Australia in collaboration with the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research on the alunite deposits of the Lake Campion area.

It would be helpful if you would give some further advice on the relative advantages of your alunite as compared with the Lake Campion deposit and also some further details of the process and the experimental work on which it is based.

These men have been interested in the deposits for three years and have made all sorts of investigations and analyses, whereas the Martin brothers did not come into the business until March, 1940. I am wondering whether it was on account of the influence of the big mining men—H. B. Jackson, Brisbane, Thorn and others—that the Minister introduced a Bill by which Martin brothers will get 23 shares and another gentleman nine shares. Mr. Chandler has been in the industry since 1927, and he and Dunn brothers are ignored altogether. Is it fitting that the State should take over these deposits, which will supply all the requirements of the State, and not compensate the first prospectors at least to the extent of the money which they have expended? They have no possible chance now of floating a syndicate, seeing that the Government has taken over these deposits.

I am not opposing the Bill; the State is too deeply committed for me to do that. I do not wish to oppose anything that will be to the advantage of the State. The State is crying out for potash. Our to-

bacco industry wants it, our potato industry wants it, our market-gardeners, our orchardists and vigneronns want it. Superphosphate is not suitable for those industries. We can only secure potash now from the deposits, of which the State has a monopoly. But, as I said, I want to know why these first prospectors are ignored. Why cannot the State Government do something for these pioneers? Could it not give them a couple of thousand pounds each? Chandler certainly is entitled to some recompense. Martin brothers not only get 23 shares, but they have good jobs as well. I object to the Minister introducing a Bill such as this at the last moment, after the Government had pledged itself and had advanced and expended money. That seems to me to be quite wrong. The Government must have had that expenditure in mind, because the Premier must have been preparing his Loan Estimates for some considerable time past. I desire that everybody should be treated alike, and that the men for whom I have spoken should receive compensation for what they have done.

MR. BOYLE (Avon): In my opinion most speakers who have addressed themselves to the Bill have taken—shall I say—a superficial view of it.

The Minister for Industrial Development: Great Western Australians! Are they not?

Mr. BOYLE: I would not say that. They are entitled to their own opinion. The Minister has not the right to say that. As I know the circumstances, the action of the Minister and the Government is highly commendable, because they knew what was not generally known to the people at large, namely, that we were faced with determined opposition by Eastern States interests, which were endeavouring to prevent the deposit from being worked.

Mr. J. H. Smith: We have not been told that.

Mr. BOYLE: I am telling the hon. member now, anyhow. The syndicate was a financial one. It was not kite-flying with the object of getting the deposit and selling it. One need only mention the names of the members of the syndicate, among whom are Mr. H. B. Jackson, the chairman, Martin, brothers, and Hardy. The last three were the only members of the syndicate who did not have the finance to put into it. The deposit had been located by Martin brothers

and Hardy, who subsequently interested financial men in the project.

Mr. J. H. Smith: The deposit was located 20 years ago.

Mr. BOYLE: Immediately Martin brothers went to the Eastern States with their proposition, the opposition there came to a head. The outbreak of hostilities further complicated the position. One member of the syndicate had invested £25,000 in Malaya and had lost it, while other members of the syndicate were financially affected by the war. In my opinion the Government had no option but to anticipate the approval of this House to the expenditure made. I do not for a moment advocate that Governments should in all circumstances anticipate a decision of this House, because, after all, it is the members who have the right to say whether public funds shall be expended or not. But a delay of even months would have been fatal to the development of what I firmly believe will be the greatest exploitation of our natural mineral resources.

Mr. Warner: Possibly this will be the only one left after the war.

Mr. BOYLE: I speak from a good deal of research as a layman in this matter, having frequently visited the deposit, conversed with engineers and been at the University with Mr. Fernie when the pilot plant had finished its work. I investigated these matters personally. Reference has been made to the sum of £89,000 expended from Loan funds. Why, the Japanese offered the syndicate over £60,000,000 for the raw material delivered on their ships at Fremantle. Eighty-nine thousand pounds is a small amount of capital when we have resources of this type.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Where did you get that information?

Mr. BOYLE: It can be secured from the Department of Industry. The position at that time was that practically an embargo existed. This is the largest potash deposit in the world. The only comparable deposits are in Alsace; there are deposits in Palestine, but these are small. There are no deposits in the Eastern States or in Tasmania, and so Western Australia has a monopoly of this product. In the Lake Campion area the recovery rate is 10 per cent. The treatment estimated by Mr. Norwood was 130 tons per day, with a recovery of 13 tons of potash at a cost of £8 10s. per

ton. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition referred to the fact that the importation of potash into Australia averages about 10,000 tons a year. It is obvious, therefore, that we can supply that 10,000 tons a year to Australia.

If the imported cost, as stated by the hon. member, is about £10 per ton, we are still within working costs, according to Mr. Norwood's estimate of 130 tons a day. But I visualise the export of this commodity. This wonderful deposit will produce not only sulphate of potash, but also potassium sulphate, sodium sulphate, alumina, aluminium sulphate, aluminium chloride, potash alum, sulphuric acid and hydrochloric acid. There are 750,000 tons of sulphur in this deposit. We are trying to re-settle our eastern wheatbelt, and the greatest single factor in that scheme will be cheap superphosphate. In one of her playful moods, Nature has placed this deposit almost in the centre of the marginal areas.

Hon. N. Keenan: Do you say we should use it for wheat?

Mr. BOYLE: We could use it for the production of superphosphate.

Mr. J. H. Smith: How?

Mr. BOYLE: We must import phosphatic rock and will always have to do so, but we have also to import sulphur. We were getting it from Sicily, Florida, and Morocco. We cannot now get sulphur anywhere within a reasonable distance of Australia. We have no phosphatic rock in Australia comparable with that obtained from Nauru. As I said, we have also to import sulphur. Here we have in our own State 750,000 tons, enough for our normal requirements for 20 years, and it is obtainable as a by-product. That means we could establish a superphosphate works in that district. It also means that our top-dressing and other troubles of that kind will be alleviated. We shall be able to get cheaper superphosphate for those areas.

I now come to the treatment of the men associated in the development of this deposit. Most speakers have overlooked the fact that the Government took over these leases from those men. They overlooked also the fact that there has been a great deal of expenditure on developmental work done by those men. Consequently, that they should secure shares in the venture in partnership with the Government is some-

thing that I myself would advocate. I do not deery the appeal of the member for Nelson on behalf of Dunn brothers, but I say the Minister had no option or, rather, he had an option; he could have been distinctly dishonourable and said to those men, "Owing to circumstances beyond your control, you cannot develop this particular deposit. Therefore, I am going to cancel your leases, take over the deposit and work it as a State proposition." That would have been a dishonourable action. Owing to difficulties in carrying out the conditions of the leases, the Minister for Mines could have cancelled them. The Government has given certain shares to these other men. It has given 23 each to Martin brothers. Those shares do not represent a cash value.

Mr. Hughes: How many shares are there?

Mr. BOYLE: The number would not exceed 100. I think it is about 69 amongst the three of them.

The Minister for Industrial Development: They were given 23 each out of a total of 420.

Mr. BOYLE: Those shares do not represent cash. There are certain conditions in the agreement. For instance, any losses must be borne by the shareholders. If this is not a profitable enterprise the shares must bear the losses just as the profits will be shared in the event of the venture being a success. The only alternative would have been to give these men a cash return. In the circumstances, I do not think the Minister made a bad deal, and the placing of £89,000 on the Loan Estimates was in the nature of rather a bold effort to develop a proposition which, to my mind, is fraught with incalculable good in the development of this State. It gets away from gold and all other primary products, and brings into Western Australia the development of a decentralised industry which, as one member said, is away from the coast, and is in our agricultural areas and which, I am sure, will be profitable to the State in more ways than one. Alumina has been mentioned. In this particular case that is one of the least of the products. It is really a residue product. But there are substantial recoveries to be made of sulphate of potash, sulphur and other things that have to be imported at present. If we can produce such things here and this Bill will help in that direction, it has my unqualified support.

THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT (in reply): The way of anyone who attempts to establish secondary industries in this State is very hard.

Mr. Boyle: Like that of the transgressor!

THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: Listening to at least one of the speeches this afternoon one would have thought one should make no attempt to establish a secondary industry in Western Australia unless one could guarantee it 100 per cent. in every respect. The suggestion was that unless that could be done it would be unwise and unsafe to do anything. I would like to know how much we would add to the structure of our secondary industries if we waited, before attempting to do anything, until we had a proposition which was absolutely 100 per cent. certain in every respect. We would not make one inch of additional progress. If that position had had to be waited for in the past, we would not have had even one tiny secondary industry in Western Australia. I doubt whether we would have had one primary industry either. If Western Australia is to progress at all in the field of secondary industries, we shall have to show a little more initiative and courage than was suggested by the member who delivered the speech to which I am referring.

Mr. Marshall: Some tenacity and determination, too!

THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: We were told that the proposition in connection with this industry was hawked—I do not like that term for a start—all over the Eastern States, and that financial interests over there were so poorly impressed that they would not put even a shilling into the proposition. That is not correct in any shape or form. The proposition was not hawked in the Eastern States. No financier of any kind in eastern Australia was ever given an opportunity to put a shilling into the industry. We were particularly careful to keep the Eastern States interests out of it altogether because we feared—justifiably, I think, on our past experience—that if those interests could get a grip on this industry they would control it and operate it, not so much for the benefit of Western Australia, but more particularly for their own benefit and for the benefit of eastern Australia.

We were careful to make sure that Eastern States interests had no ownership or con-

trol of this industry. They were given no opportunity to become financially interested in the industry. I have no doubt that if we had made this industry available by way of offer to certain big financial groups in eastern Australia, they would have taken the opportunity to grab it, because some of them are very clearly aware of what the industry is and what it is likely to be worth when it is fully developed. We had a great fight against Eastern States interests in order to get the industry where it is today. The bauxite interests in eastern Australia did everything in their power to kill any possibility of this industry being developed.

Mr. Boyle: With a million pounds behind them, too?

THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: They realised that the development of this industry will mean that if alumina for aluminium manufacture is ever to be produced in Australia it will be produced from potash residues at Lake Campion and not from the bauxite deposits in eastern Australia. I assure members that the bauxite interests in eastern Australia had supporters in high places, and those supporters did what they could to prevent a development of any kind at Lake Campion. I give the House the absolute assurance not only that this proposition was not hawked to private financial interests in eastern Australia, but that the State Government had to fight very hard against those influences and interests in an endeavour to have the industry developed at Lake Campion. The success of the industry is absolutely assured for the war period and in my judgment, and that of those who have had most to do with it, is assured after the war.

Mr. Berry: If it only helps during the war, it is not so bad, is it?

THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: If Australia had refused to start new industries during this war because of some doubt about the possibility of their continuing in existence after the war, its war effort would have been a poor and puny thing.

Mr. Patrick: But one, the liquid fuel industry, has been protected. Is this to be protected after the war?

THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: Many have been unprotected. Since the war, millions of pounds have been put into secondary industries to

produce articles required for the war effort. The products of this industry are required indirectly, and some of them directly, in connection with the war effort. If the endeavour of the Commonwealth Government to establish an aluminium-manufacturing industry takes shape, as it is likely to do any day, there will within a short period be a demand, and a strong one, for alumina. We will have alumina in great quantities in the potash residues at Lake Campion. What greater contribution to the war effort could Western Australia make than to have available big supplies of alumina, which is the basic material required for the manufacture of aluminium?

Reference was made by the member for Avon to other by-products which would be of great assistance in connection with the war effort, and which would be a great help to our essential primary industries. I would impress upon members that it is not only the industries which produce munitions that help our war effort. Any product that helps to produce essential foodstuffs and other essential requirements associated with the war effort is an industry of great value, directly and indirectly, to the prosecution of the war effort.

Mr. Doney: That is what we have been trying to tell the House for a long time.

THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: It is true beyond any question that the primary industries of this State are playing a vital part in the war effort by producing the food without which the troops could not exist, and without which the civilian population could not put forward any war effort. The member for Greenough said that we did not issue a sufficiently detailed explanation as to how much per cwt. potash would cost to produce, and how much would be spent on labour costs; on cost of supervision and on the upkeep and maintenance of machinery. He also complained that we did not give an estimate of what profit would be made from each ton of potash produced, and each ton of other products produced. Is it necessary to give the House all these details? We have made an estimate and told the House clearly and plainly the cost at which potash will be produced. That cost has been worked out on the actual cost of production in every detail. We have estimated carefully, as the hon. member could see in his file if he wished, the cost per ton

—the labour cost, the supervision cost, and the maintenance of machinery cost. These costs have been calculated in detail, and on that detailed calculation we have reached the estimated cost per ton at which potash can be produced.

We do not want to impress any private financial interests in this or any other State. We are going into this industry to produce potash. On the careful consideration that has been given to the estimates, we are sure that we can produce it at a certain figure per ton. That is all we want to know at this stage and we know, of course, that the cost per ton at which potash can be produced is one which will enable it to find a ready market not only in Australia but in other countries not far distant. As far back as two years ago, we had inquiries from New Zealand. That country had received some information through the newspapers about an attempt being made in Western Australia to develop the potash industry at Lake Campion. We have had inquiries also from other directions. We feel positive that there will be no difficulty at all, even after the war, in disposing of the products which will come from Lake Campion.

I would point out that the financial side of the industry, so far as the Government and Martin brothers and Mr. Norwood are concerned, has been worked out on the basis of producing and selling potash only. After we have produced potash, we will have all the potash residues containing alumina, sulphur, hydrochloric acid, and the other constituents to which reference has been made. To the extent that we produce by-products, apart from the main one of potash, so will the financial position of the industry be made stronger. We have been careful to give consideration to the value of the potash residues, and the financial strength which will be added to the industry if they are treated for the purpose of producing any by-products. But we have been conservative in basing all our estimates and calculations on the potash side of the industry alone. Because we have been careful and conservative in that regard, we feel there is every prospect of financial success. We know from our investigations that the production of potash alone will provide a measure of financial success sufficient to warrant the continuation of the industry. There is every chance, as mentioned by the member for Avon, that

not only one but several of the by-products will be in great demand within Australia and in countries in close proximity. So we have that great margin of financial safety to support us. I sincerely hope and trust that members will not become pessimistic and unduly worried because they feel it is possible that potash will be produced at a loss. I am sure it will not be produced at a loss either during or after the war.

Hon. N. Keenan: What figure do you put down for your lowest cost of production?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: We place that figure at approximately £11 a ton when the full units of production are established and operating. At that cost of production we feel and know that even after the war, if potash is imported into Australia from overseas at the pre-war rate, we would still be able to compete successfully against those importations. Is it not reasonable to suppose that it will not be possible for many years after the war to import potash from overseas countries at a rate as low as that which ruled immediately before the war? Is it not likely that the cost of production in the producing countries will rise? Is it not certain that the shipping freights between those countries and Australia will increase? Is it not certain that the handling costs at our ports will be much higher than those prevailing before the war? If careful consideration is given to this aspect it must be agreed, on the information available and on a reasonable certainty of what post-war conditions are likely to be, that no potash will be capable of being landed in Australia at anything near a price as low as £12 or £14 per ton.

The member for Greenough also referred to the fact that we aim at producing, with the first unit of equipment, 130 tons of potash per day. He suggested that that quantity would far exceed Australia's pre-war use of potash. That is true. The total imports before the war approximated 12,000 tons.

Mr. Patrick: The average for the last five years was 9,900 tons.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: The total for 1939 was close on 12,000 tons.

Mr. Patrick: In the year quoted in the memorandum the quantity was 10,000 tons.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: Even if the total was

10,000 or 11,000 tons, the hon. member will agree that the use of potash in Australia was increasing year by year because of the greater development of primary industries that needed potash as a fertiliser. I think it is certain that, with the passing of the years the use of potash will, with the natural development of our industries, increase.

Mr. Patrick: You say the production will be 130 tons of potash per day?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: Yes. That is what the first unit of plant will be capable of producing.

Mr. Patrick: I think the member for Avon said 13 tons.

Mr. Boyle: I said 130 tons of alunite would be treated.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: Yes, 130 tons of alunite per day will be treated, but I am dealing with the suggestion that we should not establish a plant that might produce in excess of Australia's requirements.

Mr. Patrick: I do not say that, but not to the extent you propose.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I submit that we should establish a plant capable of producing a good deal more than Australia's pre-war requirements.

Mr. Patrick: Not ten times as much.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: No, but a quantity considerably above. It would be very foolish of the Government and those associated with it to go to the expense of establishing a plant capable of producing an equivalent only of Australia's pre-war requirements, and then find after a year or two that a good deal of additional expense would have to be faced to alter that plant or add to it in a sort of patch-work fashion. It would be better to proceed as we propose to do and ensure that the plant to be established will be easily capable of producing the whole of Australia's requirements, and that we shall be in a position at any time to produce considerably above Australia's requirements.

Mr. Patrick: You would have to increase the plant.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: We might, but we should go ahead on the basis of a plant capable of meeting all demands upon it. For the

first year or two we shall not be in a position to do that, because during the war period we aim at having one-third of the total plant established, which will produce one-third of Australia's total requirements. We are doing that partly because we do not wish at the beginning to put £250,000 into this industry without having had any practical experience of it. I think we are moving carefully and reasonably in this connection. We propose to establish one unit at a cost of £110,000, and its establishment and operation will provide us with all the practical experience we require. If we find, with the passing of time, that it is desirable and necessary to increase the productive capacity of the plant, we shall be in a position to go ahead without delay, even to the extent of trebling the capacity.

I have no doubt that, with actual steps being taken to establish the industry, there will be quite a number of men trying to muscle in on it. We shall probably have applications from all directions—from men who have perhaps walked across the lake at some stage or other, perhaps have camped there for a day or two, and from others who may have held leases for a year or two hoping that something would happen and that they would make a large profit out of selling the leases. No doubt we shall have applications from here, there and everywhere.

Hon. N. Keenan: Does that apply to Chandler?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: No, I am leaving him out of the discussion; we already have a motion on the notice paper dealing with him. His position is somewhat different from that of the other men of whom we have been told. Take the names mentioned by the member for Nelson this afternoon, the three Dunns and Mr. Joseph. What did they do? What was the member for Nelson aiming to tell us they were doing? He said Mr. Joseph met him and told him there were deposits of alunite at Lake Campion which could be developed to produce potash and sulphur. Does that justify anyone in seeking a financial interest in the industry when it is being developed entirely by the Government, with the assistance of three other men who have played a vital practical part in making its development possible? If I had held leases for two years and ascertained what the Mines Department, the

University and the C.S.I.R. had done, would I be entitled to a financial interest in the industry when other men and organisations had been entirely and completely responsible for the actual and practical development of the industry?

Mr. J. H. Smith: But you will not deny that these men wrote to you before the Martin brothers came into it?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I will deny it, and strongly.

Mr. J. H. Smith: They say the opposite.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I do not agree with what they say. The member for Nelson referred to a letter which one of the Dunn's wrote to me on the 16th April, 1941. The Martin brothers approached the Department of Industrial Development at least 12 months before that date. Early in 1940 the syndicate, of which the Martin brothers were the main members in a working sense, had made all necessary arrangements with the University of Western Australia to have their own findings and experiments and research results checked.

Mr. J. H. Smith: That was after those people wrote to you.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: After which people wrote?

Mr. J. H. Smith: Joseph and the Dunns.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: It was not. As a matter of fact the member for Nelson read a copy of a letter which one of the Dunns is supposed to have written to me on the 16th April, 1941. If members will carefully study the memorandum they will see that arrangements were made by the syndicate with the University in April of 1940, 12 months earlier, to carry out all necessary tests and research work that was required to find out for certain whether the smaller tests and the lesser research work done by Martin brothers were along the right lines.

Mr. Patrick: Of course the main trouble is how to treat the stuff.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: Exactly; and the Dunn brothers and Mr. Joseph became interested in it 12 months later, when the University tests had been completed and successful methods of treatment evolved.

Mr. Marshall: Who evolved them, anyhow?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: They were evolved, in the beginning, on a small scale by the Martin brothers, and later sent to the University for the closest possible check and analysis and further testing; and the Government supplied the University with a pilot plant in order that the research work and the tests might be carried out to the last degree of certainty, and that the treatment methods might be proved beyond any doubt.

Hon. N. Keenan: What was the research work carried on by the Martin brothers?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: It covered possible treatment methods, which they had worked out on a laboratory-scale plant.

Hon. N. Keenan: They had a plant?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: They had access to a plant. So if the member for Nedlands thought the Martin brothers had done no technical work at all in regard to treatment processes, he was quite wrong because they in fact did highly valuable work. I am very sorry this afternoon to have heard in this Chamber attempts to depreciate the great value of the work done by these two boys. They are two Western Australian lads, and they have been tremendously keen to get this industry established. They worked night and day for three years, and I consider they are entitled to all the encouragement that Parliament is in a position to give to them. I was particularly careful in the negotiations we had with the syndicate to see that the interests of those boys and the interests of Mr. Norwood were protected, over and above the general interests of the syndicate. That is why to the Martin brothers and Mr. Norwood were given more shares than were offered to the other members of the syndicate. The two Martin brothers and Mr. Norwood were the working members of the syndicate. Therefore from the aspect of developing the industry, or making its development possible, they were the valuable members of the syndicate. The other members of the syndicate were the financial members.

Mr. Marshall: Speculators!

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: The term could be used. And so the Government in its negotiations with the syndicate, over and above the syndicate as a whole, set aside a certain interest in which the Martins and Norwood would

share. Because of the magnificent work done by the Martins and Norwood we agreed that they should receive a special additional interest in the industry. To that we have stood up right through. It would be one of the greatest disappointments of my life if these boys should be deprived of an interest to which they are absolutely entitled. What are they getting out of it all? Up to date they have not received a farthing. And they will not receive a farthing out of this industry unless it succeeds. But if it succeeds, they will get a share of the success in accordance with the proportion of the number of shares they hold to the total number of shares held by the Government and them together. Anyone would think that the Government was handing the Martin brothers and Mr. Norwood handsome cheques which they could cash and make merry with tomorrow.

Hon. N. Keenan: You know that you fixed the price of the shares when you bought out the syndicate?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: Yes.

Hon. N. Keenan: That fixed the price.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: Yes, but the Martin brothers and Norwood cannot go out tomorrow and sell their shares. They are bound to remain in this industry for at least 10 years—absolutely bound to do that.

Mr. Sampson: They might work and get nothing.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: They will be paid for the work they do as officers in the industry; but in respect of all the work they did prior to being employed at Lake Campion, they might finish up by getting nothing for it.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Are they sure of their positions?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: Only if the industry succeeds. Their services could be dispensed with by a week's notice. They have not any agreement or contract with the Government in respect of their employment.

Mr. J. H. Smith: But surely they would get some compensation!

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: Not a farthing!

Mr. J. H. Smith: That would not be fair.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I do not know whether

it would be fair or not. It is the agreement. The Martin brothers and Norwood are so wrapped up in the development of the industry, so keen to see it developed for Western Australia's sake, that they are prepared to take a risk about whether they ever get anything out of the industry beyond the salaries they receive for the services they give. They have worked hard and capably and effectively. The Parliament and the people of Western Australia are indebted to these young men for the work they have done and for the manner in which they have done it. I consider that probably the Government and the State are fortunate to have them in the industry upon the basis on which they have entered it. I am positive we are extremely fortunate to have the benefit of their services as employees of the industry. The Government has made, I think, a very good agreement in this matter. I am not complaining that the Government is not well placed in respect of the agreement. I believe it is. It is entitled to be. Therefore I say that in all the circumstances the Bill now before the House, which contains the agreement made by the Government with these men, is one that warrants the full support of every member of both Houses of this Parliament.

It was suggested that we ought to have brought the agreement here for consideration before it was finalised and signed; but I think most members will agree that had we brought any agreement—not necessarily this one—here for consideration and decision before it was finalised and signed, there probably would never have been any agreement finalised and signed. Instead of being able to say this afternoon that this industry will be in production in March of next year, it probably never would be in production if production depended upon a proposed agreement being brought here and approved by both Houses of Parliament. It might have been possible to induce Parliament to approve of a proposed agreement, but I am certain that when that agreement came to be taken to the parties for signature they would say, "Go to the devil." So the whole matter would have dragged on hopelessly month after month and year after year, without one pennyworth of work being done where we want work to be done, namely, at Lake Campion itself. I regret there has been as much delay as there has been. It has taken a little more than three

years of hard struggling and striving to reach the position we have attained today. We have had to meet difficulties, troubles and discouragement. I have not told the House all about those troubles, but they have been great in number and exceedingly varied and difficult in character. I think we are fortunate to be in the position we are in at the moment, and I trust the House will unanimously agree to the second reading and also pass the Bill through all its stages.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Marshall in the Chair; the Minister for Industrial Development in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Approval and ratification:

Mr. McDONALD: I regret I was unavoidably prevented from being present except towards the end of the Minister's speech. I desire to refer to something which he said and which I think ought not to pass without some comment, and that is the suggestion that the only way—I use his words—was for the agreement to be made first and then presented to the House for endorsement. In other words, the agreement should be made first and then the House should be presented with what is called a fait accompli. I am not saying that in the present circumstances, in view of the war and the demand for these chemicals, the Minister would not be justified in making the agreement first and then referring it to Parliament; but I say emphatically that I regard it as a most dangerous principle that any Government should consider itself entitled to make agreements dealing with an important asset of the State without reference to Parliament. A provision could be inserted in the agreement that it is subject to the ratification of Parliament, and that normally would be the proper course to take: all parties would then understand that the agreement would have no binding force until the approval of Parliament had been obtained. But, if my memory serves me correctly, there is no such clause in this agreement. Nor am I prepared to accept the proposition that an agreement should never be made, or could be made only with the utmost difficulty and delay, if referred to Parliament before it is made.

If the subject-matter of the agreement is one in the interests of the State, the members of this House and of another place are sufficiently responsible to take the view that it should be made, and they are sufficiently responsible to abstain from any objections which are not warranted by the subject-matter of the agreement. As I say, I do not object to this agreement having been made as it has been made, in advance of approval by Parliament. But circumstances are entirely abnormal. Speed is the essence of the contract in the struggle in which we are engaged. But as a principle I wish to say definitely that Parliament should not be agreeable to the making of agreements of a major character involving an important asset of the State in such a way as to bind the Crown before Parliament has an opportunity to express an opinion on them. If we were to take any other view of the matter, we would be doing an injustice to ourselves as members of this Chamber, and our action would greatly discredit us in the eyes of the public as well as in our own estimation.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I have but little to say. What the member for West Perth said may have proper application to certain classes of agreements, but not to this agreement. The circumstances surrounding the situation when this agreement was being drawn were changing from day to day and week to week. If any proposed agreement in respect of this measure had had to be brought to Parliament, it would have been debated here for at least a month or longer, on account of the importance of the industry involved. By the time Parliament had completed its consideration of the agreement, circumstances might have changed completely, as they did on more than one occasion during the 12 months or so while these negotiations were being conducted.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Has Mr. Norwood received any cash in respect of his share in the partnership?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: No. Mr. Norwood is a partner with the Government. He received 23 shares out of a total of 420 shares, but no monetary payment of any kind has been made to him.

Clause put and passed.

Schedule, Preamble, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1942-43.

In Committee of Supply.

Debate resumed from the 10th November; Mr. Marshall in the Chair.

Vote—Agriculture, £94,370 (partly considered):

MR. BERRY (Irwin-Moore) [5.20]: When introducing these Estimates, the Minister expressed a great deal of concern about the ravages of what we assume to be swine fever. I have not yet seen any reference to this disease being under control, though something may have appeared in the Press without my having noticed it. The Minister said the incubation period was 14 days, and that if no fresh cases occurred after that period, we were to assume that the unfortunate visitation had passed. I hope the Minister will give us an assurance to that effect. Another serious problem that the Minister has to face is the manpower problem. I have spoken about that on several occasions and drawn attention to the fact that, with the advent of Japan into the war, we indulged in what might easily be called a form of panic recruitment. We went silly and said that everybody must become a soldier.

Now, we are all agreed that we must have an Army but, in a country with a small population like ours, surely we must have a proper balance. That would apply in any country. We cannot make every one of our seven million people a soldier, nor can we make all the men of military age soldiers, because there is something more in the foundation and construction of an army than the actual soldiers. Those men have to be fed, clothed and equipped, and it behoves us to wake up to that realisation and face up to it, and see that nothing in the nature of unbalanced recruiting by the Army prejudices the very organisation for which the recruitments are made. If our civil organisation is not so built that the Army can be provided with the things I have mentioned, namely equipment and food, very soon we shall have no Army at all. It is incumbent upon us to realise the position and deal effectively with it.

I am not criticising the Minister, who has all my sympathy. He cannot do very much about it; in fact, he can probably do no more than I; that is, stand up and shout, and hope that the winds will waft our advice to the ears of those who should take it. As I have said, we all realise that there must be an Army, but what we are asking for is a balanced Army; one so organised that the personnel will be the most efficient we can produce. That cannot be done by dragging everybody away from primary or secondary industry and saying, "You are a soldier," or by taking away from industry those men who might be described as generals of industry and putting them in the Army as privates. That is not commonsense. I think everybody knows that I was mixed up with the question of obtaining labour for shearing.

We had the utmost difficulty in securing the necessary shearers, and miles of red tape had to be cut through to enable us to get them. However, the job was done, and for the most part shearing has been completed and the wool is on its way down. That is a great achievement. When the problem was first faced by the department, it seemed that we were in Queer-street indeed. There was no labour anywhere. Actually, about 800 men were released from the Army for this work. Now the question arises: What are we going to do about next year? Those men have gone back to the Army, and should that Army move from Western Australia to some other part of the Commonwealth or abroad, this State will completely lose the trained and experienced shearers whose services we were able to utilise last year. I believe—and I hope the Minister does too—that we should make every effort to get from the Army the permanent release of bona fide and experienced shearers, so that that position cannot arise next year.

It is a most important point because, if they are gone next year, no shearing will be possible. I hope the Minister will take up the matter with the Federal authority, and I hope that the Minister for the Army will listen and be guided in that direction. If we took those men permanently from the Army, or even if they were placed in a battalion from which we could draw them when necessary, it would be found, I think, that they would be employed continuously throughout the year. There might be one month during which there would be a slack period, but I do not think the shearers would complain

about that after 11 months of shearing and moving about the State. In no case where a soldier is temporarily released should he suffer any penalty because of such a release. We should see to it that any man who is released for temporary employment in the country should at least receive all the benefits of deferred pay, nor should he be put to any expense in the transitional stage, in passing from the Army to the job. The Army being what it is, that transitional period is a matter of a day or two, and as far as I can gather these men are nobody's baby in that period.

Wheat-carting and harvesting for the coming season is in much the same case as shearing. Labour is short. Fortunately we are given to understand that hay-carting has been accomplished without any very definite appeal to the Army. In fact, I think the Army said it was not going to let us have any more men for that purpose. But the larger problem is at hand, namely the question of the harvest, more particularly the carting of the product from farms to sidings. It is no use asking men to make that carting by motive power which is derived from gas-production. We are assured that they will need three trucks on producer-gas to do the job that two petrol-driven trucks would accomplish. In fact the information I have received from the country on this subject is not an advertisement for producer-gas.

Several men have actually said that they will not undertake any carting contracts if they must do it on producer-gas. It therefore behoves us to realise that if we want the wheat to go into the sidings in a reasonable time, petrol must be provided for the purpose, whether these men have gas-producers or not. I understand that the Liquid Fuel Board is not hostile to that suggestion. My experience of Mr. Millen is that he has always done what he possibly can for the man on the land, and I think he will this time. But that does not prevent me from saying that trucks must be made available, properly equipped, to do this job of wheat-carting in a reasonable time. It is regrettable that one must be forced to the conclusion that producer-gas is so inferior that it will not drag these loads across a sandy or any other type of paddock. If we need the wheat, and I assume we do—we would not otherwise have allowed the farmers to plant it—then

we must pay due regard to the important questions of motor power and liquid fuel.

The next point in which I am interested is this new land army being formed from our womenfolk. I hope we will not make the same mistake with the women available in this country that we did with the men. I trust that the glamour of the advertisements being put over will not encourage all the young people to leave destitute their mothers in the country with the obligation of carrying out alone the domestic duties which have fallen upon them in connection with farm life. In the case of soldier recruitments, we have the sorry spectacle of all the young and fit men being taken away from the farms, and from the industries in the metropolitan area, too, for that matter, and bundled into the Army. If we are going to do the same thing with these women and say, "Come into this wonderful Army where you will wear a wonderful uniform and have a wonderful time, and leave all the elderly people to the duties you have done previously," then we are going to do a grave disservice rather than assist the war effort.

I am in favour of the land army. I know hundreds of jobs that women can do. I know many super-capable women as far as farms are concerned; women who can do almost any job that a man can do, and I hope that any prejudice which farmers may feel towards women in the land army will be dispelled and that their usefulness will be extended beyond the picking of apples, tobacco, and such like. With regard to the recruitment of women for the land army, I noticed in the Press the other day that a magnanimous Government in its intense wisdom was prepared to reduce the cost of the medical examination which these young ladies must undergo to qualify for admission. I found on inquiry that what that advertisement stated was perfectly true—that these women were expected to go before a doctor and pay him a fee. The magnanimity of the Government was such that it was prepared, through arrangements with the medical fraternity, to have the cost of the medical examination reduced to 2s. 6d. That is the lousiest thing I have ever heard! The Government got this medical cost reduced to 2s. 6d., and then said to these women, "Come into a unit that will be pretty hard and not too popular, and pay your own medical fee."

Why, in the name of Heaven, should not the Government have paid that 2s. 6d.? What does it mean to the Government? These are the rotten silly things that we do, and yet we brag about our patriotism and our war effort, but at the same time ask these girls to pay 2s. 6d. in these circumstances!

I am ashamed to admit that that is being done in this State or in Australia! That is a stupidly wicked and heinous thing. I hope the matter is dealt with. If one of my daughters happened to be eligible for this organisation and was asked to pay 2s. 6d., I would not let her go into it, compulsion or otherwise. What does 2s. 6d. mean to a Government capable of taking money, as this one does, for war purposes as fast as a conjuror produces rabbits from a hat? It seems that here is something else imposed on the primary producers. Why do not the girls who join the R.A.A.F. or the A.W.A.S. have to pay 2s. 6d.? Why pick out these people? The farmers are asked to co-operate and we are prepared to do so, but when one turns round and sees this form of co-operation from the Government it is—

Mr. Needham: It is exasperating.

Mr. BERRY: It is damned nonsense! I trust the matter will be looked into. Every time we do anything we form a new committee. I often wonder whether we will not eventually reach the stage when there will be no workers, but everyone sitting on some committee or another. It was decided a little while ago, very wisely, that we should aim at a production goal as far as primary industries are concerned. That should have been done ages ago. It is no use producing anything that is not needed, but it is a great deal of use, seeing that the manpower is available and properly available—not the round-the-corner women idea—to produce those goods which are essential and necessary for the prosecution of the war. In connection with the idea of production goals, we were to have established in the country a series of war agricultural committees. They should have been established months ago. A few have been formed, but many are still to come into existence.

That seems to be another great failing; we are always going to do tomorrow with a great deal of difficulty what we could have done with ease today. I hope the Min-

ister will tell us something about these war committees because I think that we are going to obtain from them a lot of data, detail, information and help which will reflect to the credit of the primary industries. My impression is that they are not in existence yet, at any rate not in numbers sufficient to make their presence felt. The Press announces that 12 committees have been appointed and I have been informed that seven are in existence, and so I cannot say what has been done. I hope the Minister will take this matter in hand.

The question of pay for rural workers is an important one. If ever there was any room for complaint of lack of interest in our primary industries, I think it has been dispelled in the last 12 months. We recognise that Japan has thrown out a challenge to us to feed ourselves or starve. So far the farmers have answered that challenge very well indeed; in fact they have done the best that it was possible for them to do. The Department of Agriculture and the Commonwealth Parliament have awakened to the need for increased production, and we have a Scully scheme which is to guarantee 4s. a bushel for wheat on a bagged basis, and other things have been done all indicating that we are awakening to the need for answering the challenge. Then there was appointed, in collaboration with the Australian Wheatgrowers' Federation, a committee to deal with rates of pay for agricultural workers during the period of the harvest. I believe there is hardly one farmer in Western Australia who is in the least opposed to the granting of fair and proper remuneration to the farm labourer. I am convinced there is no farmer in Western Australia who would not be prepared to provide the farm labourer with the best of accommodation were he able to do so. But the farmers will read the determination of the committee with considerable alarm. It came into force on the 9th November and provided for the following rates—

Stack-builders, 3s. 3d. per hour with keep.
Drivers of binder, header, harvester, and tractor, 2s. 9d. per hour with keep.
Sheaf pitchers, stookers, platform hands; bag sewers for stacking, bag sewers, skewer for silo and all others, 2s. 3d. per hour with keep.

These high rates of pay have been fixed for an industry that cannot pay them. Those wages cannot be paid by the agriculturists under the conditions existing today. The

agriculturists of Australia and probably throughout the world are in a state of insolvency, or perhaps at best semi-insolvency. Our farmers are beginning to say that the Scully scheme, which they were prepared to support, was introduced only with a view to transferring the value of the scheme back to labour. That is going to be a hard contention to answer. I happen to know that Mr. Scully, the accredited author of the Scully scheme, is not responsible for this wage fixation.

Mr. W. Hegney: Would not those men be skilled workers?

Mr. BERRY: Unless the farmers have the money with which to pay, they cannot pay. I am not asking this Chamber to pronounce against those rates; I am asking that the rates remain, but that something concrete be done for the farmers in order that they might be able to pay those rates and have something for themselves. Under existing conditions there are certain farmers on the Agricultural Bank who are receiving approximately 30s a week, and under this scheme they are to be asked to pay to their tractor-drivers, bag-sewers, platform-hands and other labour amounts totalling more than £12 a week.

Mr. Seward: No!

Mr. BERRY: Yes! Those men are to work 48 hours a week. The hon. member should reckon it out for himself, as I have done. The wages come to £10/15/ a week and £1 5s. a week for keep. Yet farmers on 30s a week are asked to pay the fellows who take off the produce £12 a week.

Mr. Hughes: That must be the new order.

Mr. BERRY: The industry cannot pay it. Still, the farmers would be prepared to pay it if the whole problem was tackled correctly. Why not get at this problem through the interest bill? I have occupied a seat in this Chamber for quite a time and have frequently urged that this problem be tackled. That is the only way. The farmers are willing to pay these wages, but they themselves also want wages.

Mr. W. Hegney: How long would the harvest last and those rates have to be paid?

Mr. BERRY: The farmer must be assured that he will have sufficient money to pay those rates. We must not expect the bankers to pay them because they will merely charge the amounts up to the farmers with added interest.

Mr. Fox: Does the harvest extend over a period of more than a month?

Mr. BERRY: Yes; it extends over six or eight weeks.

Mr. W. Hegney: Those rates apply only while the men are working on the harvest.

Mr. BERRY: This determination, I understand, applies only to seasonal labour.

Mr. Seward: No, to permanent hands as well.

Several members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member will address the Chair and members will refrain from interjecting, as interjections are highly disorderly.

Mr. BERRY: After reading the determination very carefully, I understand that it does not apply to permanent farm hands. If a man is a permanent hand and works throughout the year without touching the harvest, he remains on his permanent pay.

Mr. Patrick: What if he touches the harvest?

Mr. BERRY: If he undertakes bag-sewing or other subsidiary work, he immediately comes under these rates. What I am endeavouring to do is to get a proper balance between the farmer and the farm-labourer. Up to date we have had capital fighting labour, and labour getting the worst of it and then awaiting the opportunity to hit back at capital. Where are we all getting to? Labour is hitting back all over the place. We are now having the same trouble as last year. We are not capitalists, although unfortunately Labourites think we are.

Mr. J. Hegney: What is the weekly rate?

Mr. BERRY: About £3 per week.

Mr. Patrick: About £4.

Mr. BERRY: If employees find themselves in keep, they are to be allowed 26s. 6d. per week. Yet when we look into the question of income tax, we find that the rate allowed there for our keep in 15s. per week. Perhaps I have the bull by the wrong foot, but that does seem to me the amount of the allowance. I am allowed 15s. a week for keep, but I have to pay my farm hand 25s. a week for his keep. That is one of the funny things one comes across. I hope the fact will be realised. For my part, I am convinced as to these wages and am in agreement with them, and I know that all the farmers will pay the wages if they can.

But for Heaven's sake, find the means to enable the farmers to pay!

There was an exclamation here a little while ago, on my left, that we farmers were going to receive a great deal more under the Scully scheme; but that scheme is hardly likely to affect labour to any extent. The scheme is one of the clever forms of intense closer settlement. It says, "We will give you £600 approximately for 3,000 bushels of wheat," which is one man's job on one holding, providing he does the work himself. And one man can do it. So that any benefits the Scully scheme may bring in the way of revenue—and I am prepared to admit it brings benefits—would be lost to the man who has to employ labour. He would be no better off. There is no point in any scheme or any system so long as the debt system remains. Labour cannot secure a just reward for what it does in those circumstances, and farmers cannot pay them adequately. I do hope something can be done to remedy the situation. My mind is perfectly at rest with the increase for the farmer. England has agreed to give her farm labourers something more, but the English farmer is in a better position than the Australian farmer. We Australian farmers must be put in a better position in order that we may bring comfort to other people. We also want comfort for ourselves.

We are all much concerned about the matter of exploitation of shearing rates this year. That also is a trouble to be tackled. I have endeavoured to tackle it, but nobody seems very interested in it. The position which arose this year was one whereby a man with a shearing plant was able to black-market the price of shearing. And he did it. He would be on his way to one farmer when another farmer would stop him and promise to give him 5s. per hundred extra.

Mr. J. Hegney: Are such things brought to the notice of the Prices Fixing Commissioner?

Mr. BERRY: Yes. Exactly the same thing takes place with regard to labour. We farmers are prepared to pay a reasonable price for our shearing. I do not think anyone with sheep today loses sight of the fact that because of enhanced cost we have obtained a rise in the price of wool. We know, too, that enhanced cost against us goes equally against the shearer. We are prepared to take a balanced view of the matter. Had

the price been fixed at between 46s. and 50s. per hundred in the agricultural areas, a great service would have been done to all these men.

Mr. Mann: The farmer cannot pay 50s. anyhow!

Mr. BERRY: The matter may be adjusted better next year. If not, we shall have the same bother. The hire of a shearing plant is worth 10s. per 100 sheep. The award rate for shearing is 36s. 3d. That makes a total of 46s. 3d. per hundred. And the farmer keeps these men. From the wages declaration we know that the men are getting 25s. per week additional for keep. If the itinerant shearers travelling with a two or three-stand plant receives a maximum of 50s., he is handsomely treated by the farmer. I believe the majority of farmers would even agree to that rate, in spite of the member for Beverley saying, "No." Today I went on a deputation to the Prices Fixing Commissioner on this point. Members of the deputation said, "We are prepared to pay the award rate plus 10s. for hire of machinery, and throw the tucker in as well."

The thing to do is to fix these prices in such a way that we can take men out fairly and honestly to get a decent return in proportion to what the farmer receives. I have always wanted to see proper dealings between capital and labour, instead of this trouble we have had for years, the capitalist being considered a dirty jobber and the labourer regarded as something to be ground down. Oddly enough, in Malaya we got much nearer to a balance in these matters than we have ever got in Australia. We brought young fellows out from England for agriculture at a certain salary, and at the end of the year they were paid bonuses. Cheques for £400 and £600 were paid to them at the end of the year. Of course in the higher grades the pay was bigger still.

Mr. J. Hegney: What did the labourers get?

Mr. BERRY: Native labourers got well paid also. No native labourer on my property would walk 200 yards. He always drove in a taxi. That is a statement I make here, and am prepared to make anywhere else; but of course I cannot get to Malaya just now. The downtrodden native labourer there was a jolly sight better off than is the labourer in this country. A tremendous asset was lost in Malaya. I under-

stand that the Minister is interested in farming some form of rubber which will grow in this country, and I trust his efforts will prove successful. The ordinary rubber of Malaya will never be grown in Western Australia, except perhaps at Carnarvon. Under irrigation I have seen it grown in Cairns, and there it was very well-developed indeed; but that could not be done in this State.

There is only one other item to which I wish to refer, and I apologise for having taken up so much time. We have done remarkably well in flax-growing, and the Minister is to be congratulated on his efforts in this connection. I understood him to say that 10,000 acres had been planted this year. Some doubt was expressed as to what the value of the industry would be after the war. These doubts could be dispelled, I understand, to a great extent if the fullest possible use were made of all the by-products which come from the retting of this fibre. I believe in Victoria these by-products are receiving great attention. A few days ago I received a letter from an extraordinary man, whose name is unpronounceable. If I may, I will read the letter because I consider it is a good one. The writer says:—

The report of the Flax-growing Commission makes interesting reading. If, in a new flax country like Western Australia, 10,000 acres have yielded 17,000 tons of flaxen straw and this, on retting and scutching, has returned 1,000 tons of fine flax fibre—the raw material of the "fine linen" of Christ's parable of Dives and Lazarus—the experiment is indeed a credit to all concerned. But, alas, there is a sting in its tail. To make flax-growing pay in normal times, the trash as well as the fine fibre has to be used, because 13-16ths of the stalk is always trash. No provision appears to have been made in Western Australia for utilising this trash, but such provision has been made in Victoria, where 40,000 acres have been planted. Flaxen trash is far too bulky to be hauled long distances to be treated, so a plant close to the flax fields and ret plant is necessary. It is graded in a grader and treated with potash, then some of it can be spun and woven into sacks and string. In Bible days, jute was too costly in Palestine to use for sack-making, so sackcloth was always made of flaxen trash treated with wet wood ashes, hence, "sackcloth and ashes."

The Minister for Agriculture: Hence trash, too!

Mr. BERRY: That may be, but this man happens to know something about the subject. His letter continues—

Another grade of flaxen trash is still used to mix with jute to make sacking. Another

again is used to mix with tar and pitch for caulking ships, and for an armouring when making plaster-boards of calcium sulphate. Yet another grade is used when treated with hydrochloric acid for making the grade of alcohol used for synthetic rubber production, and so on.

Of course, we know nothing about synthetic rubber production! The letter continues—

But my point is it must be used and not wasted, otherwise the Western Australian area will go out of cultivation when peace comes, chased out of the market by Victoria and other countries which utilise both the sindon (fine flax fibre) and also the trash. This matter needs attending to by farmers' associations. Moreover, 1,000 tons of fine flaxen fibre would comfortably keep going a small linen mill capable of supplying Western Australia's peace-time needs in linen goods. In a white-labour country, linen (since flax can be machine handled) should be cheaper than cotton, which needs to be hand-picked.

That may be trash, but when a man comes forward with something in his mind which is not in ours, it is not necessarily nonsensical! In other words, if we do not understand and a man is cleverer than we are, we are prone to say he is a fool. I hope the letter will recommend itself to the consideration of the department concerned.

MR. FOX (South Fremantle): I was very interested in the speech of the member for Irwin-Moore, particularly in his remarks with regard to the wages proposed to be paid to farm labourers. That is something out of the common, but we have to remember that farming is a seasonal occupation.

Mr. Doney: Since when?

Mr. FOX: I mean that harvesting is a seasonal occupation. It does not last very long, and consequently the men must be paid the high rate of wages quoted by the member for Irwin-Moore because they are soon out of employment. The high rate of wages is necessary to give the men an opportunity to secure a fair standard of living throughout the whole year. Those wages would not be paid, however, except in war-time. Members representing farming electorates have complained that the farmer is unable to pay wages. I lived in one of the richest farming districts in Victoria.

Mr. Seward: Give us your cost of production.

Mr. FOX: The farmers there were never anxious to pay high wages; they were always the apostles of low wages. One case I remember vividly. There was a rich farmer in that district; when he died he must have

left nearly £50,000. He required a man to do a week's work cutting seed potatoes and offered as wages 17s. 6d. per week and keep. The man applying hung out for £1 a week and his keep, but he did not get the job. The farmer saved the 2s. 6d. a week. That was the type of farmer in my young days. I am not contending at present that farmers generally are able to pay high wages, but I agree with the member for Irwin-Moore that a farm labourer should receive adequate wages, also that farmers should receive an adequate price for their product in order to enable them to pay such wages. Every member of the House will agree to that.

With regard to our potato crop, the member for Murray-Wellington was much concerned as to how it should be dug out. We are all greatly concerned about that. I am wondering whether the growers concerned are doing as much as they should do. Recently, when I was in Victoria I saw a crop the owner of which said would average 17 tons to the acre and he was paying 2s. 6d. per bag for digging the crop out. Other growers were paying 3s. a bag, and the digging was mostly done by men from 50 to 60 and up to 70 years of age. They were doing the work remarkably well.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Our average is better than Victoria's.

Mr. FOX: I question whether it is better than that of the district about which I am speaking. The land is extremely fertile and the production very high. Crops are usually big ones. The prices I quoted were paid for digging from 16 to 20 and up to 25 bags per day. I do not know whether our farmers are prepared to pay more for digging, in view of the price they are receiving for the potatoes. They might be able to induce townspeople to take up this digging work if they offered better pay. They would have a reasonable chance of securing additional labour if they did so. I notice that many conscientious objectors are being sent to prison. That is not the proper place to send them. They should be prepared to do some work. If they are to enjoy the advantages which will accrue to Australia from the efforts of our fighting services, they should be prepared to do something in return.

Mr. Mann: How would you make them work?

Mr. FOX: I do not know whether they have been asked to do this work. I com-

mend the suggestion to the Minister; perhaps he may be able to induce some of them to undertake the work.

With the Minister, I much regret that swine fever has broken out in the metropolitan area. I believe it has spread to some country districts. I do not know how widespread it is, but I know that in the district I represent there are many piggeries and the disease has been very severe there. One man, who had 175 pigs, lost all but 30 in a very short time. That man boiled every particle of food that came on to the farm, yet his pigs got the disease. Another man who did not boil any of his food lost no pigs until about four or five days ago when the disease made itself evident at his farm. He said he believes that the germs were carried by a dog that regularly visited his place to pick up a bone. He did not get any swill from the places from which other people secured it, but got some from the camps. I congratulate the department on the prompt action it took to wipe out the disease. I feel sure that if that action had not been taken the disease would have spread more than it has done.

If it is necessary to kill all the pigs in a district in order to stamp out the disease it is up to the Government to introduce a Bill to give compensation to those people who are deprived of their industry. If the disease is not stamped out it might spread over the whole of Western Australia and do incalculable damage to the entire industry, which has been built up considerably over the last few years. In the district I represent there is often £100,000 worth of bacon in a freezer. In America when this disease breaks out the pig-owner has the option of endeavouring to save as many of the pigs as he possibly can. If that privilege—if it can be called a privilege—is taken from the pig-owner in Western Australia, the Government should be prepared to pay for any loss incurred in wiping out the whole of the pigs. I understand that when the disease appeared on some of the farms, the farmers were given the option of shipping away the pigs that were not infected, but those animals were sold at about half the price for which they would have been sold had the disease not been present. That was because they had to be put through a process where the heat was excessive and would kill any germ that might be present.

Pigs are inspected before they are killed and if anything is wrong they are destroyed, put into a digester and used for manure. Some of the pig-owners in my district complain of the practice that takes place at the Midland Junction markets. They state that when the auctioneer is putting up pigs they are never told who are the owners, and they consider that is wrong. Some unscrupulous sellers when they see a pig sick endeavour to get rid of it on the market as soon as possible, unmindful of the nature of the disease it might have.

[*Mr. J. Hegney took the Chair.*]

The Minister for Agriculture: I would say some foolish producers, too.

Mr. FOX: They may be foolish, but that is what is done. One owner told me that he bought some pigs a couple of years ago which had some disease, and he lost £300 worth of pigs straight away.

Mr. Mann: How long ago was that?

Mr. FOX: Eighteen months ago or two years; it might be a little more. He bought them at Midland Junction markets and ascribes the introduction of the disease into his piggery to the fact that he bought there a pig suffering from the disease. He has not bought a pig there since.

The Minister for Agriculture: That was not swine fever.

Mr. FOX: It might not have been; but just the same it wiped out the whole of his pigs. I was pleased to hear the Minister say he would introduce a Bill to provide compensation for those whose pigs experienced swine fever, and perhaps other diseases as well. When the Bill is brought down I hope it will include a clause that will provide for compensation for this outbreak as well as for future outbreaks. The damage to the individual is far beyond the actual price of the pigs lost, for he is deprived of his living as well. A statutory compensation scheme should include a contribution to a fund by the Government in addition to the money collected from the farmers by way of levy. I suggest that the Minister introduce a Bill to provide compensation for all diseases likely to cause loss of the whole carcase, and not confine it to swine fever. A limit could be placed on the value to be paid for individual pigs. To minimise risk it should be provided that pigs must be kept under good conditions so that disease would be less

likely to occur, and no compensation should be paid unless the pigs were maintained in a proper manner. Some growers have informed me that they do not intend to start under the old conditions. In the past they have collected swill from the military camps and from bacon factories.

Mr. Mann: We should have an Act to prevent swill from being given to pigs.

Mr. FOX: Some men have told me they do not intend to start under those conditions at all. At present it is a departmental instruction that all swill must be boiled. One grower I know carts 1,200 gallons of swill daily to his pig farm. To boil that would be a 24-hour job. I know another man who carts 160 gallons a day. In future they intend to feed their pigs on grain, if possible, and under better conditions, so that they themselves will benefit from an improved system. I do not know whether it would be possible to buy wheat cheaper than at the present time. The cost of producing bacon from pigs fed on wheat might be too great. But they do not intend to feed pigs on swill from the camps or factories. I noticed in the paper this morning that some pig-growers have already refused to take swill, and its disposal is becoming a problem at the camps.

I want to refer now to the conditions under which the onion crop is to be marketed this year. I understand that the Army has entered into contracts with the growers for the supply of 1,100 tons of onions. The usual crop produced in Western Australia is somewhere about 1,400 or 1,500 tons a year, but this year it will be about 1,800 tons. I do not know what is going to be the position if the Army is permitted to go on with its contract. I understand the Onion Board is having inquiries made to see whether the contract is valid. Under the legislation passed in this House a few years ago all onions grown become the property of the board and must go through it. The Onion Board is apprehensive at the present time. Contracts have been made with the growers and the board fears that the onions will be dumped with the military authorities at the one time. If this occurs there will be considerable waste, prices will rise and the people generally will go short. According to the many reports we have had in this House we know that the Army is not overcareful in regard to the supply of

food. I have heard statements to the effect that dozens of loaves of bread have gone out in the swill, and vegetables as well. One report stated that £10 worth of peas went out and were sold in other places where they should not have been sold.

Mr. Thorn: The military people are very careless with their storage.

Mr. FOX: The farmers will be anxious to deliver the onions as soon as possible, if it is valid for the military authorities to make contracts with the growers. It would be better for the crop to go through the board which would regulate the flow on to the market, and the grower would be obliged to keep the onions in good order and condition, and grade them to the satisfaction of the market inspector. There would then be no waste. If, however, the onions are delivered in the way the military people desire this year there will be considerable waste and shortage of onions for the civil population.

Mr. Thorn: Did not the board waive its control a little while ago?

Mr. FOX: No. It commences to function when the main crop comes in. If the military authorities take 1,100 tons out of the estimated crop of 1,800 tons there will not be a great deal left over for the board to deal with. The crop might not total 1,800 tons but only 1,400 or 1,500 tons. I would like the Minister to look into that aspect and see whether he can do something to conserve the food supplies for the civil population.

There is one other matter on which I would like to say a few words, and that is the position of the market gardeners. They are very much concerned at the present time with their position, which is on all fours with that of the farmers. I have been asked to tell the Minister—in fact I sent him a letter I received from a gardener stating that they cannot do much with voluntary organisation. There has been a lot said in the past about compulsory unionism. The market gardeners now want a little bit of compulsory unionism as well.

Mr. Thorn: Is that Mr. Mountjoy's attitude?

Mr. FOX: No, I do not know him and have not seen him. They want a small levy made on all sales in order to help them organise. It is difficult to do any organising unless the organiser has the co-operation of all the members. A few years ago

these people endeavoured to form an onion board on a compulsory basis. It did not function very well and finally went out of existence, although quite a number of them stood by it. The remainder slid out and sold their onions where they should not have been sold. They complain that at the present time they are having a very rough deal. Some vegetables are over-produced. I do not know of any that are under-produced. We should have a system of planned production. The farmers require some such system also. It would be better if all the wheat farms were run by a commission, such as the Harbour Trust Commission, and the farmers put in as managers.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Nationalisation!

Mr. FOX: The same thing could be done with the market gardeners.

Mr. Seward: Who would be in charge of the rainfall?

Mr. FOX: We should have a planned production. We should know what we want and the amount we have, and each person who grows for sale should have a quota.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 6.25 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 21st November, 1942.

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

MOTION—TRAFFIC.

Government Petrol Buses and Stands.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [2.18]: I move—

That the Government is deserving of strong censure for using petrol-driven omnibuses to supplement the transport service to South Perth and Como when the conservation of such fuel is a national necessity and other fuel can be used; and, further, this House ob-