

[Hon. J. Cornell took the Chair.]

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 10 of the principal Act:

Hon. S. W. PARKER: What will be the effect of this clause? It appears to me an error has crept in. The proposal is to extend the period governing the lending of money, the charging of compound interest and so on from 1937 to 1940. What does the clause mean?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: This relates to the prohibition against the charging of compound interest. Any contract made after the passing of the 1937 Act for the lending of money by a money lender is illegal insofar as it provides for the payment of compound interest, or for the rate of interest being increased by reason of any default in the repayment of sums due under the contract. The clause merely extends the operations of that Act to 1940.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: In other words, that which has been illegal during the last three years is now to be made legal. Why not report progress?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: The hon. member has raised an interesting point, and it might be as well that I should inquire into it.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.1 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 20th November, 1940.

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

QUESTION—SUPERANNUATION.

Deductions.

Hon. N. KEENAN asked the Treasurer: 1, Is he aware that the Superannuation Board follows the practice of deducting sixpence out of the two pounds per week paid as superannuation allowance under the Act? 2, Is such deduction made pursuant to any portion of the Income Tax (Rates for Deduction) Act Amendment Act, 1940? 3, If not, under what authority is such deduction made? 4, Will he ensure that the deductions made are certified by the Superannuation Board, so as to enable the pensioner, if so entitled, to recover the payments from the Commissioner for Taxation?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Treasurer) replied: 1, Deductions are not at present being made from superannuation payments under the Superannuation and Family Benefits Act, 1938-1939. 2, Pensioners have been notified that deductions at the rate of 6d. in the £ on payments of 37s. per week or over will be made in pursuance of the Income Tax (Rates for Deduction) Act Amendment Act, 1940, unless certificates of exemption from the Taxation Department are produced. 3, Answered by 1 and 2. 4, Yes.

QUESTION—ENTERTAINMENTS TAX.

Exemption for Patriotic Purposes.

Mr. McDONALD asked the Treasurer: Is it the intention of the Government to amend the Entertainments Tax Assessment Act to give entertainments for patriotic purposes an exemption from that tax, similar to the exemption now allowed to entertainments for philanthropic, religious and charitable purposes?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Treasurer) replied: This exemption is already provided for in Section 9 of the Entertainments Tax Assessment Act, 1925-1930, the exemption being specified as follows:—"Where the Commissioner is satisfied that the whole of the net proceeds of an entertainment are devoted to philanthropic, religious, or charitable purposes, and that the whole of the expenses of the entertainment do not exceed fifty per centum of the receipts." Though not specifically allowed in practice the Taxation Department regards the phrase "Philanthropic or charitable purposes" as covering entertainments which are bona fide for patriotic purposes.

QUESTION—ALUMINIUM.

Production in Australia.

Mr. NORTH asked the Minister for Industrial Development: 1, Is aluminium now being, or about to be, produced in Australia? 2, If so (a) Where? (b) Are Western Australian raw materials involved?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT replied: 1, No. 2, The possibilities of this State's mineral resources, particularly alunite for the production of aluminium, are being investigated, and to further these investigations, the Government has installed a pilot plant at the University.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Municipal Corporations Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Minister for Works.

- 2, Supreme Court Act Amendment.

Introduced by Mr. Marshall.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Native Administration Act Amendment.

Transmitted to the Council.

- 2, Lotteries (Control) Act Amendment.
Passed.

BILL—BUILDERS REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

MOTION—YOUTH EMPLOYMENT.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [4.37]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House the Government should take action to ensure the greater employment of our youth, particularly in the direction of liberalising apprenticeship quotas in the various arbitration awards and agreements, and in regard to extending facilities for vocational and technical training, including lads who may engage in primary production, thus helping to provide for post war conditions and the future welfare of youth.

Mr. Cross: Do you want more cheap labour?

Mr. SAMPSON: I would find it difficult to appraise the value of the labour of the hon. member.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I must ask the member for Canning to keep order.

Mr. SAMPSON: As a matter of fact, labour and the hon. member are far apart.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will address the Chair.

Mr. SAMPSON: The importance of utilising man power is insistent, and it is largely on this sentence that my remarks will be based. Man power is of value if it is trained. Unfortunately, our youth power and our man power are frequently not trained.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Some of it will be casually trained under your motion.

Mr. SAMPSON: Under present conditions. The member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) knows that a large percentage of lads never get an opportunity effectively to learn a trade. I claim it becomes an obligation on the part of every member to do the best he possibly can to improve the present position. Trained man power means that youth has had an oppor-

tunity to gain instruction. He has had an opportunity to learn some skilled calling, and that is what every boy is entitled to. This instruction embraces the requirements of trade and the requirements of work on the land. Many people, unfortunately, regard farm, orchard and garden work as callings that do not require special training, and the result is that the proceeds of the farm, orchard or garden are much lower than—or certainly not of equal value to those obtained—when the youth, in earlier years, has been enabled to learn the principles of cultivation and general farm and orchard practice. A man without a trade cannot carry out a tradesman's work. This is a very serious aspect and is of first importance. Lads should have an opportunity of acquiring knowledge to enable them to do the work of tradesmen.

Mr. Cross: In what trades is there a shortage of skilled labour at present?

Mr. SAMPSON: The hon. member knows nothing about trades or anything else, but his fanatical idea that his interjections will lead some people to attribute wisdom to him brings about a state of affairs that is becoming monotonous.

Mr. Cross: They are better than your fanatical ideas.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will now get back to the motion.

Mr. SAMPSON: A lad who seeks to become a farmer is unlikely to achieve success unless he is properly trained. We have all visited farms and other places where production is carried on and it has at once been apparent whether the person in charge is a trained man or one who works in a slipshod fashion and is unable properly to carry out the work. That class of person might be commended by people who have given no consideration to the matter, but to anyone with a passing thought for the welfare of youth, of men and of the State, the desire must be to see that condition of affairs mended. Rule-of-thumb methods are out of date. So is slipshod work. I do not wish to be personal to the member for Canning, but slipshod thinking and speaking on these subjects are most undesirable. The position is that the manhood of this and other States is in competition with the world, and it is utterly impossible for good results to be obtained if

their competition is not buttressed and supported by training. We should therefore provide opportunities for lads to get training and incidentally make the country safe and the future of youth worth while. It is no exaggeration to say that unless this is done, we cannot develop our territory. The great area contained within the boundaries of the State cannot be developed in any other circumstances. Within the last 12 months or so, we have become more and more impressed with the importance of giving consideration to our youth. War is opening our eyes; we realise the need for trained men. Men who are not trained are of little value; life becomes a burden to them; they are certainly not helpful to the State. Ministers and members alike find in this one of the most difficult problems that await solution.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Are you at the moment supporting or opposing your motion?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. SAMPSON: There is another Daniel come to judgment. The hon. member wishes to know whether I am in favour of the motion I am moving.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Well, you are speaking against it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Swan will address the Chair.

Mr. SAMPSON: Age, I suppose, is responsible for the interjection. The hon. member should be allowed to sit on this side of the House in order that he might hear what is being said. After the war the position will probably be worse than it is now, because many youths and men have gone to the war who, when they return, will be faced with a most difficult position.

Mr. Warner: They will be somewhat trained then.

Mr. SAMPSON: But not in the trades and callings for which the times of peace offer opportunities. Apparently there is an unwritten constitution in this State to the effect that the fewer the boys who have an opportunity to equip themselves for life, the better for the rest of the people. Needless to say, that doctrine is wrong. The member for Guildford-Midland will support that view. Only a limited number of boys are permitted to learn trades. That is an old story. It has been voiced here time after time by various members, but the same state of affairs per-

sists. Yearly the average number of boys to leave school is about 3,000, while girls number about 2,500. I am not bringing girls into my reckoning, although some girls are concerned in learning trades and skilled callings. The average period for which an apprentice is registered is five years. At the 30th September of this year, 1,740 apprentices were registered with the Arbitration Court and, in addition, 231 apprentices were employed at the Railway Workshops, a total of 1,971.

The Minister for Labour: How many were there when your party was in power?

Mr. SAMPSON: I am not handing out bouquets to any Government. Seemingly we have all been neglectful of a plain duty.

Mr. Cross: Were you not a Minister in one Government?

Mr. SAMPSON: I feel that I have a plain duty towards the member for Canning, but the time is inopportune to discharge it. As I said, the aggregate number of apprentices at the 30th September last was 1,971, including 231 at the Midland Junction railway workshops. Now, divided by five that figure would provide for the apprentices coming out each year. The registration period is five years, and a fifth of the number would come out each year.

The Minister for Labour: Why?

Mr. SAMPSON: Because the number of apprentices can fairly be divided by five, five years being the average period of apprenticeship.

The Minister for Labour: You are getting involved now.

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes, I know it is involved. One must think a little sometimes, or one will not be able to follow at all. It means that 395 apprentices or thereabouts would come out as qualified tradesmen each year, assuming that they went through their period of apprenticeship. That figure of 395 represents a fifth of the total number mentioned, 1971.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: What percentage of those who leave school?

Mr. SAMPSON: The number leaving school each year is included, as I have mentioned. With 395 coming out of their time each year, and allowing say 100 for those not formally registered, that would be approximately 500. It means that approximately 2,500 boys depend on dead-end and unskilled work. They are evidently headed for it. There is no alternative.

The Minister for Mines: How many can enter professions or commercial life?

Mr. SAMPSON: Some, but I am taking the boys who at least do not go to the University.

The Minister for Mines: What about the commercial schools? Hundreds of boys are there.

Mr. SAMPSON: To allow 100 would be a fair proposition, so that I may not exaggerate or minimise the number to any extent. There may be a shortage of skilled tradesmen now that we are in the midst of a most devastating war and many of our young men and youths have gone oversea; but what is the position of those who remain, and of those who have gone away, in respect of the neglect of those whose duty it is to see that the young have an opportunity to learn trades?

Mr. Cross: But skilled tradesmen and mechanicians are now more numerous than ever.

Mr. SAMPSON: The hon. member interjecting would not know a skilled tradesman if he saw one. Perhaps later the hon. member may have something to say on this subject, and if that has the effect of dispelling the darkness of his own mind I for one shall be very grateful. I said that there are approximately 2,500 boys headed for unskilled work—a most unattractive future, a hopeless future.

The Minister for Labour: How many?

Mr. SAMPSON: I said 2,500. I have the figure of 3,000 from the Education Department, and I have the figures of apprentices from the statisticians. There is no guess about those figures.

The Minister for Labour: The figures are all right, but your conclusions are appalling.

Mr. SAMPSON: If they have the effect of appalling the Minister, then I am well justified in expressing them, for it is certainly an obligation on the Minister's part to do what he can in order to develop our secondary industries and other work which calls for trained youths.

The Minister for Labour: We want customers for our secondary industries.

Mr. SAMPSON: Unfortunately our secondary industries are mostly carried on in the Eastern States. There the cows are depastured at Bacchus Marsh and other places. We do not even provide our own needs of cream and cheese.

Mr. Cross: We export those products to the East.

Mr. SAMPSON: We do on occasions, but not always. The hon. member interjecting may be an expert on milk, but it is time he was weaned and got on to some harder stuff.

The Minister for Labour: Claremont cocktails!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Swan will address the Chair.

Mr. SAMPSON: Those who have already joined the ranks of the condemned are stepping in the tracks of the relief and sustenance workers. Unfortunately that is only too true. I am not so presumptuous as to blame anyone in particular. We are guilty of grave neglect in regard to the youth and young manhood of Western Australia. It is a shocking thing that a lad born, brought up, and given a good education should, when the time comes for him to need a job, have to deliver milk or bread or wood, or do something which is definitely a dead-end proposition. As for learning a trade, he has but a very small chance.

The Minister for Labour: Who do you suggest should deliver the milk?

Mr. SAMPSON: Older men could do that. I do not believe in a lad spending on the delivery of milk or bread the time he should spend in acquiring a trade. He has opportunities to do the other kind of work simply because it is in existence.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Lads have been used in other trades because those trades are in existence.

Mr. SAMPSON: Not necessarily. I will say something about that aspect in a few minutes.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I hope you will.

Mr. SAMPSON: I hope I will, and I hope the hon. member will treat it on its merits and not give it the unkindly welcome that is suggested by his interjection. The fact that so many of our boys are foredoomed to become sustenance workers, to join that great hopeless army, is apparently not recognised by everybody.

Mr. Fox: There are numbers of tradesmen on sustenance work at the present time.

Mr. SAMPSON: The hon. member is right. But the number of them is less now, and I applaud the Minister for having succeeded in reducing it. However, the times are most unusual, and to have anyone out of work when the country has been at war for over 12 months requires some justification. What is the future of those lads? And what is the future of the lads who went

away without a trade? What is the future of the boys who during the depression period were deprived of any opportunity to acquire trades? And when we ask what is the future of the boys, we should also ask what of Australia's future, and what of Western Australia's future. The position is difficult, but we do not make it easier—rather do we make it more difficult—because of the neglect which is far too general in regard to these lads.

Mr. Cross: Will you guarantee all those apprentices jobs at guaranteed wages when you have trained them?

Mr. SAMPSON: Not being cursed with an overweening conceit, I do not think I could do that; but I assure the hon. member that unless a boy is trained I can guarantee he will become a sustenance worker. If he has no skilled trade or calling, he must in time become a sustenance worker. That is, with the exception of those to whom the Minister for Mines referred, who might become, say, accountants, which is a skilled calling.

Mr. Cross: They might become printers.

Mr. SAMPSON: I will offer a prize to any hon. member who can suggest to me what the hon. member himself would be good for! Many of our boys to-day are the victims of carelessness—or worse. They are victims of what amounts to a conspiracy that deprives them of any possible hope of success. The conspiracy to which I refer is the disinclination on the part of some employers to engage apprentices and a conspiracy on the part of some tradesmen who are so concerned to do everything within their power to prevent others from learning their trades. The policy is shortsighted and is without any justification. It bodes no good for the individual and is fatal to the interests of the State.

The Minister for Mines: Do you know of any factory without its full complement of apprentices under the provisions of the Arbitration Act?

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes, as far as my own office is concerned—

The Minister for Mines: That is not a factory; it is a tin-pot show!

Mr. SAMPSON: Whether the concern be small or large, the phase is symptomatic. I will not deal with that point at the moment.

Mr. Cross: Seriously speaking, what are you trying to tell the House?

Mr. SAMPSON: Some of these boys will go to the country districts where they will become the untrained farmers of the future. I suppose every member of this House has visited various farms, many of which present an appearance indicative of how farming operations should not be carried on. The places are littered with obsolete and wrecked machinery.

Mr. Warner: That is—after you have visited them!

Mr. Patrick: What are you talking about, fruit-flies?

Mr. SAMPSON: That condition applies to small as well as to large farms, and frequently we vote that correct farming practices are not followed. The member for Greenough (Mr. Patrick) may feel that he is not anxious to agree with what I say, but I assure him my statement is quite true.

Mr. Warner: And you are an authority on farming!

Mr. SAMPSON: I was born on a farm.

The Minister for Mines: What part of farming practice is that?

Mr. SAMPSON: Having been born on a farm—

Mr. Patrick: You knew too much to stop on the property.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! And now will the member for Swan address his remarks to the Chair?

Mr. SAMPSON: Lads should be selected for jobs whether in the country or in the city. We should not merely pick out a lad and say that he should make a good blacksmith because he has been overfed. For instance, the member for Canning would not necessarily make a good blacksmith!

Mr. SPEAKER: But the member for Canning is not mentioned in the motion.

Mr. SAMPSON: If a lad is trained his future is practically assured.

The Minister for Labour: What about the law of natural selection?

Mr. SAMPSON: Quite so, and we will go further back to the pre-natal stage and endeavour to ensure that degeneracy that is sometimes apparent shall not become general. Post-war problems will call for wide efforts in many and varying directions. That will be particularly so in the years to come. We shall need builders, stonemasons, and so on.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Is it not more a question of building works?

Mr. SAMPSON: We shall need carpenters, bricklayers, tilers, electricians, and others. All these must be tradesmen. When a commencement is made with the rebuilding of Europe, Australia will be denuded of its builders.

The Minister for Mines: Australia will be there!

Mr. SAMPSON: I know we must build where we can, but in the meantime we should encourage the registration of lads as apprentices to learn the various phases of the building trade.

Mr. Warner: To rebuild the Empire.

Mr. SAMPSON: We lost many of our builders to New Zealand some time back. There may be sufficient builders for our present-day requirements, but our needs to-day are not great.

Mr. Hughes: Speak for yourself.

Mr. SAMPSON: Members will have noticed that the Federal Government has made illegal the construction of any building, the cost of which is over £5,000, unless the approval of the Treasury is first obtained. In addition to those I have mentioned, we shall need geologists, assayers, surveyors, and others—all men who have to be highly trained.

The Minister for Mines: We are turning them out at the School of Mines.

Mr. SAMPSON: That is splendid, and is indeed gratifying to know. When I listened to the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert), I felt that our opportunities with regard to the auriferous portions of the State are not availed of nearly to the extent they should be. As the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) said last night, we have merely scratched the surface of our auriferous belts. There are tremendous opportunities for development in connection with the goldmining industry. There are opportunities for prospectors. If lads are encouraged and are afforded the opportunity to attend the School of Mines, their work later on will materially assist in the State's production of gold. Then we have a wide variety of metals. We have our tinfields and our coalmines. I do not know whether there are any young men in the Collic coalmines. Wherever I have noticed them, they appeared to be elderly men.

Mr. Wilson: They are not all old men.

Mr. SAMPSON: More young men should have opportunities for employment in the mines. Then there is the search for oil. In all these industries there are great possibilities for expansion. The employment of lads who in past years have not had the benefit of the advantages I urge, will be faced with special difficulties. They are not at present able to earn an amount approximating that applicable to their age. In my opinion, it would be a payable proposition if the wages of those lads were subsidised. Such a course would be wiser, better and more statesmanlike, than the present method of sustenance payments and rations.

During the course of the debate some member asked why some factories, foundries or workshops did not obtain the services of all the apprentices allowable under the applicable Arbitration Court awards or industrial agreements. The reason is to be found in the increasing difficulties regarding restrictions. Apprentices suffer interference with their hours of work. I suggest it would do a lad no harm if he were required to spend one night a week at a technical school without the need to upset a number of day workers who may be operating a machine in a factory or a foundry. In view of the restrictions and consequent difficulties that arise, and in view of the fact that efforts are apparently made to discourage the registration of apprentices, there are some employers who are not prepared to look favourably upon the employment of more apprentices. Apparently that tendency amounts to wilful discouragement, the effect of which is to prevent the employment of apprentices. I have said previously, and the remark is worth repeating, that anyone operating under an award or has charge of an undertaking, should be compelled to employ as many apprentices as the appropriate Arbitration Court award or industrial agreement permits.

Some time back a very fine report was presented to the Government by Mr. Justice Wolff in his capacity as a Royal Commissioner appointed to inquire into youth employment and the apprenticeship system. He dealt with his subject in a most able and masterly manner, and I regard the Commissioner's report as a classic. The thought and work put into the compilation of the document amply justify a careful

study of it by anyone interested in the employment of youth. I had proposed to read some extracts from it, but as members have the opportunity to do that for themselves, I shall not pursue my intention. The public generally is much concerned about the present-day situation. People are anxious to help, for they realise that our most valuable asset is our young manhood. There can be no future for the boys or for the State, no future for the industries that the Minister for Industrial Development is so interested in, unless the problem is tackled. Under existing conditions the boys face a hopeless future, and the State will continue to import most of its needs. I wish to pay a tribute to Mr. Murray Little, the newly appointed Director of Education, respecting his efforts in promoting young farmer clubs in the country districts. Mr. Little has shown very great aptitude and enthusiasm for the work. In consequence of what he has done, young farmers' clubs are to be found throughout the State and each is doing very well. The youths belonging to those clubs learn not only how to do the various tasks necessary on a farm, but by the acquirement of knowledge develop a love for the work. Love of work always follows upon capacity to do it. The boy with a knowledge of sheep takes pleasure in dealing with the flock. It is of importance that that phase of the problem shall not be overlooked.

One disability with which we are confronted is the absence of any price organisation affecting our products. That matter should be attended to and rectified. Definite action should be taken to ensure that those on the land secure an adequate price for what they produce.

Mr. Cross: What has that to do with the apprenticeship question?

Mr. SAMPSON: Sometimes I feel that the hon. member is utterly beyond me! I can only refer him to the motion which relates to boys on farms. However, I shall proceed and perhaps have a private session with the hon. member later on.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Canning is not mentioned in the motion.

Mr. SAMPSON: If we have that private session, I shall endeavour to tell him the story as I would to a child. The man on

the land is too often the unpaid serf, the unbranded slave of the community. That language may be considered too harsh, but what I state is a fact.

The Minister for Labour: At any rate, it is second hand.

Mr. SAMPSON: In the country districts there is no minimum rate of wages. What would happen if there were? More lads and young men would go to the rural areas.

The Minister for Mines: Then let us organise.

Mr. SAMPSON: I will lend the Minister a hand, for it is a good idea. One result will be that every man on the land will secure a living wage, which he does not get to-day. I do not believe the man on the land enjoys a living wage in any phase of primary production in these days. How does he get through? That is one of the problems. He does not get through properly. The members of a family adopt the attitude of giving father a hand; but the rate paid to the man who works on the land is never equal to that paid in the city. Why is it that a skilled orchardist or a skilled gardener is not paid the same as an engineer or an oxywelder or any man who does work that does not call for great ability and is no harder than that performed by the man on the land?

Mr. Thorn: The farmer cannot afford to pay.

Mr. SAMPSON: Because there is an absence of price organisation for products throughout the State. Recently I read a newspaper from British Columbia, where minimum prices for products have been fixed. Why should not our people have the same consideration? That would encourage men to remain on the land and lads to go there. At present there is a steady drift to the city and, no matter what is done, to induce people to remain in the country is impossible. If hon. members had an opportunity to go through the country areas they would find shops, service stations, motor engineering establishments and many other shops closed.

The Minister for Labour: You had better speak for Kalamunda only.

Mr. SAMPSON: Kalamunda is so popular that I do not think it has any empty buildings. I am speaking about the towns in the recognised agricultural districts. Members who are acquainted with those

towns will know I am speaking the truth. As for those who do not know anything about the country towns, perhaps it is useless for me to enlighten them.

Mr. Watts: It is time they found out.

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes. The hon. member will endorse what I have said. Wherever one goes in the country districts, he will find plenty of empty shops, houses and, unfortunately, in many centres, plenty of abandoned farms.

The Minister for Labour: How will the motion help that position?

Mr. SAMPSON: It will help if the Minister will help. We will get nowhere in this matter or any other matter unless an endeavour is made to improve conditions.

The Minister for Labour: How will the motion help the position of abandoned farms?

Mr. SAMPSON: We have been passing through abnormal drought conditions, and from that standpoint I will admit there is something in what the Minister has said.

Mr. Patrick: What did he say?

Mr. SAMPSON: He asked if this motion would improve the lot of farmers who had to leave their farms. Every member has heard the remark made in this House that the good farmer will get through on occasions when the man who has not had any training will fail.

The Minister for Labour: I think we need a better marketing system.

Mr. SAMPSON: We have a market for our wheat.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is getting away from the motion.

Mr. SAMPSON: The motion has to do with farming.

Mr. SPEAKER: We are not dealing with the marketing of wheat.

Mr. SAMPSON: As I was saying, British Columbia has secured marketing legislation. That is a comparatively young country. It is a great fruit-producing province of Canada.

Mr. Cross: What has that to do with this motion?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. SAMPSON: How can I possibly make anything clear to the hon. member?

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for Swan had better address the Chair.

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes, Mr. Speaker. In British Columbia, marketing legislation has been made accessible to the primary producers.

Mr. SPEAKER: Does the hon. member intend to connect his remarks with the motion?

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes, Mr. Speaker. If we had organised marketing, there would be more people on the land and they would be able to make a living.

The Minister for Labour: The motion does not deal with organised marketing.

Mr. SAMPSON: I hope the Minister will read the motion again. Outworn systems and ideas and destructive criticism must be abandoned. From the point of view of marketing no European country is more backward than Western Australia. Our marketing methods are antediluvian. They are practically the same to-day as when the first white people came to this country. There is not much difference. So far as orchardists and market gardeners are concerned, the law of the jungle prevails in regard to marketing.

The Minister for Mines: Most European countries have a good market—Hitler's!

Mr. SAMPSON: A change is necessary; indeed, it is long overdue. Chaotic conditions in marketing constitute one phase of the problem dealt with in the motion.

The Minister for Labour: I think those notes you are consulting must have been intended for some other Bill.

Mr. SAMPSON: Those conditions are inevitably linked up with conditions generally. They are significant of a policy that is suicidal to the future of this country. Those of our lads who desire to learn a trade must be given an opportunity to do so. Others must be encouraged to take up farm work. Rule-of-thumb methods are out of date. If I am able to secure the interest of members, and we all make up our minds to do what we can, we shall in time win through and make life in country districts more attractive; so attractive that people will not continue steadily drifting to Perth to live under city conditions, which are not nearly so pleasant as country life. Thus, something valuable will have been done. Without training—in other words, by persistence in the present policy—we will have

continued and increased degeneration, a condition of affairs no country can endure and live.

The Minister for Mines: What is the present policy?

Mr. SAMPSON: There is degeneration when no work is available for a section of our people. They should be given an opportunity to acquire a trade or a skilled calling. They should be encouraged to take up work that will render them comparatively independent and will make all the difference between a hopeless and futile outlook and the satisfaction derived from the building up of a home.

On motion by the Minister for Labour, debate adjourned.

BILL—SALE OF LAND (VENDORS' OBLIGATIONS).

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

BILLS (5)—RETURNED.

- 1, Registration of Firms Act Amendment.
- 2, Optometrists.
With amendments.
- 3, Financial Emergency Act Amendment.
- 4, Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act Continuance.
- 5, Industries Assistance Act Continuance.
Without Amendment.

MOTION—MEMBERS' LUNCHEONS.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford-Midland) [5.28]: I move—

That this House disagrees with the House Committee's decision which interferes with members' privileges of enjoying the light luncheon that has been served for many years in the members' corridor between the hours of noon and 2 p.m.

The motion is very clear, and has been the subject of a good deal of comment since I submitted it. The suggestion has been made that I should not move it, but I am not in the habit of submitting motions just for the sake of speaking. If I think something is wrong, I endeavour to put it

right. The House Committee should not interfere with privileges enjoyed by members for many years, unless there is some development which necessitates a change. I submit there has been no development to justify the action of the committee. Its decision removes a privilege enjoyed by some members for a long time. Public men, particularly members of Parliament, do not get much leisure, and the time when we should enjoy a little respite is that period when the lunch hour arrives. In my life—I suppose that is so in the lives of other members—I often have to devote part of my lunch hour to public duties. When it is possible to enjoy the respite afforded by the lunch period, I know of no place where the atmosphere is more peaceful, or where a rest can be more appreciated, than in the corridors of Parliament House. Those of us who have had the privilege of partaking of a light luncheon under these peaceful conditions have not monopolised the corridor, although we are justified in doing so. We have confined our presence to the one or two tables at the north end of the corridor. Seeing that we have had an arrangement that gives pleasure, and a little respite from our public duties, we should be allowed to continue it, unless we have made a nuisance of ourselves. I have been told that members object to that practice. One member jokingly said, "I do not like to see you eating grass in the corridor." That observation was due to the fact that the light meal we enjoy in the corridor is invariably a salad luncheon. The hon. member from time to time saw members served with a light luncheon, including salad, and it pleased him to refer to it in those words. We have been told that the dining room is available for us. I submit that that room is not available in the sense that the northern portion of the corridor is available. Generally speaking, a three-course meal is served in the dining room.

Some members have tried to justify the House Committee's decision by saying that a table could be provided in the dining room. One is confronted by the fact that the majority of members who go into the dining room do so to enjoy a three-course meal. Several of us prefer not to do that. Why interfere with the arrangement? Why not allow us to have our light luncheon in our own way, at our own time, and in our own peaceful atmosphere? It

is also said that we interfere with visitors. That is not correct. Visitors are invited by members to enter the dining room. It is not right that they should be invited into the corridor to interfere with members. Visitors, however, do go into the corridor. If there is any congestion, I submit it should not be the members who are inconvenienced, but the visitors, if there is any inconvenience. The corridors of Parliament House do not constitute a social centre. It is a centre where, during the active part of parliamentary sittings, business is done. I have used the corridor for years as a place in which to discuss parliamentary business, and in which to confer with members of another place on matters of State concern. It is a place where members congregate. Conveniences are placed there to enable us to have conferences, and during the peaceful period to which I have referred, we should also be able to use that place in our own way, and not be called upon to go into the dining room where the atmosphere is that of a three-course meal. We cannot expect to obtain the same peaceful meal by entering the dining room and associating ourselves with a three-course meal as we can do by having our light repast in the corridor. At this stage I wish to remove an impression that meals and refreshments supplied at Parliament House are supplied free of cost. I should like the Press to make a reference to this matter. Nothing in Parliament House is supplied free of cost.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Except a lot of talk.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: In the dining room, where members get a full-course meal, the charge is 1s. 6d. per head, and for visitors the charge is 2s. If we have a meal in the corridor we pay a charge equal to that which is imposed for a light lunch of that description in any other place. It is just as well, when moving this motion, I should make it clear to the public that whilst we speak of the privileges of members, they are only privileges to enjoy the company of fellow members quietly and free from contact with the general public. We are always before the general public. Of course we want some respite. I am active in public life, but in the many years during which I have been a member of this Chamber, I have been glad to get away for a while during the lunch hour, and to pull off my coat and rest in the summer, or get

into a warm corner in the winter where one can sit and enjoy a respite in a peaceful atmosphere. I do not think we do interfere with visitors. It has been said that visitors have arrived at a time when the alcoves have all been occupied. If they are all occupied, they are either occupied by members who have a right to be there, or occupied because the number of visitors has been out of proportion to the accommodation available.

Those of us who have a light luncheon in the corridor cannot be said to interfere more than to the extent of the two tables at the north end of the corridor. I do not think there was any justification for the decision of the House Committee. I move about amongst members and I have never heard one complaint. Evidently I have offended by having this light luncheon, but no one has told me that he has objected in any way. That the privilege has been enjoyed is evidenced by the number of members who follow the practice of having their lunch in the corridor. I ask the House Committee to reconsider its decision. It is not a question of having an argument on the subject, but surely a member is justified in appealing for a continuation of a privilege he has enjoyed for many years. In my case the privilege has endured for 20 years. Some members have told me the practice is an innovation, but that is not correct. The practice may be said to have been followed practically the whole time that I have been a member. I certainly began it when I realised it was advisable to have a light luncheon if such a meal could sustain my energies and maintain life. The practice has been there and we have enjoyed it. It is a privilege that is not in any way costly to maintain. It is just as convenient to serve members at a table that is really nearer to the servery than is the dining room. The staff cannot be more costly to carry out. When the practice has given pleasure to a number of members, why interfere with it? I do not desire to press the motion, but appeal to the House Committee to reconsider what is really an injustice. We are being sacrificed for some reason that is not apparent, and that is unfair. The decision of the House Committee has grievously annoyed

me, because when I do get a free hour to myself during the lunch period, there is no place where I can make use of the respite with more enjoyment than I can in the corridor of Parliament House. I pay for the privilege just as I would pay anywhere else. It does not matter what I pay elsewhere, I still do not get the same atmosphere that I get in our corridor, and I think the privilege should be maintained.

Mr. DONEY: I formally second the motion.

MR. LAMBERT (Yilgarn-Coolgardie) [5.43]: I am surprised that the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) was able to get a seconder for his motion. No argument has been put up against the action of the Joint House Committee. The only good purpose the motion has served, either with decency or dignity, is that it has drawn the attention of people outside to the fact that members pay for the privileges they enjoy here. No thanks are due to the House Committee or anyone else for that. The hon. member stressed the fact that privileges members have enjoyed for some time are being interfered with. Only recently has the practice developed of members expecting to be served with a light lunch in the corridor. Members, of course, have the right to enjoy whatever lunch best suits them. I have figures in connection with the meals that are served in the dining room and in the corridor. I do not suppose the hon. member would be familiar with them, because he does not participate in any of the privileges given in the corridor more than three or four times a month. If all members deserted the dining room and elected to have their meals in the corridor—

Hon. W. D. Johnson: We could then close the dining room.

Mr. LAMBERT: Then the hon. member would deny the right to others to have a meal in the dining room?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I would not.

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for Guildford-Midland must keep order. He has already addressed the House. The member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie will please address the Chair.

Mr. LAMBERT: I do not agree that the corridor is the proper place for a member to have his lunch. Moreover, if a member desires only a light meal, and he does not

approve of what the House Committee has done, he can go elsewhere. If a member cannot afford to pay the additional sixpence charged in the dining room and there receive additional privileges, it is better that he should go somewhere else. I cannot understand the inconsistency of the member for Guildford-Midland. Only a few weeks ago in this Chamber he rose to great flights of oratory in the indignant protest that he made—and made with considerable vituperation too—against an inoffensive person conducting an open-air refreshment stall on Mounts Bay-road.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is out of order in quoting a debate that took place in the House this session.

Mr. LAMBERT: I am not quoting the debate; I am merely drawing a comparison between his protest of to-day and that of a few weeks back, and I make that comparison with a tinge of pity for the hon. member. I also express surprise at the attitude he adopted on that occasion, a surprise that he should have adopted that course and later entered a protest because the House Committee had seen fit to put an end to the chewing of lettuce and sandwiches in the corridor of Parliament House. Suppose we had the Prime Minister here or some distinguished visitors invited to luncheon at Parliament House and they saw, while walking along the corridor, eight or ten members lolling about eating their sandwiches and lettuce. Would they not be astounded and would they not ask why we could not provide a private dining room?

Mr. Thorn: It is no worse than seeing you lolling around somewhere else.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the member for Toodyay to keep order.

Mr. LAMBERT: That is just about what I would expect from the hon. member. It is just what he would stoop to suggest.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie will address the Chair, and the member for Toodyay will please keep order.

Mr. LAMBERT: I should like to refer to the attendances in the dining-room and the corridor during the luncheon hour for six days, and members will note that there is very little difference in the figures, which are—Dining-room 13, corridor 5; 10 and 5; 10 and 6; 7 and 5; 9 and 5; 9 and 6. So it goes on and the average is about the same. Our controller has to order a con-

siderable quantity of food and catering for Parliament House proves a real problem because sometimes a full meal is provided—and this applies more particularly in the evening—and there is not a full attendance of members. For instance, he may cater for between 60 and 70 in the dining-room and one House adjourns before the tea hour and members make a hurried departure for their homes. Then a considerable quantity of food must be thrown away because it is not consumed. Were it not for the little profit that comes from another place—I am not speaking constitutionally when I mention "another place"—it would be impossible to keep the dining-room open, and members would be deprived of the delicacies that are provided for them.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I do my share there.

Mr. LAMBERT: I daresay the hon. member does but not like the member for Toodyay who spends ten times as much as anyone else there. However, the use or misuse of the canteen is no immediate concern of mine. As members know, the House Committee is elected at the beginning of every session and the members of that committee attend to their duties in an honorary capacity, devoting what little talent they possess to assisting the controller and his wife in attending to the requirements of members. The committee tries to do its best and, in its opinion, it is not right that members should invade the corridor and eat their grass and sandwiches at a time when visitors are here. It is customary for visitors before being entertained at luncheon, to be shown over the premises and it is not an edifying sight to see people lolling about and having a light meal in a place not set apart for it. Then again, if all members followed that course the dining-room would soon be deserted and it might become necessary to close it up. Members who entertain visitors in the dining-room are charged an additional 25 per cent. for that privilege.

Mr. Sampson: No, 33 per cent.

Mr. SPEAKER: That has nothing to do with the motion.

Mr. LAMBERT: I assure the House that the members of the House Committee have the best interests of members generally at heart, but at the same time it is considered

some dignity should be observed and the corridor should not be used as a place for the serving of meals, or developed into a *café de gutter*.

MR. STUBBS (Wagiu) [5.53]: The motion surprised me very much because no one knows better than the hon. member who moved it that if he had been a member of the committee controlling the affairs of Parliament House, he would have been the first to resent a complaint such as that which he has put before the Chamber. The House Committee is appointed at the beginning of each session, as the hon. member knows, and it would have been a simple matter to drop a note to the Chairman of the committee and put the complaint before him instead of wasting public time as the hon. member has done for the last half hour, creating a discussion on a twopenny-halfpenny motion of this character. The hon. member is well aware that he is causing only a waste of time by presenting the motion. It should not be necessary to inform him that whatever the House Committee does, is actuated by one motive only and that is the convenience and comfort of all members. If it were not for the fact that we have a bar on the premises, where refreshments are dispensed, it would be utterly impossible for members to enjoy a three-course meal for 1s. 6d. The House Committee employs a certain staff and at meal times the members of that staff are hard put to it to attend to every call that is made. The House Committee was faced with this position: If some members desired to have a cold luncheon in the corridor between the hours of 1 and 2 it would be quite impossible for the staff to serve those who preferred to patronise the dining-room. I have yet to learn that the hon. member is right in saying that members are forced, under the instruction given by the House Committee recently, to pay 1s. 6d. or that the staff is not to serve luncheon in the corridor between the hours of 1 and 2. What the House Committee did was to issue instructions that a table should be set apart in the dining-room for those who did not want a three-course meal, but who were still satisfied to partake of a light luncheon and be charged the same rate as they paid in the corridor. Surely the hon. member cannot take exception to that, nor can he take exception to members who prefer to have a three-course meal being charged

1s. 6d. If what the House Committee has done is considered by the hon. member to be a hardship, then I am sorry. The House Committee is always prepared to receive any reasonable suggestion or to hear complaints regarding the conduct of that part of the building under its control. I regret that it should be left to the member for Guildford-Midland to waste the time of the House on such a paltry motion, the like of which has never been submitted to Parliament and I hope will never again be brought forward.

MR. THORN (Toodyay) [5.58]: I agree with the hon. member who has just resumed his seat that the motion is trivial and that the only result can be a waste of time. It is no wonder that we are criticised by the public for the work we do in this Chamber when we allow a motion of this description to be debated. I listened with interest to the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) who, as usual, walks into the Chamber, snipes at someone, and then retires to the lounge.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must not reflect on another member.

Mr. THORN: No, Mr. Speaker, I understand; but the hon. member referred to other members lounging and lolling in the corridors eating grass. That is a reflection on members and probably while some of us are sitting in the corridor having light refreshments, the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie is lounging elsewhere. Therefore, he has his lounge as well as the rest of us. As far as my support for the hon. member's lounge is concerned, I admit I appear there occasionally for light refreshments just as the member for Guildford-Midland and other members patronise it. I am in agreement with the action taken by the House Committee and have no complaint whatever to make about it. The Committee has made an improvement in the dining room and any member wishing to have a light luncheon may have it served there. The alteration is an improvement for this additional reason, that accommodation in the corridor is limited and many members take their friends there in order to entertain them. Members bringing their friends should have a place, other than the corridor, where they can have refreshments. Before the alteration, the corridor was occupied by members having light refreshments.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That did not occur.

Mr. THORN: It did. I have seen members bring visitors into the corridor and there has been no place to seat them.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Visitors have occupied the corridor.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. THORN: Not at all. The hon. member is not often here and I am afraid he does not know the true position that existed in the corridor.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I am a good attendant.

Mr. THORN: The House Committee has made a good job. I myself have felt far more comfortable lately when I have been accommodated in the dining room for a light luncheon. When I sat in the corridor, members passed by and made remarks about eating grass or referred to the spring-onion crowd. I appreciate the action taken by the House Committee.

Question put and negatived.

BILL—PROFITEERING PREVENTION ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Second Reading—Defeated.

Debate resumed from the 16th October.

THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [6.3]: There are now before the House two Bills which propose to amend the Profiteering Prevention Act. One is the measure which was explained yesterday, the main object of which is to extend the number of services over which there shall be price control. The second is the measure we are now considering, its main object being to reduce the number of commodities over which control shall be exercised as far as prices are concerned.

Mr. Watts: How does it reduce them?

The **MINISTER FOR LABOUR**: One of the clauses of the Bill seeks to amend the definition of the term "commodity" in the parent Act by stating that the term shall not include certain products, those products being agricultural or pastoral in character. Where agricultural or pastoral products have not passed out of the possession of the person who has grown or produced them, then those products shall no longer come

under the Act and be subject to price control. Therefore, this proposal runs entirely counter to the main purpose for which the Act was introduced. That purpose was to give the fullest possible control over increases in the prices of the widest possible range of commodities. True, in a later part of the Bill it is proposed to give power to control the maximum profit which traders shall be entitled to receive in the distribution of the products; but that, in my opinion, provides little protection for the public. The schedule to the Bill sets out the products which, so long as they have not passed from the possession of the producer, shall be excluded from the operations of the Act. Those products are cattle, sheep, pigs and other stock, the carcasses or dead bodies of such animals when intended for human consumption, meat and chaff. The Bill would therefore allow producers of those commodities the opportunity to obtain the highest prices possible; the producers could, without interference of any kind, charge the highest prices they could obtain.

Let us give some consideration to the commodity of chaff and we will be in a position reasonably to judge how undesirable is this measure. A few weeks ago it was made reasonably plain that this season there would be a shortage of hay. Had October not been a favourable month from a seasonal point of view, it is certain that supplies of chaff would be short during this and next year. If that position had been reached and this Bill had become law, the producers of chaff could have held on to their hay and demanded any price at all for it. The same position could arise with regard to other commodities. It must be remembered too, that farmers in the drought-stricken areas are the main customers for chaff. Farmers in the more favoured districts, such as my own, who would have had hay for sale, could have demanded high prices for it, and those prices would have had to be recovered by means of even higher charges for chaff to farmers in the districts most adversely affected by the drought.

Mr. Seward: How would that apply to meat?

The **MINISTER FOR LABOUR**: Not nearly to the same extent. It would,

however, apply particularly to chaff. Whether it would apply to the same extent to meat or to the other commodities mentioned in the schedule is not, in my opinion, an important point. The all-important point for consideration is that the Bill proposes to remove entirely from control—so far as prices are concerned—the commodities mentioned in the schedule. It is undesirable from every point of view that any attempt should be made to reduce the number of commodities or the number of services that may be controlled under the prices control legislation. If the Act is to be altered, it should be amended in the direction of extending the number of commodities and the number of services that may be brought under such control. I am aware this Bill has been brought down because of an action taken by the Price Fixing Commissioner some months ago with regard to prices that were to be charged for meat of one kind and another. I know it has been asserted that the action then taken by the Commissioner had the effect of reducing the return which producers received for the livestock sent by them to various markets. That is a point which might be debated from now until this time next year, with both sides still holding firmly to their conflicting opinions. If the Price Fixing Commissioner made a mistake in the action he took, in my opinion the only mistake he made—certainly the most serious mistake—was in not consulting representatives of the producers before he took action. I have discussed his action with a number of farmers in my own district; they all assure me that they would have had no complaint at all to make had the Commissioner at the same time taken action to fix minimum as well as maximum prices.

Mr. Patrick: He has no power to do that.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I explained to the farmers who discussed the point with me that the Price Fixing Commissioner had no authority whatever to fix minimum prices. I might explain that when the Act was being framed, we closely investigated the possibility of providing in it for power to fix minimum as well as maximum prices.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I was dealing with the fixation of minimum as well as maximum prices, and had pointed out that it is not constitutionally possible to take power under State Acts of Parliament to fix minimum prices. An attempt to take such power under a State Act and any attempt subsequently to use that power would be regarded as an interference with the free movement of trade. Professor Copland, the Commonwealth Commissioner of Prices, was in Perth a few days ago. During his visit I took the opportunity of discussing with him the possibility of something being done under Commonwealth regulations to obtain power to fix minimum prices. He told me that consideration had been given to the matter and that regulations had been framed under the National Security Act to obtain power to fix minimum prices for certain primary commodities. Therefore there seems to be every likelihood that minimum prices will be declared for certain farm products in the near future.

The Minister for Lands, when the position regarding chaff supplies was considered to be developing in an acute way, called a conference of representatives of the interests involved. The question of having a minimum price as well as a maximum price for hay was discussed. The Minister undertook to have inquiries made to ascertain whether power could be obtained to fix a minimum as well as a maximum price. The Hon. G. B. Wood, M.L.C., who introduced this Bill in the Legislative Council, was present at the conference, and I understood he gave an assurance that he would be pleased to withdraw this Bill if power could be obtained to fix a minimum price along the lines suggested by the Minister at the conference. The Minister for Lands ascertained that no such power could be obtained by action in this Parliament but, as I have mentioned, the Commonwealth Commissioner of Prices will obtain power under Commonwealth regulations to fix minimum as well as maximum prices for farm products.

Mr. Warner: To operate during the war period only?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The National Security Act is the law under which the regulations will be issued. I am not quite sure whether that Act is to operate only for the duration of the war and a

short period thereafter, but the regulations would continue operative so long as the Act under which they were issued remained upon the statute-book.

Speaking for myself, I think it a great pity that power does not exist to give price-fixing authorities in every State the legal right to fix minimum as well as maximum prices for all classes of goods. If that power was available, it would be very useful, and would be of advantage not only to consumers but also to traders and manufacturers. This Bill was introduced, I think, mainly because of the strong feeling that had been engendered following the action of the State Commissioner of Prices in the arrangements made for a maximum price to be charged for meat. As I mentioned earlier, the wisdom or otherwise of his action could be debated for days, months and years, without altering the opinion of those who consider the action of the commissioner was wise or the opinion of those who consider that his action was unwise or even worse. However, this Bill does not pronounce upon the wisdom or otherwise of the commissioner's action. If it did, the Bill would not be regarded by the Government nearly as seriously as it is. The measure proposes seriously to reduce the scope of our prices control legislation. Because it proposes to do that, the Government is very strongly opposed to it, and hopes that members of this House will bring about the defeat of the Bill at the second reading stage.

Members should bear in mind that primary producers are protected in the matter of the prices they have to pay for goods. They are protected by the State Profiteering Prevention Act and by the Commonwealth system of prices control. They cannot reasonably expect to have all the benefits of prices control in the matter of the goods they buy and, at the same time, expect to have the goods they produce entirely exempted from prices control if the necessity for control arises. I have instanced how the necessity could arise to control the products of a farmer in connection with a commodity like chaff. Instances could be quoted of other primary products. It is not difficult to conceive that the supply of potatoes available in an unfavourable season would be so short as to make it possible, if not easy, for the supplies to be held back in such a way as to force prices

sky-high. The producers who had potatoes for sale could hold on to them and demand the most exorbitant price imaginable. Neither the Commissioner of Prices nor any other authority could take any action to fix the prices at which the potatoes should be made available. If this Bill became law, the Commissioner of Prices could step in only when some individual or firm had purchased potatoes at the price demanded by the producer. The Bill would then give the commissioner the right to declare the maximum amount of profit that the individual or firm would be entitled to receive in distributing the potatoes to some other trader or to the consumers. Members will appreciate, therefore, that while this Bill has the appearance of giving the consumers some protection, it will in fact give them no protection at all. If the measure was passed and the conditions were such as to enable farmers in favoured districts to demand £15 a ton for hay, that price would have to be paid by those who needed hay, and the Commissioner of Prices could take no action in relation to the price demanded, but when someone, through necessity, had paid £15 a ton for hay, the commissioner could then step in and say that the person, in reselling the commodity either in the form of hay or of chaff, would be limited to a certain percentage of profit in the re-sale transaction.

Mr. Watts: What would be wrong with that?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Nothing at all, except that prior to that transaction, the Bill would place the producer in the position of being able to demand and receive any price he cared to name.

Mr. Patrick: That price does not seem likely.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Certainly not at present. Had the conditions of six weeks ago continued—I am referring to the dry weather—I think there would have been a chance of that position continuing. What would happen regarding chaff under the conditions I have explained could happen in regard to potatoes and quite a number of other commodities. So I say this Bill leaves the consumers entirely unprotected as to whether they shall pay an exorbitant price for the commodities with which the Bill seeks to deal. What is

the protection to the consumer worth when there is no control over the price that may be demanded and received by the person who sells the goods in the first instance? That is where the exorbitant price could easily develop if conditions were favourable to an exorbitant price being demanded and received, and if the conditions were favourable to an exorbitant price being demanded and received, the commissioner could say to the person who first bought the goods, "You paid an altogether exorbitant price for the hay, potatoes, or other commodity, but I propose to give the consumers some slight protection by limiting the amount of profit you may make in re-selling those commodities to some other trader or to the consumers direct." But the consumers would still be in the position of paying an altogether exorbitant price for the supply of goods available to them. If the farmers desire to receive, in regard to the things they buy, that protection which this Act gives to them, they should have no serious objection to having the same system applied, when considered necessary, to the goods they have to sell to other people. I hope, therefore, that members of this House will give the most careful consideration to the Bill. A casual reading of the measure might give an impression that there is not much wrong with it, and that it has much to recommend it, and even that it might be desirable; but once members come to study the Bill closely, once they come to understand exactly what is involved in it, and what the position would be if the Bill were to become law, I think there will not be much support for the measure.

I have dealt with the main principles of the Bill. Outside of those principles there is little if anything contained in it that requires attention. In my opinion, if the person responsible for the introduction of the measure into the Legislative Council had not been so stirred up at the time, he would not have acted as hastily as he did in bringing the measure forward. No doubt he felt that the circumstances of the time were such as to justify him in the action he took. The fact that he gave an assurance, at the conference I mentioned, to the effect that he would gladly withdraw the Bill if power could be obtained to fix minimum as well as maximum prices, indicates, I think, that he is not really anxious to achieve what the

Bill would bring about, but is perhaps more anxious to administer a rebuke to the Price Fixing Commissioner in respect of the action that officer took as to meat prices at the time that action was taken. When the measure was being debated in another place, one member there—I think it was Mr. Baxter—

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minister may not refer to a speech made in another place.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: May I be permitted to say that I read in the "West Australian" some few weeks ago a statement attributed to a member of the Legislative Council which suggested that the Minister concerned knew of the action that was to be taken by the Price Fixing Commissioner as to meat, and approved of it before it was taken. I refer to that statement only because it was altogether inaccurate. There is no truth whatever in it, because, as it happened, the Minister concerned was at the time unfortunately an inmate of a private hospital at Midland Junction. I have explained the principles and the contents of the Bill, as I understand them, at some length, in order that members should have an opportunity to grasp just what the measure contains.

Mr. Stubbs: And why it should not go into the waste paper basket.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I explained just what effect the Bill would have if it became law, in order that members might have an opportunity to know that there are two sides to the case covered by the measure. I again appeal to members to reject the Bill, because I feel that it will take away from the consumers a protection they should have against profiteering, and because it is extremely doubtful whether the Bill, if enacted, would confer much in the way of benefits upon the primary producers of Western Australia.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [7.52]: On general principles I do not favour legislation of the character contained in the Bill. When we have on the statute-book legislation dealing with a subject like profiteering, it is proper that the legislation should apply generally to all the people engaged in trade and to all sections engaged in selling commodities. I feel, however, that I am justified in treating this measure as an exception to the general rule. I have fol-

lowed the remarks of the Minister for Labour, and I fully comprehend that there are two sides to the question of the desirability of a measure such as that now before the House. The question of the sale of chaff, which is now to be permitted at the price fixed by the producer without any interference by the Price Fixing Commissioner, is something which may react to the prejudice of the farmers themselves—to the detriment of a class perhaps least able to meet any price beyond what is a fair price. On the other hand, the Bill is brought down by representatives of the farmers; and if they accept the responsibility of bringing it before the House on behalf of the farmers, then I am prepared on this occasion to assume that the farmers desire legislation of this character and are prepared to accept any risks which are involved so far as they are concerned. I feel that there is not much likelihood for the time being of any profiteering by those engaged in the farming industry. There may be isolated cases; but taking it by and large, I do not think there is much chance of primary producers for some time to come gaining such huge profits that the matter becomes a scandal in the community. In fact, it would be a highly pleasing circumstance in this case if our primary producers arrived at that stage when their profit was so large that it would be proper for the State to step in on behalf of the rest of the public and compel the primary producers to reduce their demands to something which accorded with a more reasonable remuneration for their services. When that day arrives it will be a happy day for Western Australia, not in the sense that the primary producers should be allowed to continue to profiteer, but in the sense that they had arrived at a stage where primary industry was so profitable that it brought profits so great as to compel the State to step in and limit the prices to be charged. So I feel that there is no great danger in this Bill for the time being, and that if the primary producers, who are now passing through an extremely difficult period, consider that they will be safeguarded to some extent by this particular Bill, then it would not be unreasonable to grant them that much consolation and that much satisfaction. They have to take the bad times, and in the past those times have been very much in the majority. If by this Bill pri-

mary producers feel they can take advantage a little oftener of an occasional good time, then the passing of it may encourage them to continue to carry on an industry which is of the highest importance to the State, particularly at a time like the present.

I regard the Bill as of a tentative character. I was interested to hear the Minister's remarks as to minimum prices. In my opinion, the minimum price is necessary in connection with any legislation fixing maximum prices. I know the constitutional difficulty, but I believe that it is not so great as has been thought. Even in State legislation with regard to a number of transactions where commodities are produced and sold inside the State, it may on investigation be found by the Minister's legal advisers that it would not be unconstitutional to fix a minimum price by State legislation.

Mr. Patrick: It has been done by individuals.

Mr. McDONALD: It has been done in the past by associations of manufacturers and traders.

Mr. Patrick: By binding retailers not to sell below a certain margin.

Mr. McDONALD: Price-fixing agreements by associations of traders, which have operated in the past, are very much suspect at the present time, in view of existing legislation both State and Federal. But I wish to regard this Bill as legislation of a provisional character, as one which might not unreasonably be accepted by the House until such time as the fixation of minimum prices for primary products has been explored and put on a proper basis. If the farmers, by reason of a minimum price, can be saved the fluctuations in the market which sometimes have meant very great hardship to them, if we can extend to them a minimum price while we demand that they accept the obligation of the maximum price, then I think they may be called upon reasonably to come under the same price-fixing legislation as other sections of the community. In the meantime, pending examination of the application to primary producers of the main principles of the Act, and until such time as the profits of primary producers become so great as to demand the interposition of

some State authority, my feeling is that the Bill, as an encouragement to primary producers in the very difficult period through which they are passing, might well be allowed to enter the statute-book as a provisional measure; that is, I repeat, until the position of the primary producers and their prices has been further examined and some means found by which price-fixing legislation can be fairly applied to the industries of the primary producers.

MR. WATTS (Katanning—in reply) [7.59]: Before I address myself to the objections to the Bill which have been made by the Minister for Labour, I propose to deal with the point he mentioned in regard to an alleged undertaking of the sponsor of the Bill in another House to withdraw the Bill, an undertaking which the Minister stated had been given at a conference with the Minister for Lands. I am aware that a reference to that effect appeared in the report of the conference published in the "West Australian" newspaper; I am also aware, and of my own knowledge, of the actual circumstances in which that conference took place. Mr. Wood, who was referred to, went to the conference with the Minister and within an hour of his return and at least 16 hours before the "West Australian" was published, informed me that he had agreed to delete the word "chaff" from the Bill if the Minister would arrange for the introduction of legislation fixing a minimum price. That is the statement made by Mr. Wood within an hour of the conference and before the report appeared in the "West Australian."

Mr. Patrick: And the statement was quite correct, too.

Mr. WATTS: Members who were there—I was not present—can confirm that statement. Therefore I claim quite conclusively that there was no undertaking whatever to withdraw the Bill, so far as Mr. Wood was personally concerned. The Minister, when dealing with the Bill, apparently took his principal objection to that portion which says that a commodity as defined by the Act was "not to include any agricultural or pastoral product so long as such product is in the ownership or possession of the grower or producer thereof and has not passed into the ownership of another person." From his reading of that provision the Minister drew a somewhat

painful picture of what might happen regarding products which the farmer had for sale, but had decided to hold on to pending some substantial rise in the market and then, having profiteered to the utmost extent possible, to allow that product to be sold to some retailer who would be permitted to charge some maximum profit, which profit was to be based, as calculated, if the Bill were allowed to be passed with that provision, on the tremendous price obtained at the outset. To reason along such lines in the light of the circumstances of the last 10 years and, in the light of circumstances attaching to agriculture during the last 25 years, is, to my mind, utterly ridiculous. There has been no occasion in the last 10 years when any primary producer has been able to secure an excessive price for his commodity, just as in the last 10 years he has received nothing like £15 a ton for his chaff. Such worries are merely problematical and the Minister knows that only too well.

The Minister for Labour: There have been at least two seasons in the last 10 years.

Mr. WATTS: With chaff at £15 a ton?

The Minister for Labour: No, not that price.

Mr. WATTS: Nor a price anything like that figure. The position is that the prices received when the products grown by the primary producer have been sold in recent years, have been extremely low.

The Minister for Labour: Chaff was imported from South Australia during one season.

Mr. WATTS: Yes, in 1914.

The Minister for Labour: No, much more recently than that.

Mr. WATTS: If the Minister will allow me to come to that point in due course, I will remind him that the importation of chaff cannot be prevented and the circumstances that the Minister suggested, so far as I can see, could not arise unless the price of chaff elsewhere in Australia was in the vicinity of the figure suggested in this State. The Minister knows as well as I do that if chaff in Western Australia was at a certain figure and chaff was half that price in South Australia, means would have been found for securing supplies from the neighbouring State, and there is nothing we could do to prevent that course being adopted because of Section 92 of the Federal Constitution. The provision in Clause 2 of the Bill is

to be found in legislation passed in one other State. As a matter of fact, I have been seeking for the exact Act, but for the moment cannot trace it. At the time the Bill was prepared, I saw the Act and from that measure the clause in question was largely extracted. It is not unreasonable that the product of a primary producer when in his hands and not disposed of to any other person should not be subject to the provisions of the Profiteering Prevention Act—firstly because there is little, if any evidence, available of profiteering and, secondly, because there is little chance of it happening in this State at the present time. What I want to do—this furnishes the reason why I believe members on the Opposition side of the House are in favour of the Bill, including the clause under discussion—is to give the primary producer a reasonable opportunity to gain a price that is commensurate with his cost of production which, as I explained when moving the second reading of the Bill, is very frequently increased by causes quite outside his control and on which the recent action of the Price Fixing Commissioner prevented him from receiving any profit whatsoever. That action caused a great deal of concern amongst primary producers, and substantial losses as well, at a time when they had been put to great expense in preparing their commodities for market and had expected to benefit from the increase in price occasioned by partial scarcity—and that price was to be realised at public auction. I remind members that agricultural and pastoral products extend not only to chaff, but to many other items such as beef and mutton when alive and grown on those pastoral and agricultural areas. In another place, not only those who belong to the party with which I have the honour to be associated strongly supported the measure, but those other members who realised the position of other sections of the primary producers. They appreciated that the interests of producers in the other districts would be jeopardised if this or somewhat similar legislation was not placed on the statute book. So I have no hesitation in telling the Minister that there is nothing unfair or unreasonable or likely to be damaging to the public arising from the retention of the clause in the Bill. On the other hand something will be gained by that section of the primary producers likely to be covered by the Bill in that they will secure an opportunity at times of

showing profits on transactions, which has occurred on all too rare occasions in recent years. So I suggest that that particular portion of the Bill contains nothing about which the Minister need worry.

Turning to the next section of the Minister's observations, we find that he took some objection apparently to the provision enabling the vendors to the consumer to get the benefit of the maximum margin of profit on the price paid for the product. Those profits are fixed before the product goes into public consumption. I cannot for the life of me see what objection can be raised to the proposal. When I moved the second reading of the Bill I said I was quite in favour of the application of the Profiteering Prevention Act. I recognised that it was necessary, through a variety of reasons, that the Price Fixing Commissioner should have an opportunity to restrict excess profits. I pointed out the reason for the percentage idea included in the Bill was that the price of many of the commodities, many of which are sold at auction, must naturally fluctuate and therefore if we fixed the percentage basis, the fluctuation would be taken care of in the profits. If an article were bought for £1 and the profit was fixed at 25 per cent. gross, the article could be sold at 25s. If it were bought at £2, the commissioner might think that 25 per cent. profit was too much and that it should be fixed at 20 per cent. or even 15 per cent.

The Minister for Labour: The Commissioner already has that power.

Mr. WATTS: The provision in the Bill will give him power to act accordingly.

The Minister for Labour: But he already has that power.

Mr. WATTS: I remind the Minister that under Section 14. of the principal Act—this is another reason why agricultural products still in the hands of the producer should be excluded from the application of the Act—the commissioner is entitled to demand that anyone who holds a commodity—unless the Bill is passed, that provision will remain—must sell any reasonable quantity required by the commissioner. Is it reasonable that the primary producer, be he farmer or pastoralist, should be obliged, by order of the commissioner, to sell sheep if he does not desire to do so because, in his opinion, the market will be unprofitable in view of the

cost he has incurred in order to bring the sheep to a stage at which they are marketable? Is it reasonable that he should be obliged to sell hay or chaff that he considers he will require for his stock and in respect of which he will have no guarantee that he will be able to secure feed for them? Yet, in the face of the action of the commissioner, which is consequent upon the wording of the Act, the primary producer will not have any safeguard. So we ask the House to say—I approve strongly of the sentiments expressed by the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald)—that for the time being we should see how this proposed legislation will work. We ask the House to agree that the product of a primary producer shall not be classified as a product so long as it remains on the farm.

Mr. Berry: How would that influence the minimum price? Would it have any effect?

Mr. WATTS: I cannot say that it would. I am not prepared to go into the question of the minimum charge at this stage. The last advice I received was that it was impracticable. In consequence of that, the question of the minimum price, so far as I am concerned, was not further discussed. I say quite definitely that the action of the Price Fixing Commissioner taken once without consulting the producer, may easily be repeated with regard to other lines. If that is so, we do not know what the effect will be on the primary producer. When I moved the second reading of the Bill, I instanced the calculation by a graph indicating what took place regarding the prices of livestock at the Midland Junction sales. With regard to livestock, those sales represent the basis upon which the Commissioner, under the Bill, would actually fix the percentage of profit. Therefore, as I pointed out, it was impossible to do other than work on a percentage basis because of the obvious fluctuations that always take place in prices so arrived at. Then again, the percentage of calculations is to apply only to the commodities that are mentioned in the schedule. It is admitted that, under the Bill, until any agricultural product of any kind leaves the property of the farmer, the Act does not apply to it because it is not a commodity. As soon as it does leave the property of the farmer and becomes the property of someone else, then it becomes subject to the margin of profit,

which is referred to in the Bill, as only applying to those things referred to in the schedule, which are "cattle, sheep, pigs and other stock, the carcasses and dead bodies of such animals when intended for human consumption," together with meat and chaff. It is only then that the Commissioner will be expected under this method, to fix prices for sale to the public. In regard to those items mentioned, the maximum marginal profit basis will apply.

For the reasons I have given, both in introducing the measure and a few moments ago, I again contend it is in the interests of the primary producers, the people most concerned—the pastoralists and the farmers—that the measure should be passed, because the provisions of the Act will continue to apply to everything that comes off the farm once it passes out of the farmer's possession, and there will be no question of a maximum margin of profit. The declared price as it stands in the Act will continue to apply. So we narrow the measure down to two things: First—and I think I have given strong reasons why this is reasonable—that the farmer's commodities shall not be commodities under the Act so long as they remain his property; and secondly, that when they leave his property—if they are the items mentioned in the schedule—they will be subject to the declared margin of profit in lieu of the declared price: but so far as the consumers are concerned there will still be regulation of prices. If they are not the items mentioned in the schedule, if they are any other commodities, they will remain subject to the Act. In those circumstances, I cannot for the life of me see what are the strong objections to this measure, what are the reasons actuating the responsible officers of the Government in being so opposed to the Bill, as the Minister gave me to understand they were. Nor can I see how any member of this House who is interested in or whose interest lies in the direction of those engaged in the pastoral or the agricultural industry, can consider himself justified in disposing of the measure at the second reading. I contend that in the interests of the people I have mentioned, the second reading should be carried. It may be possible to improve the Bill in Committee, but that is another story. I hope the second reading will be agreed to.

Question put and a division taken with the following result:—

| | | | | | |
|------------------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Ayes | .. | .. | .. | .. | 16 |
| Noes | .. | .. | .. | .. | 18 |
| | | | | | — |
| Majority against | .. | .. | .. | .. | 2 |
| | | | | | — |

AYES.

| | |
|---------------------|--------------|
| Mr. Abbott | Mr. Sampson |
| Mr. Berry | Mr. Seward |
| Mr. Boyle | Mr. Shearn |
| Mrs. Cardell-Oliver | Mr. Thorn |
| Mr. Hill | Mr. Warner |
| Mr. Keenan | Mr. Watts |
| Mr. McDonald | Mr. Willmott |
| Mr. McLarty | Mr. Doney |

(Teller.)

NOES.

| | |
|---------------|--------------------|
| Mr. Coverley | Mr. Millington |
| Mr. Cross | Mr. Nulsen |
| Mr. Fox | Mr. Panton |
| Mr. Hawke | Mr. Raphael |
| Mr. W. Hegney | Mr. Rodoreda |
| Mr. Johnson | Mr. F. C. L. Smith |
| Mr. Lambert | Mr. Triet |
| Mr. Leahy | Mr. Withers |
| Mr. Marshall | Mr. Witson |

(Teller.)

PAIRS.

| AYES. | NOES. |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Mr. Mann | Mr. Cotter |
| Mr. J. H. Smith | Mr. Holman |
| Mr. North | Mr. Styants |
| Mr. Stubbs | Mr. Tonkin |
| Mr. Patrick | Mr. Wise |
| Mr. Latham | Mr. Willcock |

Question thus negatived.

Bill defeated.

RESOLUTION—RURAL RELIEF.

To Inquire by Joint Committee.

Message from the Council now considered requesting the Assembly's concurrence in the following resolution:—

That a joint committee consisting of three members of each House be appointed to inquire into and report upon such measures as may be necessary and/or desirable to relieve those engaged in the rural industry from their present financial handicaps and problems.

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [8.20]: I move—

That the Council's resolution be agreed to. The question involved in the message from the Legislative Council is this: that a joint committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon the financial difficulties and problems of those engaged in rural industry. It does not seem to me necessary to enter into a long discussion as to what those difficulties and problems are. A good deal has been said in this House in the last few months, and indeed in the last few years,

concerning the difficulties and problems of those engaged in rural industry. A number of suggestions have been made—mostly, be it noted, by private members—as to how those difficulties might be solved. At various times some interesting measures have been before both Houses of Parliament designed to alleviate to some extent the difficulties to which I have referred. Those proposals might not have been the most satisfactory that the brain of man could evolve, but they were at least bona fide efforts to do something in a set of circumstances recognised as being very difficult. They have received some measure of support recently—and, I think, fairly strong support, too—in the report of the Surveyor-General who was appointed a Royal Commissioner on the pastoral industry. In regard to that industry it appears that there are strong grounds for saying that there should be an adjustment and/or cancellation of the excess debts of those engaged in it. From time to time we have endeavoured to establish here that the same arguments apply to those engaged in rural industries. We have pointed out that in many instances the liabilities existing on farming properties are greater than the value of the assets upon which they are secured. We have explained—and I think established the fact—that while the liabilities were incurred at a time when values were fairly high, those liabilities have been increased by the inability to pay interest and the compounding of that interest, and that the decline in the value of those properties has taken place, broadly speaking, through circumstances over which neither party had control. Unfortunately, whatever the reason, the decline has occurred and to-day in many instances the liabilities existing, including the compounding of interest, have increased beyond the value of the security on which the liabilities are secured. That is one aspect of the question.

There are, of course, other aspects. There are the liabilities that are not secured, but still remain as unsecured debts, and I presume the resolution intends to take them into consideration. Also covered by the resolution, are, I presume, debts owing to the Crown. But whatever the ground that can be covered by the proposal for an inquiry into rural difficulties and financial handi-

caps and problems, the resolution has been carried in another place. It was carried after very careful consideration and a good deal of debate, and in consequence of the fact that it has passed the Chamber, the resolution should receive more favourable consideration even than one which might owe its birth to this House. I admit it asks for a joint committee and that from that aspect it comes to the Chamber a little late in the session. That, however, is hardly the fault of those who produced it in another place, approximately three months ago, and had it sent down to this House something over a month ago. Unfortunately it could not be discussed here until to-day. I mention this in order that I may not be told that it is too late for us to have a joint committee appointed this session. I suggest it would be practicable—and I ask the Government to give sympathetic consideration to this suggestion—to appoint a joint committee of both Houses and subsequently to turn that committee into an honorary Royal Commission as was done, if I remember rightly, in another case a few years ago. That honorary Royal Commission, at very little cost, produced a report of tremendous value which unfortunately has not yet been acted upon to any great extent.

I submit that the situation is such that if we cannot persuade the Parliament of this State to carry legislation, we must inquire as to what ought to be done in lieu of that legislation. It may be possible to arrive at good results and substantially improve upon the legislation previously offered to Parliament. In any event, it is vitally necessary that we should find some means of alleviating the position that exists. If Western Australia is to continue to make any progress, I contend—and I do not think many members of this House will disagree with the contention—that its agricultural industries must be able to take their proper share in the economics of the State. At present they are not able to do so. In many instances degradation and unhappiness exist in agricultural districts, degradation and unhappiness requiring the closest attention of those purporting to represent the people of this country in this Parliament. If they are not prepared to give that attention and consideration to those difficulties, I venture to say that the consequences will before very long be disastrous for this State. I do not think we can expect a sub-

stantial proportion of those engaged in the agricultural industry to continue to be engaged therein unless they can see their way to some hope of solvency, which hope many of them do not possess at the present time. Looking around the country, I see a proportion of men engaged in farming who, despite their many difficulties, are still moderately happy. I can see a few who are satisfied, but I see many more, by far the most substantial proportion, who are not in the least contented, and have nothing to make them so. As I have indicated, their position has arisen not through causes of their own making. I have no time for the man who does not try, for the man who has established himself as being hopelessly inefficient, but for those people who after many years of hardship have had to become evacuees from their properties, I have the greatest sympathy. But the people who are left on the land are entitled to the utmost consideration that can be given to them. Because I think that their difficulties are evident, that the solution is not so evident but must be found, I ask the House to agree to the motion and have the joint committee appointed. If the committee cannot complete its labours under our Standing Orders as a joint committee, I ask the Government to be good enough to convert it into a Royal Commission, so that if possible a period may be put to the state of doubt and difficulty that has occurred in the primary producing industries, and that some definite and co-operative effort may be the means of placing the agricultural industry once more upon as sound a financial footing as it is ever likely to be.

On motion by the Minister for Works, debate adjourned.

MOTION—COMMONWEALTH GRANTS COMMISSION.

Advances for Developmental Works.

Debate resumed from the 23rd October on the following motion by Mr. North (Claremont):—

That in the opinion of this House the powers of the Commonwealth Grants Commission should be enlarged to include the making of recommendations to the Loan Council for advances for the construction of developmental works; and that this motion be transmitted to the Federal Government for its concurrence.

MR. SHEARN (Maylands) [8.32]: I do not think any member imagines that the member for Claremont (Mr. North) was not sincere when he moved this motion. I find it difficult to believe, however, that any good result would be achieved by passing it. I am also uncertain whether if we agree to the motion we might not be conceding some portion of our already too slender control over State affairs. When listening to the remarks of the Premier on this question I felt impressed, despite all the difficulties, by the cumbersome methods and other aspects associated with them, by the work done by our representatives at the Loan Council, and by the efficiency of the more recently constituted system under a works Co-ordinator-General, and the appointment of State representatives working on behalf of and representing the various States. All those things that the hon. member had in mind could surely be dealt with without jeopardising those principles which this State, through its Government for the time being, should most strenuously maintain. I hope I shall be permitted to mention as an illustration the growing tendency which appears to have arisen in the industrial States of Australia to take over the remaining control of State Parliaments. This was evidenced by reports appearing recently in the Press to the effect that a large and representative body in New South Wales had carried unanimously a motion advocating the abolition of State Parliaments. That does not occasion any surprise when one reflects upon the fact that New South Wales is not only in close proximity to the other States, but has a population out of all comparison with that of this State, and has representation in the Federal Parliament that cannot be compared with the representation from Western Australia. For these and many other reasons, that State has nothing to lose by the carrying of such a motion. We have to take into consideration the relative remoteness of Western Australia from the rest of the Commonwealth. We have an immense territory to develop, and difficult conditions to contend with in relation to industry. It is, therefore very necessary that we should be careful, when any attempt is made at a later stage further to develop this State, lest we lose control of the slender grip we yet have upon its affairs.

The member for Claremont suggested that big public works could be carried out through the Commonwealth Grants Commission. Every member appreciates the difficult task that commission has to perform, both in the interests of the Commonwealth and of the States generally. At the same time we have to be sensible of the fact that that body was elected for a specific purpose. I do not think it was ever contemplated that it would undertake works such as are suggested in the motion before the House. Its appointment rests with the Federal Government, and to that Government it is alone responsible. It does not appear on the surface to be practicable to suggest that the Grants Commission would either have the qualifications or that, in view of the very definite scope of activity allotted to it, it would find it practicable to supervise the major expenditure incurred either in this or any other State. As the Premier pointed out, a number of works have been undertaken in Western Australia that, viewed in a cold commercial sense, would not appeal to a body directly concerned with obtaining immediate results. In the development of Western Australia, the Government of the day is called upon in the interests of industry and the State at large to undertake a number of different works. Like the Premier, I have grave doubts whether, if we agreed to the motion, a number of the works specified by him would ever have been undertaken. One could imagine that similar conditions would apply to a number of other projects we have in mind. In effect there is danger that we would be stultifying our efforts to develop the State if we handed such undertakings over to the Grants Commission, were that a practicable proposition. I readily agree with the member for Claremont that for many years Western Australia's difficulties have not been fully appreciated in certain quarters. We have been expected to develop vast resources with but a sparse population. Because of the Federal policy over a number of years, Western Australia has suffered disadvantages not experienced by the other States.

Hon. C. G. Latham: South Australia obtains a bigger disabilities grant than does this State.

MR. SHEARN: That is so. South Australia enjoys the tremendous advantage of

being much nearer to the highly industrialised States of New South Wales and Victoria. It is able to compete under much more favourable conditions than is Western Australia. That is proved to a great extent by the fact that South Australian goods are being dumped on our goldfields in competition with locally manufactured goods, and put there at a lower cost because of South Australia's greater volume of production. By means of this greater production, South Australia is able, despite the disadvantage of freights, to place articles within our own markets in competition with our own industries. Whilst the line of action suggested by the hon. member is, I think, impracticable, at least the motion gives the House the opportunity once more to register its apprehension concerning the position in regard to centralisation that has been developing for many years, and is still acute to-day, not only because of the difficulty associated with overseas markets for our primary products but because of the outlook as a result of seasonal conditions. I listened to the resume of the Minister for Labour the other night. He told us of the investigations that were taking place in relation to potential industries and the development of industry generally, and said he was devoting himself entirely to all aspects of the development of secondary industries. Whether those subjects dealt with by the member for Claremont be a matter for general concern to the Federal and State Governments, or whether they be essentially State matters or Federal matters, I consider that the Minister and his officers are the people who, through the Premier or some other approximate channel, should make all the necessary representations and suggest such steps as may be necessary and practicable to bring the claims of this State for a proper share in the decentralisation of Australia's industries before the Federal authorities. By that means we shall be able to keep some grip upon what is going on. We would have a much more sympathetic and workable approach to the matter than if we operated through a body whose duties were solely concerned with finance. Furthermore, we would not be risking the possibility which appears to exist in the project put forward, of handing over some portion of an all-too-meagre control which this State has upon its own affairs. For these and other reasons I do not think the motion is a practicable

one. I believe we can through the Minister and his department take all the steps necessary to see that every opportunity is seized to ensure that Western Australia shall not only get a greater distribution of the general industrial development of Australia, but a fairer distribution of the huge Federal war expenditure, a much greater volume of which could be incurred in this State than has been evidenced in the past. For these reasons I shall have to oppose the motion.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [8.45]: The member for Claremont (Mr. North) has drawn attention to something which may well engage the attention of the members of the House and the Government. I see no great difficulty in the Grants Commission being allowed or encouraged to suggest means by which the industries and the activities of Western Australia may be enlarged. The Grants Commission has done a fine piece of work; we all admit that. After all, though, the members of that commission seem to have been mainly concerned in the past to keep the ship of State off the rocks. Cannot they also turn their attention to piloting the ship of State into more prosperous seas, where we shall receive greater advantages than hitherto and also a fair share of the industries which belong to the whole continent? The Grants Commission's work is negative, and the idea of the mover is to make it positive as well as negative; to give it a more positive side. The Commissioners come across every year and investigate with the utmost care the position of the State. I see no reason why they should not say to the Commonwealth, "This State of Western Australia has an immense deposit of iron ore. Now, in our opinion it should be Commonwealth policy that part of the manufacture of steel should be by means of ore obtained from Western Australia, in the interests of the whole Commonwealth."

After all, the Federal Government can do what it pleases; and by virtue of the orders it gives, especially in war time, it can exercise a great deal of influence over the industries, and over the location of the various industries, of the Commonwealth. There seems no insuperable objection to the Grants Commission not only saying what we do wrong but also what we ought to do that is right. That is something which is concerning the whole of the people. The

Minister for Labour is doing a great deal; but if we get behind him, and if we organise opinion throughout the Commonwealth by means of recommendations by the Grants Commission, then the Minister, who is our chief commercial traveller, may find his business extending beyond anything he dreams of at present. I would not be prepared to ignore any agency which may tell the people of Australia that the Commonwealth's true interests, and the best interests of all the Australian people, will be best served by seeing that the economic structure of Australia is built up through this State having an adequate population and having secondary industries. So I think the member for Claremont has touched on a very vital aspect of the position of Western Australia. A State is like a business. It may become in need of some highly energetic and enterprising direction. If we can assist to get that, if we can enlist the influences which the Grants Commission can very properly exercise, then by all means let us take advantage of it. But at any rate the idea behind the motion is that we should, by any agency we can, extend and expedite our move for some share in the war expenditure; and to that end that carrying of the motion is most desirable.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [8.50]: If we examine the work of the Loan Council, I think we shall find that on application being made by the Treasurer of the State consideration is given to the things mentioned in the motion. I do not think the members of the Grants Commission would be qualified to do what the motion suggests. We must all regard the work of the Loan Council entirely from the angle that it operates, made up by a representative of each State with the Federal Treasurer. It could only authorise its experts to do the work and then report their recommendations to the Loan Council. I do not know whether the hon. member will agree with me, but in my opinion, if the potentialities of the State justified the expenditure of capital, if it were proved that those potentialities were attractive securities, undoubtedly a good deal of money would be furnished for investment here. I am very reluctant to surrender the right of the individual. Just recently we had the Minister for Mines telling us about a large area of land taken up by a company for the

purpose of prospecting for oil. For that purpose evidently money is forthcoming. We appear to have a tremendous amount of other mineral wealth lying dormant. The only reason why it is lying dormant is that we cannot obtain a market for it; or, more accurately, not a profitable market. In the Kimberleys we have great mineral wealth situated a long way from the coast, the cost of getting it there consequently being very high. I do not think that just now it would be advisable for us to investigate these things too fully; but immediately after the termination of the war we shall have to seek avenues of employment for our people, and to my mind there is no better means of doing that than to absorb them in industry. There is, naturally, no means of telling what international relations will be after the war, and whether other nations will require our raw materials. But that may give us another chance.

Recently I expressed the wish that we should do something with Yampi Sound. I suggested that to the House because I believe there is to-day an opportunity to market our iron ore. Probably we would find some sale for it even in America, and certainly to a considerable extent in the Old Country. In fact, we might even start smelting works in Western Australia, though perhaps only in a small way. I am desirous of ascertaining what can be done in that direction. When the member for Claremont moved the motion he expressed in clear language his desire that the Grants Commission should do this work of investigation, and that the Federal Government should be asked to carry out the wishes of this House. That, in my opinion, would be unwise. We have our representatives attending meetings of the Loan Council, where the money would be found for that purpose. The Grants Commissioners are men more, I should say, of actuarial experience, who go very carefully into accounts; and therefore I do not think they would have the necessary qualifications for the work suggested by the member for Claremont. Nevertheless, I hold that everything we can do in the direction suggested by the hon. member it would be wise to do. I should like to see the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research get out into the open. At present no doubt that body is busily employed in seeing what can be

done in secondary industry. A great deal of its attention has latterly been directed to Australia's primary industry, and now it will no doubt direct its attention to ascertaining whether we can establish facilities for manufacturing in Western Australia the goods we have been importing. But the demand of the Federal Treasurer is that we should cease manufacturing goods that our people can really do without, and should turn our attention to the manufacture of articles that really are essential for the safety of our population. While I do not like to disappoint the member for Claremont, whose ideas I consider very sound, I still hold that the motion is one that I cannot possibly support. By asking the Federal Government to have this work of investigation done by the Grants Commission, we should be doing a great injustice to Western Australia, because the Commissioners are fully employed now with the three States to which grants are being made, and at the same time are investigating the welfare of the contributory States towards removing the disabilities of the other States. Therefore I regret that I cannot support the motion, not on account of its object, but from the aspect of its advisableness.

HON. N. KEENAN (Nedlands) [8.58]: Before the mover replies, I would like to point out that his object in bringing forward the motion was to draw the attention of this House to the necessity for making some effort to obtain balanced economy in Western Australia, especially in our industrial sphere. It is not, of course, to-day that the matter is of such vital importance, because a large number, especially in Western Australia, will leave for military duties abroad. It is not at the present time that this matter will be urgent. But even to-day, with the drain that the army has made on the population of Western Australia, there is evident in this State a want of industrial balance in our social economy. Every Australian State except Western Australia to some extent has that balance. South Australia is making magnificent strides in that direction, in the different works that have been opened there since the war began, particularly the Whyalla works, which are very large and important and no doubt will absorb numbers of South Australia's industrial popu-

lation. But here in Western Australia we are absolutely stagnant. We have been stagnant on the industrial side, except in one industry, mining, and in the pastoral and wheat-growing industries. The member for Claremont (Mr. North) desires to get some body constituted to investigate that question and to direct the attention of the Commonwealth Government to the necessity for interference in order to bring about a satisfactory solution. It is absurd to imagine we could successfully attract sufficient capital here to cure this defect, at all events within a limit of time that it is possible to look forward to as being reasonable. It is equally absurd to imagine that any Government of Western Australia could launch out on an industrial career on its own, as was suggested by the Treasurer. If such a calamity did happen, it would mean the immediate bankruptcy of our State. What this motion really drives at, what it means, is that the Grants Commission should be converted into a tribunal to investigate the problem of our industrial development and to recommend the Commonwealth to take steps necessary to bring about that development. From the point of view of the Commonwealth—if the world in future is to be what the prophets foretell, a world in which our people must be strong enough to hold what they have—then it will be absolutely necessary for the population of Western Australia to be largely increased. For the safety of Australia as a whole, for the safety of Sydney, for the safety of Melbourne, it would be necessary to have a much larger and more virile white population than we have to-day. That can only be brought about by increasing industrial development in this State, and so I regret that no address was made on this motion except by the Treasurer, because it is a vital question.

It may be suggested that the particular body selected by the member for Claremont is not the most apt body to undertake this work: but the only reason he selected that body is because it is the only one in existence. The C.S.I.R. conducts investigations in a very narrow field; really its work is mostly of a research character, dealing with inventions and problems that arise in industry. Such problems require careful study by men specially trained for the

purpose. The council is not concerned, and never could be concerned, with the establishment of industries, all the working conditions of which are fixed and known. But the Grants Commission has grown up from a body that was never intended to be a Grants Commission at all. When it was first appointed in 1925 it was not a grants commission, but a commission to examine the disabilities from which Western Australia was suffering as a consequence of entering into Federation and to determine how those disabilities could be met. This is one of the disabilities, the fact that we have not to-day—and have no hope of securing to-day—the establishment on a large scale of many industries which the Eastern States at present enjoy as the result of Federation. That is because we cannot compete with Eastern States products, which are free to enter here. Had we remained what we were—an entirely independent State—we could have erected our own barriers and developed within our own boundaries the industries that have been established in the Eastern States as a result of the barriers erected by the Commonwealth. This is not an attempt to discuss the merits or demerits of secession, nor is it possible for one moment to contemplate, in the present state of the world, any agitation for secession; but the member for Claremont simply wants some attempt made to deal beforehand with problems certain to arise when the war is over and our young men return. He wants those problems to be dealt with by the only body capable of dealing with them, that is, the Grants Commission, which really is a body to adjust, on some kind of balance which it has created for itself, the revenues of the State. The revenue of the Commonwealth is partly contributed to by ourselves. That point seems to be forgotten on many occasions, so that what we receive on the recommendation of the Grants Commission is part of our own contribution towards the revenue of the Commonwealth. South Australia receives in the same way a certain sum, part of which it also contributes; Tasmania also. That is done in an endeavour to balance what, owing to the advantages or disadvantages of Federation, has grown up in the nature of things in the industries which have been developed in the other States. The member for Claremont has taken a wise, proper and patriotic step in asking this House to address itself to the problems dealt with by his motion. He sug-

gests that the House should ask the Commonwealth Government to confer such powers upon the Grants Commission as are necessary to enable it to conduct a proper inquiry. Admittedly, the commission has not got those powers to-day. Admittedly, also, the commission cannot, as at present constituted, do anything in the matter. But this motion, if carried, would be a prayer to the Commonwealth Government to increase the scope and the powers of the Grants Commission and so enable it to deal effectually with what is necessary to be done, and particularly necessary in view of what we all hope may arrive soon, the conclusion of the war.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. H. Millington—Mt. Hawthorn) [9.9]: All I wish to point out is that the Grants Commission is certainly not the right body to conduct the proposed inquiry and make recommendations. The member for Netherlands (Hon. N. Keenan) has managed to raise the debate on this motion to a high plane. The motion, however, is completely wrong, although its objective is right. The mover suggests that the Grants Commission should make the inquiry, but we have no say in the constitution of that body, which has a duty that is Australia-wide. I presume the member for Claremont (Mr. North) desires to focus particular attention on Western Australian industries. That is something the Grants Commission would not do. It is formed to take into consideration the financial position of the three claimant States and to deal entirely with Government grants. It is a sort of business doctor to control the Treasurers of the claimant States in their expenditure of State money, to examine proposed works and generally to compare the claimant States with the other States contributing to the Commonwealth revenue. For instance, if the Commission were making inquiries into special developmental work—whatever that may be; it may mean State developmental work or it may refer to the development of industries—it might be that after making a complete examination Western Australia's case would be left out of the picture altogether. Therefore, before we recommend that any body should undertake this work, let us be sure that it has got the Western Australian viewpoint. Before we could make sure of that, we would require some say in the appointment of the mem-

bers of the commission. We have no say whatever in the appointment of the members of the Grants Commission. The commission does not take the same view that we take of our developmental works. It criticised severely our irrigation works, pointing out that from a Treasury point of view they are disastrous. We are aware of that. We know a serious loss will be suffered for many years; yet we considered such work justifiable. But the commission, as a business doctor, wants to know why we undertake work that at present has no hope of paying interest and sinking fund on the money invested. We ought to secure some body to make the inquiry which has sympathy for the State and whose business it would be to conserve our interests. What happened as far as the Loan Council is concerned is that a Co-ordinator General of Works has been appointed to act in conjunction with the Co-ordinator of Works of each State with regard to works which the State's representatives suggest should be carried out. Mr. Tindale is Co-ordinator of Works in this State; he is also Director of Works. The works proposals are placed before Sir Harry Brown, the Co-ordinator General, who decides whether or not they are justified as post-war work. I had a few minutes' talk with Sir Harry Brown when he visited this State recently. He favours for the future such works as water supplies. He also favours small farms; he considers there is a great prospect in this State for the development of such farms.

Mr. Raphael: Did he discuss the new causeway?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: He did not discuss matters as intimate as that.

Hon. N. Keenan: What is the definition of a small farm?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That definition would depend upon the district. A small farm in the North-West would be 100,000 acres, I understand; but a small farm at Wanneroo would consist perhaps of only two acres. I know of instances where two men can get a living from two acres. So the definition depends on the district, rainfall, and many other factors. I suppose Sir Harry Brown's idea is that when our men return there should be an opportunity to place them, and so enable them to earn their living independently. I certainly object to this House or this Parliament suggesting that the Grants Com-

mission should have this extended power. I do not think we would agree that it should have the power it already possesses. Possibly, with another party in power in the Federal sphere, there would be a change. I think the present Leader of the Federal Opposition suggests that the Grants Commission should make a stipulated grant for a number of years so that the Treasurers would know what they had to depend upon, instead of the catch-as-catch-can method under which the Grants Commission tries to justify itself by taking evidence each year as to the position of the claimant States. Thus things might be altered, and instead of the Grants Commission being glorified, it might find itself out of its present job. I think the Commission has a great difficulty in justifying its existence to-day.

Mr. Raphael: Yes, with George Pearce on it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Therefore, it makes itself important by taking evidence each year and going over the same ground. Having decided upon the sum we shall get, the Commission then sets up a formula so that that sum will be realised. I am positive that, before any evidence is taken, the members of the Grants Commission have just about made up their minds as to what amount each State shall receive. At any rate, that is how it appears to me. I am not going to glorify the Grants Commission. We cannot afford to fall out with it, but I do not propose to give it more important work to do, and I would not trust it to do the proposed job.

MR. NORTH (Claremont—in reply) [9.17]: I am very pleased at the reception given to the motion. The more it has been opposed, the more pleased I have been. The motion has been brought forward, not with any particular desire that its specific wording should be adopted by this Chamber, which after all may mean little or nothing, but in order to challenge the whole system of State grants as applying to Western Australia. Such a system might be quite practicable and applicable to a State or States fully developed and so hopeless in their outlook for the future that they cannot carry on but must be supported by the central Government; but when we have a State like Western Australia and the other claimant States, all of which have latent

assets almost undeveloped, it is childish to expect those States to tolerate a system under which they would be financed if they were good boys, as it were, and provided they conformed to certain specifications, many of which are crippling.

As members who supported the motion have said, Western Australia and the other claimant States have undeveloped resources to a tremendous extent, and those who have spoken somewhat critically of the Grants Commission have in a sense made out the case that I endeavoured to make. I am not at all wedded to the idea that the Grants Commission should have the powers asked for, but the Commission, as the member for Nedlands said, is in existence, and if the sense of this House on the motion reaches the Commonwealth Government, it should at once appreciate the need for appointing someone who is not hostile to Western Australia, but who is imbued with the idea of opening up the backward States and bringing them into line with the more highly developed States.

What is the motive behind the motion apart from the economic question involved? It is that we as a State are almost defenceless in our present situation, and we cannot, as some economists have expressed it, expect to lift ourselves by the bootstraps. We have to look to the combined efforts of Australia to get us out of the unpopulated position in which we exist to-day. I would support a policy by the Commonwealth Government that might not be economic in the theoretical, financial or accounting sense, provided it had the effect of starting industries here that would bring an increase in our sparse population. In its own interests the central Government has to face the cost of defending Western Australia, and that cost is rendered immeasurably larger by reason of the present sparsity of our industry and population.

If the Grants Commission was given this power, it would, I trust, be compelled under new terms to alter its harassing attitude, which only embarrasses the various Governments. The Commission would then be able to see why it was necessary to finance Western Australia and why the existing assets were not being developed. There is no reason on earth why an expert member should not be added to the Commission for this particular part of the Commission's

duty. The present duties would continue as at present, but the proposed increased duties would be carried out under the powers and observation of some new officer specially appointed for the task. In any event, I am quite satisfied to have raised the question, and I am grateful to the various speakers for their contributions. Every member approves of the suggestion that this State, in common with the other claimant States, needs a large, definite central-government policy of development, quite apart from the ordinary annual loan expenditure for ordinary annual loan works. Therefore I shall not expect members of the Government or other members to exercise a vote that might be ambiguous because, if the Government opposed the motion, it might in a sense be open to a charge of not having the development of this State at heart, which would not be a true indication of the position. Therefore I shall content myself by thanking members for their criticism and support, and asking leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

[*The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.*]

MOTION—UNEMPLOYMENT.

Relief Work and Sustenance.

Debate resumed from the 23rd October on the following motion by Mr. McDonald (West Perth):—

That in the opinion of this House the Government should review the conditions governing relief work and sustenance for unemployed, particularly as to rates of sustenance for children.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. H. Millington—Mt. Hawthorn) [9.22]: The member for West Perth, the Leader of the National Party, moved this motion a few weeks ago, and his review of the various phases of the whole unemployment problem certainly raised it to the level of first importance from the economical, industrial and social viewpoints. I cordially welcome the attitude of the Leader of the National Party. He belongs to what is still a great party representing diverse and substantial interests in this State and throughout Australia. Therefore it is a matter of great satisfaction to me to know of the interest he is taking in this question. Time was

when the Leader of the National Party would not have viewed this question so sympathetically, and therefore it appears to me that the present leader of that party is disposed to view the problem more as it appears to us and dissociated from the attitude of those who preceded him in the leadership of the party. I consider that the most effective way of dealing with the motion would be to give, as he suggested, a review of what has taken place during the last ten years in regard to the problem of unemployment, and so show that many of the things he suggested should be done have been done, and that generally there has not been a tendency on the part of the Government to neglect its duty or refuse to face the problem.

There are two factors in respect of unemployment as it becomes a responsibility of the Government. One is that we have not control over the amount of money available to provide work for those who are displaced from private industry. Neither have we any influence at all upon the number of men for whom we might be responsible. This has compelled us during past years to ration the amount of money available amongst the men for whom we are responsible. That is the reason and the only reason why the work has had to be rationed. It is the reason why we have to allot the work, not in accordance with a man's ability, but in accordance with his family needs. Those who are in the greatest need and have the largest number of dependants are those who receive the greatest amount of work. After the hon. member had spoken, I asked the Department of Employment to bring up to date the history of unemployment in the State during the last ten years. I think the member for West Perth said that we had nothing on record of the policy of what had been done during all those years, and had not shown that any advancement had been made or that there had been any attempt to better the position.

Unemployment, unfortunately, has always been in existence in the State. In spite of what people say about the good old days, may I say there were never any good old days. My experience is that we have always had this problem of unemployment. But it is only during the last ten years that an attempt has been made to provide employment and relief work on a continuous

and systematic basis. Certainly it has been reduced to a system during recent years. In the initial stages we had a board, directly responsible to a Minister, consisting of three senior civil servants to undertake measures for the relief of unemployment. I think that was about the commencement of systematising the work of dealing with the unemployment problem. When the Labour Party took office in 1933, a full-time Minister for Employment was appointed. Having regard to the number of men out of work and the then difficulty of organising work, it was considered advisable to make this practically a whole-time job for the Minister and department in order that effect might be given to the views of the Government. At that time the rationing system was introduced. May I say that in this matter we had to have regard to the family and family responsibility. Someone has said that the family unit is the imperishable foundation upon which all human society rests. That is still the position. Whatever may be said of various forms of government in various parts of the world, the foundation of society is still the family unit. Just as under our arbitration law the court is instructed to provide for a family, so in the matter of providing employment, we must have regard to the family, and that is why there has been a disparity in the amounts received by the men for whom we have to accept responsibility.

Due to enlistments and work arising out of the war, the position has considerably improved in recent months. For instance, 12 months ago we had on sustenance 883 married men and 172 single men, or a total of 1,055. The latest record we have—this is the best news the House and the country have received for some time—indicates that we have on sustenance 90 married men and 12 single men, or a total of 102 as against 1,055 last year. Then as regards relief work, last year we had 4,996 married men and 729 single men, or a total of 5,725. That aggregate has been reduced and we now have on relief work 3,968 married men and 539 single men, or a total of 4,506. The complete totals show that last year there were on sustenance and relief work 6,780 men, whereas to-day the latest figures give the number at 4,603, or 2,100 fewer than last year.

Another question the member for West Perth asked was, what had been done in order to ascertain the absorptive capacity of industry apart from employment provided by the Government. The policy of the Government was first to place the Employment Department under the control of the Minister who was also at that time Minister for Industrial Development. Since then, the Employment Department has been placed under the control of the Honorary Minister (Mr. Gray), who devotes his full time to the work. Then we have the Minister for Industrial Development (Mr. Hawke). Thus, so far as the Government can stimulate industry, it has pursued that course by setting up another department and not proceeding through the department which I represent. If the member for West Perth desires to know what has been done to stimulate and extend the industries of this State, he will find much of interest in the speech delivered by the Minister for Industrial Development quite recently in this House. I shall not attempt to enlarge on that phase. The fact remains that particulars regarding the activities of the Government and the effect of its policy are available. I agree that it is necessary that the Government should have a policy not only with regard to the employment of those who are displaced from industry, but should do all that is possible to stimulate industry and to assist those engaged in existing industries, by every means in its power.

Some mention was made of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research. That body has been carrying out excellent work throughout Australia, but its activities have been practically confined to assisting primary industries. It has carried out wonderful work in co-operation with the State Agricultural Departments, but the time has certainly arrived when the activities of the council should be devoted to promoting our secondary industries. I consider the C.S.I.R. should interest itself in the development of those industries. In 1937 that body conference was convened at which men who were the directors of industry in many parts of Australia, were asked to deal with the problem of stimulating and developing our secondary industries. That conference agreed that Australia lagged behind every other country in the world from that stand-

point. In other countries laboratories have been established not only by Governments but by wealthy and influential firms. Thus secondary industries have developed rapidly throughout the world, but in Australia we have fallen far behind. Now we are compelled by force of circumstances to attempt to bring ourselves into line with other countries, and to modernise the secondary industries already established. I hope we shall be successful. Had it not been for the development of the heavy industries by the Broken Hill Proprietary Co., Australia would have found itself in very straitened circumstances in these days when it is practically cut off from the rest of the world.

As in years gone by it was essential to give attention to fostering our primary industries, so the time has now arrived when the Commonwealth and State Governments have even a greater responsibility in developing secondary industries. With that object in view, we have established the department presided over by the Minister for Industrial Development. When discussing some of the questions raised during the course of his speech, the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald) would not agree that the Government itself should enter into these industries—I shall not argue that point with him at this juncture—so that all he desires and considers the Government is entitled to do, is to assist private enterprise in the development of our secondary industries. He does not suggest that the responsibility attaches to the Government to embark upon such industries competitively.

Dealing with the actual work of the Employment Department, the Government has always had for its objective the provision of work in preference to retaining the unemployed on sustenance and relief, realising that the well-being of the community as a whole is bound up in that of the individual. The point is appreciated that the average worker is not in a position, when in work, to accumulate sufficient resources to free himself of the fear of unemployment and that he is in distress very soon after losing his work. The member for West Perth suggested that if men worked eight months in the year and were idle for four months, the latter period was too long for him to sustain himself on his savings. That is not the policy of the department. Men are not

employed for eight months and then kept idle for four months. Such work as is available is rationed on a scale to which I shall refer later on.

It is universally recognised that in any community, whatever the circumstances, a state of more or less constant change is a normal condition of industry leading to the existence of some unemployment. Even when there is not a general trend towards unemployment, some industries are affected by slack periods and seasonal fluctuations and find it necessary temporarily to reduce hands from time to time. This condition has been accentuated enormously during recent years by the rapid mechanisation of production methods. Numerous instances demonstrating this could be given, but it is now generally accepted that one of the principal causes of increased unemployment throughout all countries is the fact that the labour saturation point has been reached owing to the tremendous strides achieved in the mechanical world. Recognising that there is nothing more demoralising to the individual than the idleness associated with unemployment, it has been this Government's aim to provide, within the limits of its financial resources, as much work as possible instead of keeping men in idleness. Relief, of course, it not granted without adequate inquiry. Each case is investigated with the object of assuring that the State is not called upon to maintain anyone who is in a position to provide for himself, and also to establish the extent of the family responsibilities.

As an employer, the Government endeavours to maintain employment at an adequate level. Approximately 18,000 wages employees are directly employed by the Government in all its activities, other than persons employed under the Public Service Act and excluding also school teachers. Men engaged upon relief works are included. Of the above total, 2,609 only are employed on a part-time basis. From that point of view, the Government, as an employer, has certainly not been responsible for the unemployment problem as it has existed during recent years. In speaking of the number of men on construction works dependent upon the Government for employment, there is a distinct tendency to assume that the whole of the 5,000 so employed are in addition to what the Government would be normally employing. Such an assumption is quite wrong.

This State is still in process of development and under normal conditions the construction of roads, water supplies, harbours, etc., would be undertaken, thus giving employment to approximately 3,500 men each year. Therefore of the 4,810 men at present employed upon relief work or in receipt of sustenance, some 1,500 are employed on work which is undertaken merely to absorb those not required by private employers. That is the point. Although sometimes we have on our hands approximately 5,000 men—the number is now reduced to 4,600—normally those men would not be described as sustenance employees. As I have already pointed out, the Government would require, in order to carry out work in normal conditions, about 3,500 men annually. That would mean, apart from the rationing scheme, about 1,500 only would be in receipt of sustenance. The Government has been importuned to revert to the good old times when men were either fully employed or were unfortunate enough to be entirely out of work. That is what has taken place in Queensland recently. The Government there decided that if the workers required work to be carried out under the old scheme, those fortunate enough to obtain work could do so and the remainder would be placed on a rationing basis. We wired over to find out what had been the result and a reply came from Queensland showing that the number of males on ration relief totalled 9,144. The position in this State is that if we employed on full time the men we wanted, irrespective of their family obligations, we would have about 1,500 men continuously on rations. By rationing the work, the position is that speaking from memory the lowest rate that can be paid for married men with dependants is £3 4s. per week throughout the year. Those with three children and more are employed practically full time for the duration of the job and they are employed practically full time throughout the year. As I stated earlier, with the exception of 2,609, all those we have employed on wages in the Government service have been employed full time. Many of those whom we term sustenance workers are employed full time.

In Queensland single men on sustenance work receive 8s. per week, married men with no children 17s., married men with one child, 20s. 9d., married men with two children 24s. 6d., and married men with

three children 28s. 3d. Despite what has been said about getting back to the good old days when people were fully employed or unemployed, I say the system we have is more humane and is fairer considering that we have the responsibility of employing or maintaining these people, and it is much better for the individual that the work should be divided amongst all on the basis of family needs. It is interesting to know how Western Australia compares with the Eastern States, about which we hear so much, both in regard to work and rations. The following comparison of the weekly earnings of sustenance workers in the various States has been made by the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics. In New South Wales single men who are working part time receive 16s. per week, in Victoria 17s. 6d., in Tasmania 15s., and in Western Australia 33s. 2d.

Hon. C. G. Latham: What do they get in Queensland?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Queensland has a different system, as I will show later on. The married man with no child receives in New South Wales 22s. 11d., in Victoria 30s. 6d., in Tasmania 28s. 1d., and in Western Australia 64s. 3d. So that if comparisons detrimental to Western Australia are sought, one must go outside Australia.

Hon. C. G. Latham: We always did pay more here than is paid in the Eastern States.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is because New South Wales is unable to provide men with the same amount of work as we in Western Australia can provide. In New South Wales married people with one child receive 32s. a week, in Victoria 34s. 6d., in Tasmania 33s. 3d., and in Western Australia 66s. 8d. Those with three children receive in New South Wales an average throughout the year of 33s. 4d., in Victoria 42s. 6d., in Tasmania 43s. 9d., and in this State 85s. 8d. Those figures prove conclusively that Western Australia is ahead of any of the other States. The Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics has not included any figures of South Australia in that table because there are no established relief works in that State. Queensland is also excluded from the table but there was in operation in that State from 1931 until 1938 the Intermittent Relief Scheme which

provided work for persons eligible to draw relief. After September, 1938, all single men and 50 per cent. of married men were reverted to ration relief. In January, 1939, a further 50 per cent. of married men were reverted to rations and the scheme was finally abolished on the 30th June, 1939, being replaced by a full-time employment plan under which the labour required for the work available was selected from persons in receipt of ration relief according to priority. As I have pointed out, we wired to Queensland and ascertained that the number of males on ration relief totalled 9,144.

[The Speaker took the Chair.]

Another question raised by the member for West Perth was that of youth employment. I asked the department to give me what information it had on that subject. The hon. member is entitled to ask what we are doing in Western Australia in connection with this matter and I am pleased to supply the information provided by the department, which reports as follows:—

As a result of investigations made in New South Wales by the Employment Council, an advisory body set up by the Government of New South Wales, a report dealing with the effect of blind-alley occupations and whether this was a factor in producing a surplus of unskilled adult males, resulting in chronic unemployment, was submitted to the New South Wales Government.

This report disclosed a rather serious position. The Employment Council reported that a major contributory cause of unemployment amongst males was—

That many industries employ an excessive proportion of youth labour to adult labour. In such cases a great majority of the juveniles are discharged (to be replaced by younger boys) at age 18, 19, 20 or 21. The youths in question, while in such employment, do not acquire any skill or experience which will help them to obtain fresh employment as adults. They are thus fitted in adult life only for the already saturated market for unskilled general labour.

After traversing the evidence which had been collected in support of this conclusion, the Employment Council made recommendations to limit the employment of youth in blind-alley occupations and to overcome the after effects of employment in these occupations.

As a result of these recommendations, the Premier of New South Wales invited the other State Governments and the Commonwealth Government to send representatives to a conference at which the serious position disclosed in New South Wales and which it was believed also existed in the other States of

Australia, could be discussed, preventive measures formulated, and a simultaneous attack made on the problem throughout the whole of Australia.

Western Australia was represented at this conference which took place in Melbourne on the 19th and 20th July of last year by the Assistant Minister for Employment, accompanied by the Industrial Registrar. The other States attached sufficient importance to the conference that each was similarly represented by a Minister as was also the Commonwealth Government. In each case the Ministerial representatives were accompanied by Government officers expert in industrial matters.

This conference of expert officers and political representatives of all shades of political opinion advocated sweeping measures to deal with the problem.

Briefly these measures were:—

- (1) The fixation of ratios of minors to adults and of females to males by all industrial tribunals.
- (2) The raising of the school leaving age.
- (3) The Commonwealth, New South Wales and Victorian Governments to prohibit the employment in factories of boys and girls under the age of 15 years.
- (4) The appointment of research organisations to attack the problem of employment and unemployment, in each State and by the Commonwealth Government.
- (5) The investigation without delay of the problem of dead-end employment by these research organisations.
- (6) The uniformity of factory legislation affecting employment in all States.
- (7) A Royal Commission to inquire into the practicability and desirability of adopting a shorter working week.

Unfortunately before the various Governments had given consideration to the implementation of the resolutions of this conference, the war intervened and the economic and industrial re-organisation which the implementation of these resolutions would undoubtedly have imposed was replaced by an economic and industrial upheaval over which the various Governments and indeed the Governments of the other nations of the world had little control.

However, there were two of the resolutions of this conference which the Commonwealth and State Governments considered should be given effect to, for while the approach of the social and industrial problems of youth and to problems of employment generally may change from time to time during the war, the necessity will continue for some machinery to examine and report on these problems.

Accordingly each State and the Commonwealth agreed to set up research organisations to examine and report on the various

aspects of employment and unemployment, with particular regard to dead-end employment.

In this State, a committee of expert departmental officers with a full-time research officer was appointed. Similar action was taken by the other States while the Commonwealth Government added qualified officers to the Research Section of the Bureau of Census and Statistics to co-ordinate and direct the work under the Commonwealth Research Director.

The personnel of the State committee is as follows:—

Industrial Registrar (Mr. R. A. Wood), chairman; Acting Government Statistician (Mr. R. J. Little); Industries Promotion Engineer (Mr. N. Fernie); Assistant Superintendent of Technical Education (Mr. L. W. Phillips); Chief Inspector of Factories (Mr. F. W. Warman); an Inspector of Schools (Mr. T. S. Edmondson); Economics Research Officer (Mr. H. J. Goodes); Secretary Department of Employment (Mr. F. A. Scott); Research Officer and Secretary (Mr. J. C. A. Hodgson).

In respect to a committee to inquire into and formulate a policy for youth employment, I say that this committee is fully qualified to do the work. Its business is to devote its time to that work, and it has associated with it the necessary technical officers to advise it. The member for West Perth suggested that a committee be appointed to go into the question and make suggestions. It appears to me that we have already anticipated the formation of such a committee, and a very capable one that is heavily officered and is already devoting its time to the work. Furthermore it is associated with an Australia-wide investigation. Because of the war the work has certainly been delayed, but we have here the organisation desired which will keep in touch with everything and will be in the position to deal with the question of youth employment. Since the appointments of research organisations in all the States were completed a uniform programme of research has been agreed upon. This programme will advance along lines of inquiry to be pursued in each State, and every elasticity will be allowed in accordance with the conditions appertaining to each State. The Committee has discretionary power, but at the same time it will be actuated by an all-Australia policy. In this State the committee is making inquiries—(a) into blind alley employment and (b) the absorptive capacity of industry. That is something mentioned by the hon. member, and is highly import-

ant. The committee has at command the necessary official information in many instances, and is making this inquiry into the absorptive capacity of industry. Then it is, inquiring into the effect of raising the school-leaving age. That has been a very contentious question for many years. It is one that any Government would desire to give effect to. Unless boys leaving school at the age of 14 have some control exercised over them in respect to their subsequent welfare and general behaviour, a problem immediately arises. There is the question of raising the school-leaving age to 15.

Mr. Patrick: We would then require many more buildings.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Many parents say that they could not possibly afford to educate their children up to that stage, although we may say it is desirable and advisable that they should do so. That is one of the questions into which the committee is inquiring.

Mr. Doney: For how long has it been making such inquiries?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The committee began its inquiries but war intervened. I know it is working on those lines now.

Mr. Doney: Has it made any recommendations on the point?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The committee does make recommendations to the Minister.

Mr. Doney: In respect to raising the school-leaving age?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, but that would be a matter of Government policy, although it would also be one for a recommendation by the committee. An inquiry is also being made into the effect of industrial conditions upon employment, the age and wage structure of junior employment in various industries and occupations, the training and placement of youths with a view of their entry into permanent forms of employment; and other various aspects of employment and unemployment which cannot be separated as individual items, but are interwoven. Organised research in this State is a new departure, and as such may require a re-organisation of some of the existing facilities for the collection of information. The committee in this State has found that most of the data required is not readily available. While it

has submitted suggestions for the bridging of the gap in statistics and other information it is endeavouring to utilise other valuable sources of information in the meantime. The report of the committee states that a step in the right direction, and indeed a vital one, was the organisation of a survey to determine the nature of the employment to be entered into by children leaving school, whether they had employment to go to, and what the prospects were for the continuity of such employment. The survey will also show whether the most effective placements, according to the natural ability of the children, are taking place. These matters are probably of the utmost importance in the life of children when leaving school to enter employment. First there is the necessity for placing them effectively, and there is also the question of providing opportunities for training. These factors will determine in most cases the whole future of our young citizens. The result of the survey will represent a big step forward in an attempt to grapple with the unemployment problem.

I have traced the efforts that are being made to understand by scientific means the causes and characteristics of the major problems. It will be realised that while existing measures for the relief of unemployment are being continued, and are being improved from time to time, these are merely palliatives. The real remedy lies in obtaining precise knowledge of the extent and characteristics of the problem so that the final solution may be based on that knowledge. The committee is co-operating with similar bodies that have been set up in the Eastern States. The suggestion has been made that no advancement has been effected, that the Department of Employment is a dead letter and has been allowed to run itself. In respect of all those matters the motion of the hon. member has been anticipated. No doubt that will be a subject matter for congratulation on his own part. The question of the Labour Bureau has been raised. It has been stated that the training of farm labour should be undertaken. As an immediate step towards assisting the farmer to obtain the necessary labour, and with a view to assisting all employers in that direction, the Assistant Minister for Employment has under consideration the enlargement of the

services of the State Labour Bureau. Branches of the bureau are to be established in York, Beverley, Wagin, Katanning, Albany, Bunbury, Busselton, Northam, Merredin, Southern Cross, Geraldton, and Kalgoorlie. Because of employment directly connected with the war effort, and other factors, it will be necessary to give attention to the labour requirements of farmers and other employers. The current report shows what has taken place with respect to the Labour Bureau in Perth. As stated at different times, the services rendered by that bureau are free. Our concern is to place men in employment. From the 1st October to the 25th of that month registrations for work numbered 407 and applications received from employers numbered 151, the placements by the bureau being 88. Positions still current and unfilled numbered 42. Cases assisted by fares to jobs obtained through private registry offices numbered 61. Rail fares to men who obtained jobs for themselves were given to 46. In the majority of cases it was said that the wages were too low to induce men to fill the positions offering. The operations during October show that the registrations numbered 172, the positions filled numbered 131, and those unfilled numbered 69. The Youth Employment Branch is situated in James-street. Its activities for the period from the 1st October to the 25th October show that applications were received from 102 employers, lads registered for employment numbered 64 and placed in employment 52, while the number of current positions unfilled was 27.

The distribution of labour in all branches of the department has received close consideration. I have endeavoured to show the position as it was. There were some 14,000 unemployed, nearly all on sustenance, and now we have reached the stage when all those who are willing and able to work can be placed in employment. That brings me to the much discussed 7s. per unit sustenance. All those who are able and willing to work do not depend on sustenance. That is the difference between this and the other States, where in many cases people do depend on sustenance. If, as suggested by the hon. member, we raised the rate even to 10s. per unit, it would mean that a family of four persons, as indicated by Arbitration Court awards, could then receive only £2 a week, instead of which a family consisting of a man and his wife would receive at least £3 4s. a week under our system. Now

that we have reduced the numbers, as I have shown, those who are unable to work instead of being kept on sustenance only will be transferred to the Child Welfare Department, where they will have the advantage of 9s. per unit instead of 7s. Those who remain with the Employment Department would not depend on sustenance only. Their rates would be considerably higher.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: In the case of the Child Welfare Department people have to pay the money back. It is only loaned to them.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They would not have to pay the money back if they were transferred to the Child Welfare Department, because they would not be able to work. If they are able to work we are in a position to offer them employment. I notice that as soon as we were in a position to offer them a job quite a number of them disappeared from the department. The hon. member objected to the means test. Without the application of that test it would be impossible to establish whether a person was eligible for assistance or not. The possession of a house as a home does not debar a destitute person from receiving assistance. If income producing property is owned, such income is taken into consideration when determining whether relief should be granted. The hon. member also asked a question about people who have money in the bank. Although a person who has money in the bank is not eligible for sustenance, it is not expected that all such resources should be exhausted before relief is granted. Consideration is given to commitments and circumstances in each case. These are the amounts allowed to those who are working. Husband and wife on sustenance of 14s. are allowed to earn 30s., which would make their weekly income 44s. And so right down. To those receiving sustenance of 49s. per week, additional earnings of 23s. 6d. are permitted, making the total income 72s. 6d. per week. There is a scale which recognises that in spite of sustenance rates the people receiving them are allowed to earn the amount stated without any reduction in the rate of sustenance.

Just to give an instance of the cases cited by the member for West Perth. People can easily present an ex-parte statement on the

face of which there is a case for extreme sympathy. When it was decided that the Unemployment Department should be separated from the Child Welfare Department, very close inquiries were made; and here I have the case of an unemployed "C" class man—I have the name here, but of course it will not be made public—where there was no less a sum than £8 7s. 6d. coming into the home weekly. When he applied to the Child Welfare Department, it became apparent that he should not receive sustenance from the department. The income of the home was such that he was not entitled to it. After paying rent, there was still £7 10s. coming into the home. This was a large family, and the parents had been receiving sustenance for some time at the 14s. rate, notwithstanding that the family had a weekly income of £8 7s. 6d.

Mr. Doney: What sort of check had been made upon that lot?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I understand that the way this happened was that at the time the man first received sustenance the children were young, and that when they grew up they started to earn. The disclosures show the close supervision of the departmental officers, investigation having been made when we found that the family was not entitled to receive benefits from the Child Welfare Department. Therefore I warn members to be careful. An extremely bad case can be examined only by the department; it cannot be done by any individual. I could not discover whether a man was or was not justified in receiving sustenance. But the officers of the Child Welfare Department can. They are particularly competent as well as sympathetic.

Mr. McDonald: How many were in this family?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: All told, eight. However, the fact was that upon the position being examined they could not qualify. In such a case people are apt to say, "Hand them over to the Child Welfare Department, where they will be entitled to 9s. per week." Then they are told by the sympathetic but watchful officers of the department that they are not entitled to sustenance. These people got away with it for a while, but on making an attempt to improve their position they were discovered not to be entitled to anything. That shows

how careful one should be in accepting ex-parte statements.

If time permitted, the whole question of unemployment might be gone into here. As a Government we are certainly responsible for those whom we employ; but we do not enter largely into industry, outside transport and other activities that will immediately occur to members. Western Australian industry is chiefly carried on by private enterprise. I understand the National Party desires that industry should be interfered with as little as possible. That was understood to be the policy of the party; I do not know whether it has been altered. It means that although the State is called upon to provide work for those who are displaced from private enterprise, the Government has very little control indeed over employment. In these modern times the best managers of businesses are those who are able to displace men by introducing machinery. If they do not do that they are not wanted, and certainly not required as managers. Much as we object to it, that has become the rule of the road throughout the world. The object and practice of those who modernise industry is to displace men and introduce machinery. In some cases they have machinery tending other machinery. People advertise goods as being untouched by human hands; they think that is sanitary and acts as an attraction. So that we are now getting to a stage where private employment under what is called the capitalistic system—it is certainly an individualistic system—has control of industry; and whilst industry depends upon producing goods at a profit—for the moment I am not arguing about that aspect, except to say that it is so—it is not concerned with the employment of persons, but is concerned solely with profits. If it does not pay private industry to keep men, their services are immediately dispensed with.

With the ordinary variations of trade in a country, say the United States of America, there is always a normal unemployed army. It may be that when industry starts there is a stimulation of employment; but before long there is over production, or production to such an extent that people cannot purchase the goods produced, more especially when men are being displaced from industry and the earning capacity which might purchase the enormous output of the machines is largely or measurably destroyed.

As regards the United States, it has been pointed out that the peak of employment was in 1918, when the numbers employed were greater than ever previously, but that the peak of production was reached in 1929. A graph would show that whereas from 1918 production went up, the actual numbers employed went down from that year. That is what the world has to face. The wit of man has not yet discovered how the problem is to be solved. The whole of the commercial and industrial brains of the world have centred on manufacturing for profit, and are not concerned in any way with keeping men constantly in employment. Even in this State it has been noticed that where men are not required, or youths reach a certain age they are displaced and become a responsibility of the Government. The Commonwealth Government do not accept any responsibility for them, and neither will local governments. When it is said that we should examine the causes of it, I say that the trend of modern industry is such that the enormous increase in the productive capacity of the people produces another problem—unemployment. Inevitably under the present system—for the time being I am not complaining but merely stating a fact—there is no solution of unemployment. In fact the system compels people engaged in industry so to conduct their business that unemployment is inevitable. I say to the leader of the National Party, "You can have a small committee; but in this State there is, so far as I see, no overcoming that phase of the unemployment problem." It is one of the worst features of the problem in modern times—worse than it has ever been. No one has ever suggested any solution; and the best we can do is to humbug along as we are doing by endeavouring to take up the slack of those who are displaced and find them either work or sustenance.

As regards the youths, we have the committee going into that problem. There is, certainly, the question of training of youths. When addressing the Chamber of Manufactures recently I said that the one advantage we possessed in Western Australia was that we had a market, whereas in other countries of the world production had reached such a pitch that it was impossible to find adequate markets. In this State we certainly have a market for our goods, and

therefore there is a prospect of extending those industries within Western Australia. We can certainly devote our time and energies to that. That is why the Government has divided the Department of Employment from that of the Minister for Industrial Development. I can see some hope that from the work which that Minister is doing to provide that we shall be sufficiently insular, or patriotic, there may result a market here. I should say to the mothers who desire their children, girls as well as boys, to be employed, that they must simply purchase goods produced in Western Australia if opportunities and openings are to be made for the boys and girls of Western Australia. Our advantage over many countries of the world is that we can still manufacture many of our requirements which at the present time are imported. It is an advantage also in other Australian States, but particularly so in Western Australia. If we Western Australians will co-operate in the work that is being done by the Minister for Industrial Development and make up our minds to buy Western Australian articles, there is hope for Western Australia. But the general question, the real problem of unemployment, can never be solved until the system under which we now work is changed. There are countries which have plans. I do not think the Australian people would submit to those plans. Russia can work under a plan, or nationalisation scheme. That is also the case in Germany and Italy. I remember seeing some time ago an account of a world conference held to deal with the question of national planning. At that conference Russia was able to show that it had established a five-year plan. I think Greenland also had something to do with plans. Those countries would not consider the American New Deal to be a plan. That was ruled straight out. Eventually a good wise old Englishman got up and said, "This is what you have to remember. You have to consider the kind of people and the kind of nation for whom you are planning." The plan that suits Russia may suit certain other nations, but certainly would not suit the British people, and equally certainly would not suit Australia. If we are going to take control of industry, we have to discover what is going to be done. But whilst it is in the hands of private employers and we have

only the problem of providing work for those who are displaced, I can see very little hope, except the one ray that Western Australia will still have a market provided by its own people, if they are patriotic enough to purchase our local products. Outside of that I can see no hope. I feel indebted to the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald) for the thought that he certainly has put into this subject. I am sure we are all pleased that he should be interested in it. The question now is one which is removed from any party bias and I agree that this House, as a House, should devote itself to the solution of the problem, because the solution means so much to the State. I am pleased to be able to report that the Government has progressively overcome the difficulty. We are now in a position to offer a job to any man able and willing to work. Men need no longer depend upon sustenance. Any man out of work who approaches a member should be sent by the member to the Employment Department for the purpose of having his case examined. We guarantee now that the men will get something better than sustenance. Our conditions are better than those of any other State of Australia. I am extremely pleased to be able to make that report.

On motion by Mr. North, debate adjourned.

BILL—TRAMWAYS PURCHASE ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

House adjourned at 10.33 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 21st November, 1940.

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

BILL—FISHERIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—RESERVES.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—York lot 450:

The HONORARY MINISTER: The name "Pyke" is twice mis-spelt in the clause. I move an amendment—

That the word "Pryke" where first appearing in line 2 be struck out, and "Pyke" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

The CHAIRMAN: The word "Pryke" where appearing for the second time in line 2 will be consequentially amended to "Pyke."

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 3 to 7, Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—LEGITIMATION ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the previous day. Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair, the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 6 (partly considered):

The HONORARY MINISTER: The amendment standing in my name on the