

guess at what the future will be. However, we have to observe how this State of Western Australia has been treated relatively to the Eastern States. When we examine that aspect, our future does not look very bright. In the past conduct of our brethren in the Eastern States there is nothing to inspire us with a hope that they will mete out better treatment to Western Australia when they secure additional power. I do not think we shall suddenly encounter a change of heart in eastern Australia. If this forecast should prove to be completely wrong when the Commonwealth gets the additional power it seeks, if the Commonwealth then sets about a comprehensive, intelligent reconstruction policy for Western Australia, sets about developing Western Australia's resources and abolishing the disabilities of Western Australian citizens as compared with Eastern States Australians, sets about placing eight or ten million people in Western Australia as a protection in the war that will come after this one, we shall all acknowledge that we are proved wrong and that there has been a change of heart on the other side of the continent. I do not say that the change of heart may not come about. I would be happy to feel that such a possibility existed.

Recently I have had occasion to do public business and private business under a system of intense control by the Eastern States. One cannot do anything here; nobody here has authority; everything has to be referred to the Eastern States. That is a very bad system indeed to live under. I suggest that the bureaucratic system under which we live, controlled by the Eastern States—where non-entities become celebrities over night and wield unlimited power, often wielding it unsympathetically towards Western Australia—leaves Western Australian citizens at a great disadvantage as compared with the inhabitants of the Eastern States, alike in major problems and in minor matters. Let me quote one trifling incident to show the disabilities existing here. Frequently regulations are promulgated in Canberra. We already have a book of regulations that runs to a thousand pages.

When one sees an advertisement in the Press that there has been an amendment of a regulation, and when one goes to the Commonwealth Treasury to obtain a copy of the amendment, one is told, "There are only two copies of the amend-

ment here. We can get you a copy from Canberra." If one asks how long that will take, the reply is "A week or ten days." One has to wait for that length of time to ascertain the nature of a law one has to obey. I hold that the present Canberra system is the worst part of the Nazi system. It is the bad bureaucratic part, without the intense efficiency. So I shall be indeed sorry to see any prolongation of the present system in Australia. Nevertheless I hope that if the Bill goes to a Select Committee we shall arrive at something more definite than the present wording of the measure. My main objection to the Bill is its vagueness. I feel that in supporting the Bill I am giving away rights of the Western Australian people without being clear in my own mind as to the powers I am helping to transfer to the Commonwealth. The risk is a terrible one to take. For the reasons I have given, I shall support the second reading of the Bill.

On motion by Mrs. Cardell-Oliver, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.25 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 21st January, 1943.

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

QUESTIONS (6).

GRASS FIRES.

As to Outbreaks Caused by Locomotives.

Mr. SEWARD asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is he aware that on Christmas Day some twelve fires were caused by a railway engine at various points between Narrogin and Pingelly? 2, Was any inquiry held to ascertain the cause of such happening? 3, If so, what was the result of the inquiry?

4, If no inquiry has yet been held, will he have one conducted immediately and make known the results? 5, Will he take all possible measures to prevent engines from starting fires during the remainder of the summer?

The MINISTER replied: 1, No. The Cuballing Road Board reported that fires had been started on Christmas Day and on subsequent investigation the length runner observed traces of several fires outside the railway reserve, date and origin of which are unknown. 2, It is not the practice to investigate the cause of fires occurring outside the railway reserve unless damage is caused and there is evidence that they were started by locomotives. 3, Drivers of trains on Christmas Day on this section did not notice any fires. Spark arresting appliances were fitted to the engines of these trains and were reported to be in good order prior to and after completion of journey. 4, Answered by No. 3. 5, All engines are fitted with efficient spark arresting appliances and these are examined both before going on traffic and when stabling. All necessary precautions are taken to see that appliances are in good order. In addition, firebreaks are cut on railway reserves and sidewidths burnt off, railwaymen are instructed to take every care to prevent fires, and to give all possible assistance in extinguishing outbreaks, and other measures are also taken with a view to minimising fire risk.

WHEAT GROWING.

(a) *As to Superphosphate Supplies.*

Mr. SEWARD asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Is there a regulation which will compel wheatgrowers to sow 40 lbs. of superphosphate per acre with wheat sown during the coming season? 2, If so, is it a State or a Commonwealth regulation? 3, In view of the fact that superphosphate supplied this year is only 18 per cent. as against the usual 23 per cent., will a farmer be penalised in any way if he uses a greater amount of superphosphate per acre in such circumstances, reducing his acreage accordingly, when his experience dictates that 40 lbs. of even the higher grade of superphosphate is insufficient for his type of land. 4, If so, will not this necessarily result in a waste of superphosphate and seed?

The MINISTER replied: 1 and 2, National Security (Fertiliser Control) Regulations,

No. 340, 1942, and National Security (Fertiliser Control) Regulations—Delegation of Powers—conferred such powers on the Under Secretary for Agriculture. 3, A total phosphoric acid content of 23 per cent. superphosphate should not be regarded as the usual percentage in commercial superphosphate. Prior to 1937 the total varied from 17 per cent. to 22 per cent. During 1941-42 the percentage was 22 per cent., and since November, 1942, the total has been reduced to 18 per cent. The statement is noted that in the experience of some farmers 40 lbs. of 23 per cent. superphosphate is insufficient for the production of wheat on certain types of land. This statement is not indorsed by the Department of Agriculture without express qualifications. Research by the Department of Agriculture at various centres of the State over a period of 14 years indicates that—even on light loamy soils—there is some residual value of superphosphate up to 14 years. Our scientists advise and are confident that, with a normal season this year, but with a reduced application of superphosphate on well tilled mature forest land, yields should exceed 90 per cent. of the normal crop. Western Australia normally requires approximately 260,000 tons of superphosphate. Only 90,000 tons are available this year for all purposes after allowing for priority crops and the Contingency Pool. Wheat for grain is being allotted approximately 32,000 tons of this amount. 4, It is not thought that farmers will deliberately sow land which is unsuited for the cultivation of wheat and which will thus result in a waste of superphosphate and seed. Farmers are advised to restrict operations to most suitable types of soil or the best tilled portions of their farms.

(b) *As to Acreage Restriction and Compensation.*

Mr. SEWARD asked the Treasurer: In the House of Representatives on the 11th December last, the Minister for Commerce (Mr. Scully) said that he had authorised the payment of the amount agreed upon, in compensation for reduced wheat areas, to the Western Australian Government, which, he presumed, would distribute the money forthwith to the wheatgrowers concerned. 1, Has the money referred to by Mr. Scully been received by the State Government? 2, If so, has the work of paying the money

over to the farmers concerned been commenced? 3, If not, when and how will such payments be made? 4, Will they be made direct to the farmer? 5, If the money has not yet been received from the Commonwealth Government, will he endeavour to obtain it at once and make it available to the farmers before the end of January? 6, If the receipt of the money is delayed, will the State Government advance the money required so that payment to the farmer can be expedited?

The TREASURER replied: 1, No. 2, Answered by No. 1. 3, Preliminary work of preparing lists is in hand and payment will be made through the Australian Wheat Board immediately following completion of payments covering present season's wheat deliveries. 4, Yes. 5, See answer to No. 3. 6, If after the claims are approved there is any undue delay in making payments, consideration will be given to advances being made by the State.

FIREWOOD AND COAL.

As to Supplies.

Mr. NEEDHAM asked the Minister for Labour: 1, In view of the widespread distress in this State last winter, owing to the shortage of firewood, will he inform the House what steps have been or are being taken to prevent a recurrence in the ensuing winter months? 2, Will there be a sufficiency of coal and firewood available for industrial and domestic purposes?

The MINISTER replied: 1, The Forestry Department has continued to have firewood cut and stored for the purpose of trying fully to provide for next winter's requirements. 2, In view of manpower and other difficulties, it is impossible to state with certainty that sufficient coal and firewood will be available during the whole of the winter for all industrial and domestic purposes, but every effort will be made to achieve that objective.

SWINE FEVER.

(a) As to Treatment of Affected Carcases.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, What number of pigs approximately has been discovered in Western Australia to be affected with swine fever? 2, Are the pigs, after slaughter, treated by digesters and, if so, does such treatment ensure that infection cannot be spread? 3, Is the residue, following the operation of the digesters, useful as ferti-

liser and, if so, is it made available to agriculturists, and does its use compare with other fertilisers both from the standpoint of utility and cost?

The MINISTER replied: 1, 12,138. 2, Pigs slaughtered on farms are not treated in digesters at meatworks. The process of digestion effectively sterilises any offal treated. 3, Yes.

(b) As to Preventive Measures.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Agriculture: As it appears that the forwarding of pig meat to Australia from the United States of America is to be continued, and as such will assuredly prevent the cleaning-up of swine fever locally, will he advise how, ultimately, he hopes to ensure immunisation of clean pigs from the perpetuation of this scourge?

The MINISTER replied: By eradication of the disease, and the prevention of feeding swill or any household refuse to pigs.

BILL—COAL MINE WORKERS (PENSIONS).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. W. HEGNEY (Pilbara) [11.6]: As one of those who believe that a system of superannuation or pensions should be made available to all workers in the evening of their lives, I have much pleasure in indicating my support of the Bill. Similar schemes are already in existence and these no doubt will act as a guide or basis for future legislation of this character, which I believe will yet be universal throughout Australia. The member for West Perth said that this proposed legislation is of a sectional character and that it should apply to all workers, instead of a particular body. With that contention I think we can all agree; but the Government, no doubt after serious consideration and thought, has decided to introduce this Bill and I desire to congratulate it upon its action. In passing, I would also like to offer my commendation to the member for Collic for his persistent advocacy over a long period of years on behalf of the coalminers of this State. The Government has, in my opinion, acted wisely in selecting the coalmining industry as the first calling of a private nature to come within a pensions scheme.

We must study the whole background and, when we have done so, I think we can in a large measure agree with the Government. Firstly, there is the compactness of the locality, since the area from which coal is produced in this State is about 40 square miles, and the number of men concerned is comparatively small, approximately 800. Secondly, although the industry may be termed a private one, it has been said—and no one is in a position to contradict the statement—that 90 per cent. of the output of these mines is purchased by the Commissioner of Railways on behalf of the State Government. So that although the industry is not actually under the jurisdiction of the Administration, yet the State Government exercises a fair measure of control. We have also to take into account the fact that in Queensland, Victoria and New South Wales, the other three main States where coal is produced, the miners now enjoy a system of pensions. It is only natural that in the ordinary course of events the miners in this State should expect at least a similar measure of social justice to that obtaining in the States I have mentioned. So far as I am aware, the provisions of this Bill follow those embodied in the Acts in the other States. Taking a glance through the pages of history, we find that in regard to the first record of coal production, the Fifth of Forth is mentioned, coal having been found there in the year 1200; and down through the centuries in various parts of the United Kingdom, coal has been discovered.

Under the terrible conditions which existed in the early stages of the coalmining industries, those obliged to earn their living by this calling were in a state of semi-serfdom. It was not until 1799 that serfdom in the industry was abolished by Act of Parliament in Scotland. The history of the dawn of the industrial revolution and a great part of the nineteenth century indicates that workers who were obliged to work in that industry were to all intents and purposes slaves. There were no laws of any kind to protect the coalminer, and there was no stipulation or regulation as to age or sex. Men and women, and children of tender years earned their living in the bowels of the earth. It has been recorded in the reports of Royal Commissions that tiny children too frail to walk to work were often carried on the back of father or mother. They were unable to

stand the strain of walking both ways, and had to be helped by their parents. Accidents were frequent. Explosions were often severe, and caused many fatalities. There were no such things as inquests in those days because the miner was considered, by the coalmine owner at least, not to be a human being. Many miners were killed underground. The fatalities were regarded as normal incidents in the industry, and it was not until 1840 that the Government of England began to take serious notice.

In that year a humanitarian by the name of Lord Shaftesbury caused to be established a Royal Commission to inquire into the horrors of employment in the mines of the United Kingdom. It was disclosed that children from five years of age upwards were obliged to work in the mines for a living, and they figured prominently in the death-roll of the day. The work of women and children, it is recorded, was to drag wheel-less tubs in the bottom of the mine. There were no rails except wooden ones here and there, and their duty was to drag these tubs full of coal, the tubs being attached to the women by ropes and chains. As a result of these disclosures, the employment underground of women and of children under the age of ten years was prohibited from 1842; such things as the truck system, the miners' bond and the butty system, were designed for the purpose of keeping the miner in a state of subjection and semi-slavery. Coming to our own country we find that the industry is a comparatively old one. Records show that coal was found in New South Wales in 1797, only a few years after the establishment of that Colony. It was found in Victoria in 1825, and in Western Australia, on the banks of the Murray River, in 1846. It was not until 1883 that it was found on the Collie River. In Tasmania, coal was discovered in 1850, and in Queensland in 1859.

Since the inception of the industry in Australia, the miners, who have come in for a great deal of criticism—much of it unjustified—have suffered many vicissitudes and trials in their efforts to gain decent living conditions. Of late years, however, both in England and in this country, much has been done in the way of ameliorating the conditions of miners who win coal from the earth. Such legislation as the Mines Regulation Act, and legislation providing for the ventilation of mines and the introduction of

modern machinery have done much to assist in the improvement of the working conditions of miners, but much remains to be done. It is true that Arbitration Courts fix the rate of wage for workers in that industry, and it is also true that some of them on piece-work receive £6 or £7 per week. But any man who has been employed on piece-work, even on the surface, will admit that if an employer pays £6 or £7 a week as a result of piece-work, the worker well and truly earns that figure. The amount is nothing remarkable to pay to a man who has to earn his living away from the sunlight. Dirt and danger, falling stone, gases, and a dark and dusty atmosphere—these are the normal surroundings in which a miner wins coal from the earth. Those who have had to live in mining fields—whether gold or coal—will have experienced the wonderful feeling of mateship and the brotherhood that exists amongst the men who earn their living in the dungeons of the earth.

Mr. Marshall: Do not forget their heroism.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: Their heroism goes without saying, because the records disclose that as the years go by. I think it is the continual danger to which these men are subjected which is responsible for the strong link of friendship which exists between miner and mate, and between neighbour and neighbour. By degrees, the conditions of the miners have improved and they are incomparably better today than they were some few years ago. But there is as yet no provision to enable the miner to receive a reasonable allowance on retirement, after having performed faithful service to the nation for many years. I do not propose to go into details regarding the provisions of the Bill. Suffice it to say that the Minister for Labour in his introductory speech clearly outlined the provisions, financial and otherwise.

I merely desire to indicate my opinion that the Bill is a conservative one. The Minister said that some members might think it was over-generous. That is the only point on which I differ from him. Under the Bill, the miner is to contribute a certain amount, the mine-owners another amount, the Government is to pay its quota for a certain period of years, and a maximum is established. The miner, however, is only to receive £2 a week by way of pension, and if he has dependent children under the age of 16, he will receive an additional 8s. 6d. per

week in respect of each such dependent child, the maximum amount to which he will be entitled being £1 5s. 6d. per week. It is true that provision is made for the widow on the decease of the one entitled to the pension. But this fact must be taken into account that the Bill provides that all Commonwealth pensions, or payments of a Commonwealth character dealing with pensions or allowances, are deductable from the sum payable to the pensioner or retired miner. Thomas Carlyle once said of the miners—

Venerable too is the rugged face. Is it not the face of a man living manlike? For us were thy straight limbs and fingers so deformed. Thou wert the conscript on whom the lot fell, and fighting our battles thou wert so marred.

Those words were uttered about 100 years ago, and conditions are different today. The miners' long struggle is epic of their efforts to gain a measure of independence and social justice. The fight has been a long and hard one, but by unity and self-sacrifice by sticking to their mates, participating in long and anxious struggles and going without food when their principles were at stake, by arguments at the conference table and insistent advocacy of their principles in the Parliaments of the British Empire, they have emerged with the hallmark of dignity and citizenship.

It is a remarkable fact in history that these men, at the inception of the industry in the United Kingdom, were looked upon and treated by their owners more or less as dogs. They were certainly not regarded as human beings. They had practically no rights and were to be compared, as the member for Perth says, with galley slaves. They have now, after their many battles, reached a point—and I have great respect for the men who earn their living in the deep and dark dungeons of the earth—where they have attained some degree of social security. The least we can do is to give them this measure of justice to which they will also contribute. I, as a member of the Industrial Disputes Committee of the A.L.P., have had a great deal to do with these men during the last 14 years. They are sound and reasonable men and recognise the rights to which they are entitled, and which they are prepared to obtain by all fair means. Their record of industrial peace in Western Australia justifies this Parliament in giving special consideration to them. Their Bill has been placed on

the Statute-books of the Eastern States, and I hope the same thing will be done here. Their unity and self-sacrifice have lit a torch that has diffused and generated light for themselves and their wives and children, and shows to other workers throughout this Commonwealth the road they should follow to obtain that measure of social justice about which we hear so much today.

MR. CROSS (Canning): I have no desire to waste the time of the House, and would not have spoken on this measure but for the clever and ingenious speech made yesterday by the member for West Perth. I was amazed at the statements made by him, because it seemed to me that he indicated his opposition to the principle of superannuation being extended to anybody. He referred to islands in the community that have got either pension schemes or superannuation schemes, and spoke of the civil servants as being people who, in recent years, obtained a long overdue system of superannuation. Then he complained because the miners of this State—one of the hardest working sections of the community and who toil possibly under the worst conditions of any men in any country of the world—

Mr. Seward: Don't talk nonsense!

Mr. CROSS: If the member for West Perth does think along those lines, I challenge him to bring down a Bill to repeal the Superannuation and Family Benefits Act, and see how far he gets with it.

Mr. McDonald: I voted for it.

Mr. CROSS: Then I am surprised at the tenor of the hon. member's remarks yesterday. Among other things it was very evident to me that quite a lot of the matter contained in his able speech was not prepared by him, but by some party vitally interested in the industry. I do not know how much reliance can be placed on some of the figures quoted by the hon. member. One statement he made was that the cost of electric current was cheaper in other States than in Western Australia. He referred to the large industrial States in the East. It is true that the cost of electricity is a most important factor in the running of secondary industries, whether in Western Australia or in any other State. I, therefore, took the trouble to check something which I thought I previously knew, namely, that electricity

costs in this State compare more than favourably with those of any system in the Eastern States.

It is difficult to get recent figures because the various electrical undertakings in the Eastern States are not now issuing their latest figures. I will, however, make one comparison which, I think, is the fairest one that can be made—a comparison of the greatest electrical undertaking in Australia with that operating in this State. I want members to understand that in considering anything in connection with the cost of production of electric current some notice must be taken of the number of kilowatt hours produced by a concern because, as will be obvious, the larger the undertaking the cheaper the cost of production. We will, therefore, take the largest producer in Australia and compare the kilowatt hours produced by it with those produced by our own power house. The biggest electrical undertaking in Australia is that run by the Sydney County Council. It is regarded as the biggest electrical system in the Southern Hemisphere. In its latest available report, that for the year ending the 31st December, 1941, we find that the number of kilowatt hours produced was 887,957,000.

Mr. Seward: Can we rely on these figures?

Mr. CROSS: Yes. They are taken from the annual report of the Sydney County Council.

Mr. Warner: There is a later report than that.

Mr. CROSS: The kilowatt hours of the Perth Electricity Department aggregated 146,538,104 for the same period. Thus members will see that the Sydney concern produces many times more than the quantity of electric current that is turned out by the Electricity Department here. The cost per unit in Western Australia during the same period was .765d. whereas the cost in Sydney was .76d. Thus the Western Australian cost shows a very slight advantage in that the cost of production is disclosed as a little less than that of the Sydney undertaking. Further, I assert that the Sydney and Perth concerns produce the cheapest current in the Commonwealth and it is also claimed that these two systems are the cheapest in the world, not even excluding the undertaking at Niagara. In these circumstances, how the member for West Perth could say that the

cost of production of electricity was cheaper in the Eastern States than here I cannot understand, and I certainly do not know where he obtained his figures.

Mr. North: From Adelaide.

Mr. CROSS: If we can place no more reliance on the hon. member's figures than we can respecting those I have taken the trouble to analyse, I for one shall pass over that phase and ignore his statements.

Mr. Warner: And that is that!

Mr. CROSS: I can say without fear of successful contradiction that in Western Australia we have the highest thermal efficiency of any associated with the production of electricity throughout the Commonwealth. Dealing now with the main principles of the Bill, I believe that all sections of the community should have provision made in their interests so that in their old age they may enjoy adequate pensions or superannuation. Because it is outside the ability of any Government to make some such provision for the whole of the community simultaneously, that affords no reason why a start should not be made with provision for one or other sections of the community. There is another phase. The miners of New South Wales enjoy a pension scheme. In normal times Western Australia draws large supplies of coal from that State. On each ton of coal exported from New South Wales a special charge of 5d. per ton is levied as a contribution towards the miners' pension scheme and that special levy is paid by the Government of Western Australia. If it is right that our Government should contribute towards the cost of the miners' pension scheme in New South Wales, is it not fair and reasonable for the Government to contribute towards a pension scheme for the coal miners in its own State?

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. CROSS: I am pleased that the Bill has been introduced, and I shall support its second reading. If I can do anything to ensure not only the passing of the Bill now before the House, but later on of other measures seeking to provide that all workers shall be properly and adequately provided for in their declining years, I shall gladly fulfil that obligation.

On motion by Mr. Seward, debate adjourned.

BILL—COMMONWEALTH POWERS.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MRS. CARDELL-OLIVER (Subiaco) [11.35]: I have very little to say on this Bill. I have listened to some excellent speeches against the measure, but strangely enough most of those who have addressed themselves to the Bill and opposed its provisions ended their utterances by indicating that they intended to support it. They gave that intimation despite the fact that they had taken up much time in speaking against its provision.

The Premier: They said they would support the second reading.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: Yes.

The Premier: They could still deal with the Bill in Committee.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I hope so. After listening to the speeches I have referred to, I came to the conclusion that the reason for those members indicating their support of the Bill, despite their opposition to its provisions, was based on the fear that the Commonwealth Government would not carry out its obligations regarding the rehabilitation of soldiers and the provision for their families and dependants. Possibly they also feared that the Commonwealth might terminate the payment of widows' pensions, child endowment and similar social payments. If we bear in mind the number of men now becoming soldiers, we can definitely say that when the war is over, should any Government not carry out its obligations it will not remain in power for long. Either by force or through the ballot box the soldiers will see to it that they and their dependants obtain what is due to them. The member for East Perth said that if the Bill was not passed by the 31st January it would be illegal. Despite that he said he was going to support the second reading. I cannot understand that form of diplomacy, which seems to me to be absolutely dishonest.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must not reflect upon another hon. member.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I do not intend to do so. I am merely saying that that form of diplomacy seems to me to be dishonest.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is now insinuating that another member is dishonest.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I do not desire to do that.

Hon. N. Keenan: You mean diplomatically dishonest.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: Yes. I claim that dishonesty in the individual or in a nation leads to ruin. We despise those small countries in Europe that have given way to Hitler because they would not stand up and fight. Many of them gave way to intimidation simply because of fear. What has been their experience? Their position is relatively the same as it would have been had they not given way and abject slavery has been their lot. They have been forced to do just as Hitler required. I am afraid that the attitude of some members regarding the Bill now before the House is along the same lines. Members have indicated their intention to support it because they fear the Commonwealth Government and what it may do. If we are to agree to the measure for that reason, we shall make a great mistake.

The rest of my speech I intend to devote mostly to quotations. I believe I cannot do better than let members know what was said at the recent Convention. I presume that members have received copies of the official report of the debate and I know that Dr. Evatt sent a booklet to each member regarding his propaganda. It is a most interesting piece of propaganda.

The Minister for Lands: Where did you get your copy?

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: From the same place as the Minister got his.

The Minister for Lands: I got mine from the Premier.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: Mine came from Canberra.

The Minister for Lands: But I am referring to the report of the proceedings of the Convention.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: So am I! In the course of extending a welcome to members of the Convention the Prime Minister said—

This Convention differs from the Convention of 1897-98 because, today, federal union is an accomplished fact, and there is in force a written Constitution which defines the relations between the Commonwealth Parliament and the Legislatures of the several States. The Constitution also lays down the procedure for any change in its terms. That procedure for

amendment involves action by two bodies only—the Commonwealth Parliament and the people of Australia. There is no provision for anything in the nature of a popularly elected convention or for the reference of proposed amendments to any assembly outside the Commonwealth Parliament itself.

On page 2 of the report the Prime Minister stated—

But the amendment of our Constitution is, of course, not a question for lawyers or technicians. It is primarily a question for citizens speaking as citizens. The actual language of our Commonwealth Constitution expresses this plainly. It is a people's question that we have to examine.

I should also like to quote some remarks made by our Premier because, in my opinion, he made one of the best speeches—in fact, I may say, the best speech—in setting out what he believed to be the desires of the people of Western Australia. He said—

I recognise that any proposal for an alteration of the Constitution must be carried by a majority of the States and a majority of all the people. . . . I represent the State of Western Australia, whose citizens have been for the past 20 years traditionally hostile to handing over to the Commonwealth powers which it is the function of the States to exercise. . . . The States are prepared to grant the Commonwealth such powers as are necessary.

In making that remark the Premier was dealing with post-war reconstruction.

But I believe they are unwilling to grant such comprehensive and ill-defined powers as might lead in the exercise of them to unification. Perhaps 75 per cent. of the powers asked for by the Commonwealth will not be exercised within the next five years.

We can all readily understand that they will not be exercised within the next five years, because no Government would put the screw on until it had made its own position perfectly secure by obtaining the consent of the people at a referendum. Referring to the times and the proposal to take a referendum, the Premier said—

I repeat that our first duty to the nation before taking a referendum should be to give the people an opportunity to understand the proposals.

I hope the Premier will bear that in mind when the proposal is made to refer this Bill to a Select Committee.

At present the Commonwealth has power under the Defence Act and the National Security Regulations to do anything it desires to do.

Then the Premier suggested that the powers should be extended, the period of their operation being from two to four years after the

cessation of hostilities. Later he definitely suggested three years.

The Premier: The Convention did not agree to that.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: No, but the suggestion was made. The Premier continued—

I have no doubt that if any proposals were submitted by way of referendum to the people at present many would take the view expressed this morning by Mr. Playford that some of the powers asked for are entirely unnecessary and could be used in relation to any activity now dealt with by the States.

He added that the proposals now before the House were very wide; they were practically unlimited. Speaking of the powers usurped by the Commonwealth, he said—

In 1906, tariff powers were taken from Western Australia. That was only five years after that State was given the right to levy Customs duties under the Constitution. In 1911, the Surplus Revenue Act was passed. Under that legislation, the States were deprived of a considerable portion of their sources of revenue . . . Within ten years of the establishment of the Commonwealth, Western Australia had been deprived of money which it expected to receive from Customs duty and surplus revenue . . . It is not surprising therefore that the people of Western Australia at any rate have got the idea that the Commonwealth is a band of robbers. . . .

The people of Western Australia, at any rate, have had a bitter experience in that respect. Invariably, when the Commonwealth has asked for increased powers, it has declared that it required such powers for specific purposes. However, the Commonwealth has extended the application of certain powers to other purposes; and, whenever that has been done, appeals to the High Court against Commonwealth action have failed. At least, the argument that such action is not in keeping with the spirit in which such powers were granted to the Commonwealth has been ineffective so far as the High Court is concerned. On this occasion Dr. Evatt has stressed the spirit of these proposals. I remind him that the High Court, in dealing with any matter arising from the application of these powers, would pay no attention to the spirit in which they may be granted . . . The High Court has declared that it can take into consideration only the letter of the law.

Further, on page 73 the Premier continued—

I have every confidence in the present Government; but some future Government may decide to exercise these powers for other than the purposes for which they are now sought. In that case, as I have just pointed out, the States could obtain no redress from the High Court. For this reason, many people, particularly the people of Western Australia, are inclined to take the safe path by saying "No," to every proposal for altering the Constitution.

Our Premier then outlined the geographical position of Western Australia. He quoted John Stuart Mill as saying that in London he was a churchman but that possibly in Arabia he might have been a Mohammedan; and I suppose Arabia is not much further distant from London than Canberra is from Western Australia. The Premier proceeded—

Whether we like it or not, that fact is apparent in Australia.

He instanced the seat of government, saying—

Because of lack of knowledge, distance from the seat of government also breeds misunderstandings, and once they occur much effort is needed to dissipate them.

He quoted India and the United States, and continued—

There is a deep-rooted opinion in Western Australia that the Federation has developed in such a way that the older-established and more populous States have exploited the smaller States, particularly Western Australia. The discontent centres in the use of the Customs tariff, which has operated to place a heavy burden on the primary producers of Western Australia and at the same time to retard its secondary industries. Dumping and other practices have been prevalent quite a long time.

Our Premier also pointed out that the percentage of enlistments from Western Australia was higher than that from other States, and that the Western Australian people had done more than their share in buying war savings certificates. He stated, further, that whilst our enlistments had been used to make good deficiencies in other States, we had not participated in the nation's record industrial expansion—what industrial expansion we had being due mainly to our own efforts. Further, Western Australia, he said, was the only State whose industrial expansion from the standpoint of the number of personnel employed in factories had declined since the commencement of the war. Regarding prices, it was pointed out by our Premier that the greatest rise in prices during the last war took place in 1918, and also in 1919, while the Commonwealth Government had war powers. I, of course, intend to vote against the Bill, as I feel that our Commonwealth Government has shown the greatest ability to disorganise and to discriminate against this State and get the least return for its money.

Mr. W. Hegney: And you want to perpetuate that, since you advocate continuance of the present system!

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: If under the present Commonwealth Government we have such disorganisation as we have now, let me tell the hon. member that the Bill means the perpetuation of that disorganisation. On page 111 of the Convention report there appears the following, though this is not by our Premier—

The Civil Construction Corps will remain in existence after the war, as the Civil Reconstruction Corps, into which will be absorbed all the surplus displaced munition and transport workers and demobilised soldiers, airmen and naval men. It will be a post-war labour battalion, the equivalent of Hitler's pre-war conscript labour force. It will be the big employment agency, possibly the largest existing in our post-war economy.

That is what Canberra is aiming for and driving at. I shall not cast my vote to get that sort of government.

Member: Who said that?

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: A man named Nicklin or Nicholas, I am not sure which. I do not know whether any members of this House have ever been forced to work where they did not want to go. I do not know whether any of our members realise what compulsion is like, though they are beginning to have a notion of it now under war conditions. As regards labour in Russia under such conditions, the dam that was blown up during the war meant the sacrifice of over a quarter of a million lives—lives of people forced into labour gangs to build the dam.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think that has anything to do with the Bill.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I desire to draw a parallel. During our great depression in Australia, men were set to work in this State on national undertakings, so that they might be employed, having no other source of livelihood. Men of 64 years of age and more were sent to work in places far distant from their homes, men in such a physical condition that they were almost unable to do the hard manual work they were told to do. Many of them came back to die in hospital. That is what we should get here if the scheme now put before us were instituted and perpetuated.

Yesterday we listened to a wonderful speech by the member for Nedlands, who pointed out the stupidity of being governed from a distance, with consequent inability to get satisfaction from the Central Government for this country. I could quote scores and

scores of instances where it has taken almost a year to get payment of a few shillings due from the Commonwealth Government. I could give instances of shopkeepers who are afraid to sell their goods at certain prices lest they should be prosecuted for profiteering. There is great difficulty in obtaining information quickly from Canberra. Yet we are asked to give the Commonwealth Government all these powers perhaps because we need a few houses. What did the Commonwealth Government do as regards the few houses it built here? It built those houses not of our wood but of Eastern States iron. Under the proposed system of government everything in the way of goods and material required here by the Commonwealth Government would come from the Eastern States, as much as it does now.

Senator Collings made a remarkable speech at the Convention. He slightly castigated our Leader of the Opposition, telling him that he made a wonderful speech, that he thought he had an ordered mind, but not a controlled mind. However, the senator made the statement that he could go into any little hamlet or village throughout Australia and send a telephone call through the post office there to any place on the continent. We might tell the senator that we can go into any village throughout the continent of Europe and send a cable to Australia. We can also go to any place throughout England and America and find post offices there in which we can get the same facilities. But there is one thing I can tell the senator, and it is that I know of no post office in the world, other than Australia, where our Prime Minister could be hung up for practically a whole day when he wanted to get in touch with one of his Ministers on a most important subject in war-time. He was not allowed to get through to a distant Premier because the lines were controlled by the S.P. bookmakers. I know of no other country in the world where the post office is getting huge sums of moneys by installing secret lines so that racing men can conduct illicit business.

There is an organisation here which has been sending letters to members of Parliament asking them to protest against this Bill. I have had several such letters. One reached me yesterday and I would like to read it. The writer, whom I know, controls many hundreds of votes.

Mr. Fox: Controls votes?

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I mean that he is the president of an organisation in which he wields tremendous influence. That is what I should have said. The letter reads—

Dear Madam: Re the Commonwealth Powers Bill now being considered by the Legislative Assembly, we wish to place our views on this measure before you and to say that we most strongly oppose the granting of any additional powers to the Federal Government. One legal authority, whom we had the opportunity of hearing recently, gave as his opinion that it was extremely doubtful whether any of the powers now being sought, if once given, could ever be regained. This is most important and should be cleared up. Also quite a few of the powers mentioned in the Bill have been administered by the Commonwealth for many years. Further, under the National Security Regulations the Commonwealth has all the powers which are necessary and which we consider are more than sufficient for any situation which may arise during the present conflict, and for that matter immediately after, and any measures which are thought to be vital for post-war reconstruction can be arranged by agreement between the States and Commonwealth without giving away powers which may never be returned. We feel that the proposals are only the thin end of the wedge for the abolition of the State Parliaments generally and should be resisted with all our power. In conclusion, we also feel that the general feeling of opposition to this measure is a sufficient mandate for you to oppose the Bill in the Lower House. With all good wishes, Yours faithfully (Sgd.) Willcocks.

Willcocks!

Mr. North: No relation, I hope?

Mr. Fox: What is the address at the head of the letter?

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I will give it to the hon. member later. In conclusion, I wish to say that it has been a great disappointment to me, after reading the speech of the Premier made at the Convention and after reading speeches by others, to find that while Daniel went into the lions' den and got out because of his faith, our Premier had no faith, no faith in himself, no faith in his State. He simply allowed himself to be gobbled up by the lions.

Point of Order.

Mr. J. Hegney: On a point of order! I understand that the letter just quoted by the member for Subiaco will be made available in the House for members.

Mr. Speaker: No.

Mr. J. Hegney: Will it require a motion to that effect?

Mr. Speaker: No.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: I will willingly give the letter.

Mr. Speaker: The Standing Orders provide that a member may demand that a document or a file quoted by a Minister be placed on the table of the House; but no provision is made for the placing on the table of the House of documents quoted by private members.

Debate Resumed.

MR. TRIAT (Mt. Magnet): I have listened with a great deal of attention to the various speakers on this all-important subject, and must confess that I have received much enlightenment, especially from the legal members. The speech made by the member for West Perth is one of the most able speeches that have been made here. He was not prepared to pick on the persons responsible for the framing of the Bill; but dealt with the subject-matter of the Bill, in my opinion, in a most comprehensive manner and in a way that could be understood by the lay members. The most important point that I was able to glean from his speech was that he, an eminent lawyer, said that Clause 4 meant what it actually said, namely, that at the end of the five-year period this Bill, if passed, would no longer remain in force. But another extremely able legal gentleman in this Chamber, holding exactly the same qualifications as those held by the member for West Perth, expressed an opinion totally at variance with that of the member for West Perth. The member for Nedlands is known to be a sound and solid lawyer whose opinion is accepted without question by most people. It is regrettable, however, for lay members of the House to find two men of such vast experience in legal matters differing in their opinions on this Bill. Their opinions, again, differ from the opinions of other members of the legal profession who perhaps have not had the same experience.

Member: Is not that the way in which the profession lives?

Mr. TRIAT: I suppose it is. Therefore, when laymen must decide the matter, the only thing they can do is to read into the language of the Bill its ordinary meaning. In other words, we must use our common-sense, because, when all is said and done, law is only the application of commonsense to anything in the way of legislation. Un-

fortunately, in legal phraseology too many words are used and these bemuse the ordinary mind. A sentence of two words would probably be construed differently by different lawyers. There are only two words as to the construction of which there can be no difference of opinion by lawyers, and those are the words "yes" and "no." As to any other words, there will be all the difference in the world.

Since I have been a member of this Chamber and since war broke out, I have heard speakers make definite pronouncements on the question of a new order. Speakers of every shade of political opinion have spoken strongly on the subject. They were definitely of the opinion that the new order should be introduced at the earliest possible moment. That was the opinion of them all and it still remains their opinion. In my opinion, we must have a new order after this war.

Mr. North: Or civil war.

Mr. TRIAT: That is the alternative. But every man and woman has a different opinion upon what the new order is to be. I suggest that there is the best part of a third of a million different opinions on the new order in Australia today. There are countless different opinions as to what shape it should take and in what manner it should be administered. Everybody seems to regard himself as qualified to say the last word on the new order. That is the position as I view it and therein lies a danger. In Australia today there are seven Parliaments and in every Parliament there are three different political opinions, so that in seven Parliaments we have 21 different opinions involved in the framing of a new order. What is going to be the result? A tower of Babel? Chaotic conditions? Of course!

It is not possible for any of the seven different Parliaments individually to constitute a new order. That can be done only through one source and that source is the National Parliament. The Commonwealth Parliament is the only body that can speak with the voice of the whole people, the only body that can say to the people, "Here is a set of rules and regulations to govern a new order and to each State Parliament powers will be delegated to ensure that that new order is put into operation." If the Commonwealth Parliament desired to take all the power of administration I would oppose the Bill strongly, but that has not been suggested. The Commonwealth Parliament

suggests the drawing up of a programme of reconstruction after the war, and the programme of reconstruction will give to the various States the right of administration. Power will be delegated to the States. The Commonwealth has emphasised the need for co-operation between the States and the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. Doney: You know how that is to be secured.

Mr. TRIAT: I have enough faith in the people of Australia to be sure they will co-operate.

Mr. Doney: It is to be secured by pressure through Act of Parliament. That is not co-operation.

Mr. TRIAT: There will be sufficient co-operation. I listened to the hon. member speaking yesterday and was astounded to hear what he said, because I regard him as a man of sound commonsense. Yesterday he attacked one man. He did not attack the Bill but the man.

Mr. Doney: I attacked the man and the Bill.

Mr. TRIAT: The hon. member said that this man had said, "Here is a Bill; take it or leave it," and then asked the members of the Convention to frame a Bill between themselves that would be suitable to all parties. Because of that he said that this man had no convictions of his own but was a weakling. As a matter of fact, Dr. Evatt was a man who was prepared to bring a body of men together and try to get them to reach a common opinion.

Mr. Doney: You do not share the common understanding of the man.

Mr. TRIAT: Evidently I do not. Perhaps I do not know him well enough, but I give him credit for trying to be honest and sincere. Jokes have been made on this question. Yesterday the member for Nedlands referred to one of Aesop's fables, which was quite aptly quoted to strengthen the point he desired to make. There is another fable which is very apt and applicable to quite a lot of speakers, including myself. It would not be amiss perhaps to recount it. It is about the fly and the chariot axle. Probably every member knows it. It refers to a big chariot race which was held in the days of the Roman Empire. A large number of chariots were dashing up and down creating a tremendous amount of dust. One particular chariot, drawn by four beautiful horses, con-

tributed a large quota to the dust already raised. As it went on its course a little fly settled on the axle and called to its fellows, "Look at all the dust I am raising!" That could aptly be applied to a lot of the speeches that have been made.

This is the time to pass a Bill to provide for the launching of a programme for reconstruction after the war. If we leave such a measure until the war ends it will be too late. It has been said that there is no occasion for haste, but my opinion is that this is the time in which to do it. If we leave it until hostilities cease we will be faced with chaotic conditions and it will not be possible to surmount our problems except, as was suggested by an interjection, by revolution, in which I am quite sure this country has no desire to participate. Now that there has been an attempt to evolve some scheme of reconstruction with a view to doing some good for the people after the war we find that there is a multitude of ideas even in this House. The most grievous circumstance is the suspicion which has arisen. People are seized by the great bugbear of suspicion that somebody is trying to get some particular advantage for himself, or that some particular Government is trying to do something with a view to deriving particular advantage for itself. If the Commonwealth Government had said to the State of Western Australia, "In view of the powers you have today to administer your own affairs in Western Australia we will give you the right to form a reconstruction plan for after the war," this Parliament could not do it. It would not have the power to do it. It could deal only with matters within its own borderline.

This Parliament has no power to raise finance by any means or measure, and no reconstruction plan of any consequence could be available to the people unless the power of raising money lay within the province of the Government in power. So who can put a reconstruction plan into operation, apart from the National Government? That is the only body which is able to do this job and I give it the credit for being prepared to play the game and be fair. I have no hesitation in saying that the Federal authorities are the people I am going to support in their attempt to give effect to a reconstruction plan for the rehabilitation of our people and reconstruction of our economy, and to give us freedom from want and

all the good things they propose to give us. There seems to be a lot of fear that the Commonwealth Government is going to be a sort of bogey man, but we have an all-protecting clause in the Bill—much as legal men may differ on the point—to provide that the Bill shall not operate for a period longer than five years after the termination of hostilities.

Mr. Doney: There is a protecting clause in the uniform taxation measure. How do you reckon that will operate?

Mr. TRIAT: I think it will operate in the same way. Surely a measure can be framed from the English language by people of legal or even ordinary standing to provide a guarantee that what the people want done shall be done!

Mr. Patrick: We can have a try.

Mr. TRIAT: Of course we can and it can be done! If the Commonwealth Government did not carry out its promise at the end of five years we could depart from the proposal. But if the promises made by the Commonwealth Government are adhered to I think this Parliament will welcome a continuation of its proposals. If the Commonwealth Government can give us freedom from want and fear and can put our returned men and women into employment after the war—

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: That is not in the Bill.

Mr. TRIAT: Of course it is! Does the hon. member mean to say that to provide employment for men and women is not giving them freedom from want?

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: It is not in the Bill.

Mr. TRIAT: I can read it into the Bill.

Mr. Doney: It is not said in so many words.

Mr. TRIAT: It will be stated in so many words. I will read in a moment extracts from this yellow book.

Mr. North: That is, "The Case?"

Mr. TRIAT: Yes. I will read the details to indicate that the Commonwealth proposes to give us freedom from want.

Mr. Patrick: You are referring to the original proposals, which were abandoned.

Mr. TRIAT: A lot of the proposals are sound and are still being adhered to.

Mr. Patrick: Freedom from want has gone.

Mr. TRIAT: If a man is guaranteed employment his fear of want has gone and he has freedom from want. During the last war when men were fighting, I can remem-

ber quite a lot of speakers saying that this country would be made a country fit for heroes to live in. Capable men made that statement. But there was no guarantee on that point. It was only a statement. What was the result? When the war was over there were poverty and suffering and no freedom from want. A returned soldier who had lost an arm or a leg was not wanted by employers. If he could not do his work 100 per cent. efficiently his patriotism did not impress the employers. There is one big celebrated firm in Perth that offered returned limbless soldiers jobs at a reduced rate of wages because they were not 100 per cent. Members all know the firm to which I am referring.

The Minister for Labour: The only time you get opposition to a new order is when you try to put it into operation.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Did these men have a pension?

Mr. TRIAT: That is what occurred after the last war. In 1921 and 1922 men with returned soldiers' badges on their coats were walking this country begging for food. They were not looking for work because they could not get it. That was within five years of the last war, which finished in 1918. In 1921 and 1922 starvation was rampant for the men who had fought oversea for the freedom of this country. Yet members say that, because the Commonwealth is putting up a scheme to prevent its occurring after this war, it is trying to gobble up the States. It is not a question of unification; the matter is being approached from the wrong angle!

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Hear, hear!

Mr. TRIAT: I am surprised, when this man is prepared to assist the farmers, that he cannot in a House such as this get the support of members representing the agricultural districts. No member who has been in this House for so short a period as I have has spoken so much against the Commonwealth Government. I have attacked it time after time, no matter to which party it belonged. I have not attacked it on political grounds but because it has not given to the State the rights it should enjoy. I am prepared to attack the present Commonwealth Government, or any other, that refuses to stand up to its obligations. Nobody has been more vicious in his attacks on that Government than I, but I am just as strong

in my support of the proposals put up by the present Government.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: But it has not put up any proposals.

Mr. TRIAT: A Bill has been drawn up.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: With vague generalities.

Mr. TRIAT: The Bill is not that vague. Much of it is substantial to me, but many people regard it as being vague.

Mr. Withers: The substance is what they are afraid of.

Mr. TRIAT: The essence of the proposals is contained in the Bill. If the Commonwealth Government is prepared to co-operate with the States and see that these proposals are included in a fluid manner so that they can be administered, what is wrong with that? Let us do our best to frame them in a reasonable form.

The Minister for Labour: The member for Subiaco wants to see the house built before giving authority to proceed with the building of it!

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: I want to see a house built in which we can live.

Mr. TRIAT: I am supporting this measure from every angle. The question of employment after the war is a most important one. Jobs must be found for these people and to do that we must have money. We in this State cannot find money at the present time. With our existing limited powers we are no more powerful than is an ordinary municipal council.

Mr. Needham: We have not as much power in that regard.

Mr. TRIAT: That is so. The local governing bodies have the right to tax and raise money. We stand today in the same position, in relation to the Commonwealth, as the municipal councils stand in relation to the States which have delegated powers to them. While we remain in that position we cannot draw up any solid scheme for the rehabilitation of the people after the war. But we can co-operate with the power which is drawing up a scheme, and administer the scheme, as I think we are more closely in touch with the people of our own State than is any other Government. No Federal member is so closely in touch with the population of this State because he does not spend sufficient time here, and possibly the area of his electorate is too great. But the State member is contacting his electorate every week.

He knows all the people, the circumstances of the country and its geography. He knows everything connected with his own part of the State. Under these conditions and with co-operation existing between the two Governments we can successfully administer any new order inaugurated and agreed to by the various States.

Mr. Doney: What makes you so satisfied that we are going to administer the Act?

Mr. TRIAT: Because the Commonwealth Government has from time to time said that there will be co-operation between it and the States.

Mr. Marshall: It has not displayed that characteristic in its military administration.

Mr. TRIAT: I can find a million things wrong with its administration today, but what a rotten thing to say in wartime that we must be 100 per cent. efficient. I heard the Prime Minister say that the question of organisation of the Army was one of great difficulty. He said, "Nobody realises it more than I do, but when you bring a big body of people together from all walks of life into a big job without any administrative capabilities and try to make that job function 100 per cent. efficiently, it is impossible. That is what the Army is today. When administrative ability can be brought to bear, that Army will then become capable." I can understand that position. This war has not been going very long as far as time is concerned. It started in 1939, and this is the beginning of 1943. With all the faults of the Commonwealth Government it still has some chance of achieving a wonderful job when the war is over if the matter is taken in hand in time. In putting up the case for greater Commonwealth powers some statements were made, and they have not all gone by the board. Those ideas still remain in the minds of the people who framed the proposition. One of Dr. Evatt's books dealing with this matter contains the following passage:—

The job to be done is a big one. It will require the closest association of the State Governments and local authorities with the Commonwealth Government, but it will also require a definite lead from the Commonwealth and the acceptance by the Commonwealth of the responsibility for seeing that effective action is taken by all authorities to whom repatriation functions are delegated.

In ordinary English that means that the Commonwealth is going to set up powers to deal with repatriation, rehabilitation and the

various functions set out in the Bill, and will call upon the States for their co-operation to see that they are administered. It means co-operation! Is not that the right way for a country with seven Parliaments to function? The mother Parliament should hand out the ideas and delegate to its various State Parliaments the necessary powers to carry out its wishes.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: And then see that it is done.

Mr. TRIAT: Yes. I heard a member say that it took him six months to receive a reply to an old-age pension query. I am surprised at that, because I have had a lot of experience in such matters and it has never taken me six months. Such a state of affairs should not exist where all Commonwealth authority is vested in Canberra. That idea can be departed from under a new scheme. We have officers in this State just as capable as any in Canberra. They can handle the delegated powers, but if a mistake is made by any of them Canberra can step in and say, "You are finished." I have here another extract which is as follows:—

There can be no doubt that substantial improvements can be made in the living standards of the Australian people by increased provision of communal services, educational facilities, the extension of hospitals, infant health clinics and convalescent and rest centres.

Who, in the name of goodness, can be in a better position to attend to the infant health of the Commonwealth than the Commonwealth people and Government? Who can find the money for national health but the Commonwealth Government? Who can find the money for proper and better education except the Commonwealth Government, and regulate or delegate to the States the necessary powers to ensure that the provisions regarding health, education and so forth are implemented? From whom should the money for such work be obtained? Surely it should be from the Commonwealth Government!

Mr. Sampson: We do not get it at present.

Mr. TRIAT: We get some. But even suppose we have not got it from the Commonwealth Government under existing conditions, it must be remembered that practically all the money we do get is derived from that source. The point is that this proposal deals with the future. We may not have got money from the Commonwealth Government in the past for the purposes I have sug-

gested and in the manner I have indicated, and we may not get it now. We are looking to the future. This is something new; this is the new order.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The Commonwealth Government has not the authority to furnish those funds today, and it is asking for that authority.

Mr. TRIAT: As I read it, the proposition is that the Commonwealth Government is prepared to give us this assistance if we are willing to fall in line.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Hear, hear!

Mr. TRIAT: That is why I support the Bill. I have in mind statements that have been made by important members of this House who sit in Opposition. I have every respect for them. They are men who have worked hard and have developed their properties under harsh conditions. I know their trials and tribulations, and I have every respect for them and their views. From time to time I have listened to their remarks and I have frankly told them that if they were to put their case up in the proper quarters, they would get support from men on the Government side of the House. Take the references to interest on interest! There is no member sitting on the Government side of the House who would tolerate that practice. They do not believe in payment of interest on interest. If these proposals of the Commonwealth Government are put into effect that is one of the troubles that possibly will be avoided. To quote again from Dr. Evatt's pamphlet—

The burden of high capital costs is a constant source of anxiety to many producers. In a period of low returns it absorbs far too great a proportion of the farmer's gross income. In a period of high returns, the tendency is for all values to rise and for farmers who are purchasing properties to incur further capital costs which tend to discourage the expenditure on development so necessary for proper husbandry. The method of financing farms is open to objection in that it does not provide for any automatic adjustment in values on account of variations in prices, yields, and the general prosperity of the industry. No serious attempt has yet been made to deal with these problems except at times when the burden of indebtedness has become so great that the farmer must be given some relief.

Would any member of this House say that is not true? Of course it is true.

Mr. Marshall: Have you read the provisions of the Mortgage Bank Bill?

Mr. TRIAT: Yes.

Mr. Marshall: That is an effort to relieve them—I don't think!

Mr. TRIAT: Let us hope that what is proposed is a new idea altogether. Continuing the quotation—

Plans for rural debt adjustment have been developed by co-operation between the Commonwealth and the States, but as a rule they are only expedients designed to correct the mistakes of the past and to relieve acute immediate distress caused by those mistakes. They do not pretend to tackle the problem at its source, and with the present division of authority between the Commonwealth and the States, there is little possibility of developing a uniform plan that will prevent the recurrence of the evils associated with rising land values.

Nothing I have read or heard since I have been a member of Parliament has appealed to me more than that statement. It is a statement with substance in it. Nothing has been done to tackle the problem at the source. Never has there been adequate co-operation between the Commonwealth and the State so that it could be tackled at the source. The problem cannot be tackled apart from the Commonwealth Government. Surely what is proposed is indicative of encouragement to us. If I were a farmer, I would say to the Commonwealth, "Yes, let us join up with your new order. We will join up with anyone who will give us the right to tackle the problem at the source." The farmer labours on his property and encounters endless difficulties, and in the end finds his property is overburdened with capitalisation. Let us wipe that out and let the farmers start over again on a decent basis. This is a most important matter, and I think that everything possible should be done to improve the conditions of the farmer.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The farmers of this country realise that too.

Mr. TRIAT: I have not heard any indication of that in this House apart from the fact that one or two members have stated that they will support the Bill.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is political.

Mr. TRIAT: This is not political. I do not regard it as such. The matter is so important that the individual's political opinions should not be considered for one moment. This is vastly too important for political considerations. It is a matter involving the destiny of the State. The Commonwealth scheme will operate for the good of Australia and help to cope with post-war requirements. That is not a political mat-

ter. The problem, as stated in the booklet from which I have quoted, is involved in the fact that there is a division of authority between the Commonwealth and the States, and in the circumstances it is not possible to devise an effective scheme to deal with issues such as those to which I have referred. Let us get away from that. Let us give the Commonwealth the right it seeks for the period of five years and if, during that period, it demonstrates that it can protect the man on the land, I have no fear but that the people will say the Commonwealth can continue the scheme after that period. I do not think they will desire to depart from the operations of any scheme that will benefit the man on the land or the man who is working for his living. These are the two sections of the community I seek to protect. They are the two that always seem to be in trouble and faced with poverty. The man who does not work for his living never seems to be in want. The men who are working hard under difficulties to produce the real wealth of this country are the ones we must protect. In the past the Commonwealth Government has recognised the position regarding some sections, and has ensured that when he reaches the age of retirement a man in that category shall be paid a pension. The fellow who never works is always provided for. Here is another quotation I shall place before members—

Australian development in the past has been unbalanced. More than half our population and by far the greater part of industry are concentrated in the six metropolitan areas.

Can any member say that there is no truth in that statement? No one in Western Australia would dare say it was not true. Certainly by far the greater proportion of our population is concentrated in the metropolitan area.

Mr. Patrick: And that is where the political power rests.

Mr. TRIAT: Let us see that that state of affairs is altered and that population is diverted from the city to the country. That is what I aim at. All too many of our people are concentrated in the metropolitan area.

Mr. Sampson: People are steadily leaving Leonora.

Mr. TRIAT: And under the present system they will continue to drift from Leonora and from other outback centres. Prior to the war the drift of the population was towards the cities, and the country areas were

becoming denuded. Why was that so? It was because there are more facilities and amenities in the city. There are more amusements to be enjoyed where large populations congregate.

Mr. Sampson: And there is more work.

Mr. TRIAT: The drift to the cities is because people can there enjoy all the goods of life that those resident in the outback areas are deprived of. That is why people drift to the cities. Let us get away from that position and let us decentralise our population, so that people will be content to remain in the outer areas where the real wealth of the State is produced. Most decidedly those engaged in the production of wealth are not to be found in the city. They are the pastoralists, the wheatgrowers, the timber-getters, the goldminers, the coalminers and others in similar categories. They are doing the work, not the dwellers in the city. Two-thirds of the population of Western Australia is to be found within 20 miles of the General Post Office. Now we have before us a proposition that will seek to get away from that state of affairs, and yet some members do not seem to care for it. They do not seem to want the new order. They do not seem to be interested in the fact that population should be largely in the outer areas producing the real wealth of the State rather than be concentrated in the city. The proposal to deviate from present conditions is one I stand for and will do my utmost to support. The proposal is that the metropolitan area shall not be permitted any longer to contain by far the bulk of the population of the State. To quote from the booklet again—

In South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania the share of industrial development has been inadequate.

Is that statement correct or is it wrong? It is obviously correct regarding Western Australia and Tasmania, but South Australia has certainly derived some benefit from the establishment of war industries. Members will agree that in Western Australia industrial development has been totally inadequate. If the Commonwealth scheme is agreed to and a new order is established, it will provide for a better distribution of industrial development.

Mr. Watts: The Commonwealth has not done anything along those lines during the last two or three years. Why has it not done so?

Mr. TRIAT: I do not know.

Mr. Watts: Why expect them to do so now?

Mr. Withers: The Commonwealth Government desires the power.

Mr. Watts: It has had all necessary power under the defence regulations and Commonwealth Ministers have taken no action in Western Australia.

Mr. TRIAT: That is the trouble.

Mr. Thorn: You must remember that selfishness and greed have to be taken into consideration.

Mr. TRIAT: Selfishness and greed are inherent in human nature. Even a little child just after it has learnt to walk may be greedy. That is human nature. Still, there is such a thing as human nature being honourable. I have seen kiddies that were honourable and some that were dishonourable.

Mr. Mann: But there is no honour in the Commonwealth Government at the present time.

Mr. TRIAT: I would not say that. There are many honourable men in the Commonwealth Parliament, men who will stand up to their obligations and statements and carry out to the best of their ability what they have promised to do. There are doubtless some men in the Commonwealth Parliament, and probably some in the State Parliaments, who are "rooks," and who under the lap will do things that are definitely not right. But such men are a small minority in any Government.

Mr. Patrick: And in any community.

Mr. TRIAT: Yes. It is human nature for some people to be dishonourable, for other people to be honourable. There is another paragraph—

The tendency is often accentuated by the monopolistic practices of established industries.

That operates wherever monopolies or combines secure a grip of business. It is natural for them to be greedy and selfish.

Mr. Watts: What about State monopolies?

Mr. TRIAT: Are there State monopolies?

Mr. Watts: Yes, railways, tramways, electric light works and heaven knows what else.

Mr. TRIAT: There is no opposition to those activities in this State.

Mr. Watts: Of course not!

Mr. TRIAT: I do not refer to undertakings owned by the people. Nationalisation

is not monopoly. What I consider to be a monopoly is a small body of people who, for their own advantage and advancement, obtain control of big business. However, I differ from the interpretation of legal men that the fact of the whole of the people owning an undertaking constitutes a monopoly.

Mr. Watts: Read the definition in Nelson's Encyclopaedia.

Mr. TRIAT: Where the whole of the people own an undertaking, I classify it as nationalisation, not monopoly. So long as the State has control of an undertaking, I am quite satisfied. But there are big monopolies existing in Australia such as the Broken Hill Pty. Ltd. and the sugar combine. Do members think they will tolerate any interference with their rights or monopolies? They will use all the political and financial power at their disposal to prevent anything in the way of interference with them.

Mr. Fox: They are doing it now.

Mr. TRIAT: Of course they are! We know that sort of thing is in operation everywhere. It is even found operating in a small place like Western Australia amongst the breweries. The next item reads—

What is the result? In less industrialised States and in outlying rural districts, promising new industries have been crushed by the overwhelming strength of their established rivals.

That is undoubtedly the position. Every industry we try to establish in Western Australia is crushed, not by the Commonwealth Government, but through the influence of powerful capitalistic monopolies in other States that have the ear of the politicians in the Commonwealth Parliament.

Mr. Seward: They control the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. TRIAT: But the Commonwealth Government is prepared to stop this practice if only we give it the power to do so.

Mr. Marshall: It has not taken control of the Commonwealth Bank.

Mr. TRIAT: Any Government that attempted to interfere with the present monetary system of Australia would not last five minutes.

Mr. Patrick: That power is already contained in the Constitution.

Mr. TRIAT: What power?

Mr. Patrick: Banking.

Mr. TRIAT: I am aware of that, but if Mr. Curtin attempted to depart from orthodox practice in banking, how long would he last?

Mr. Seward: He has done it.

Mr. TRIAT: The orthodox system of banking has been carried on during the war by the Bank of England and by the Commonwealth Bank of Australia.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Do you suggest that Mr. Curtin has not done it and is not doing it today?

Mr. TRIAT: Did not the bank put into circulation some hundreds of thousands of pounds of Treasury notes with satisfactory results? If Mr. Curtin seized the whole of the Associated Banks and closed them, how long would he last? Not five minutes! A man who today has £10 or so in war bonds is almost a capitalist and looks for his pound of flesh. There, human nature comes in again. If the Commonwealth Government is prepared to say it is going to ensure that the smaller States which are less industrialised get a fair deal and are not tampered with by capitalistic combines, I am prepared to give it my support.

Mr. Seward: If the Government is prepared to carry it out.

Mr. TRIAT: The Government will carry it out.

Mr. Seward: Oh, oh!

Mr. TRIAT: There is Doubting Thomas again. Why not give the Commonwealth Government a trial? A trial for five years is all that is asked under this Bill.

The Premier: The Prime Minister said he would do so.

Mr. TRIAT: Yes, and Mr. Curtin is an honourable man. Everyone who attended the Convention said the same thing. The intention is to improve the conditions of the people after the war ends. Is not that so?

Mr. Thorn: No, the intention is to get additional power.

Mr. TRIAT: I do not think that is right. The Commonwealth asks to be given a chance for five years to put into operation a plan for something that will be worth while hereafter. Another of the proposals has regard to employment and the placing in suitable occupations of men after being discharged from the Armed Forces. Is it possible for any authority but the Commonwealth to do that?

Mr. Thorn: The States can do better than the Commonwealth provided the Commonwealth finds the money.

Mr. TRIAT: The hon. member has doubtless heard the adage about too many cooks spoiling the broth. There are six States and six different systems, and where would we get with such a task? Nowhere! Unless we have one plan for Australia as a whole, no good will result.

Mr. Thorn: We have a plan for our own State ready to put into operation.

Mr. TRIAT: What was the hon. member's plan for the State to deal with unemployment during the last 10 or 12 years?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. TRIAT: There were 10,000 men looking for jobs that could not be found for them, and yet the hon. member says we are capable of undertaking this task.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Who created that position?

Mr. TRIAT: We are not capable of undertaking the task because we have not the money. The situation was created by reason of the fact that we had no secondary industries of account in the State, because people are prepared to buy in the cheapest market and because our wages rates are higher than those ruling elsewhere.

Mr. Sampson: And because of dumping from the Eastern States.

Mr. TRIAT: Unemployment existed in England and everywhere else. I maintain that the only authority that can be responsible for putting members of the Armed Forces back to work is the Commonwealth Government, because it controls the purse. On that item also, the Commonwealth will have my support. The next item relates to the control of prices and profits. Whose function is it to attend to that matter?

Mr. Thorn: It seems to be nobody's at present.

Mr. TRIAT: There is nothing more deplorable than the present price-fixing arrangements in Western Australia. One has only to visit any town in the backblocks to see what is happening.

The Minister for Labour: That is governed by the Commonwealth National Security Regulations.

Mr. TRIAT: Someone has to do the job. Let us get someone who will put into operation a price fixing measure that will be along the right lines, and that will properly con-

trol the business and see that adequate penalties are set up. That would fix the matter entirely. It is a most important question. A man may be earning £1 a day at the present time, but that £1 is not really worth 15s. to him, because the cost of living continues to go up by leaps and bounds. People say that that is due to a shortage of this or that commodity. Actually, there is no shortage. In some respects we have more products than before. Let me instance vegetables. There is an enormous production of them in Western Australia, but an enormous price is being charged for them.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: They are cheap today. You can get nice beans for 4d. a lb.

Mr. TRIAT: I know that bananas have been costing 4s. a dozen. It would be a wonderful thing if the Commonwealth authorities had legal power properly to control prices.

Mr. Willmott: They have made an unholy mess of the potato industry.

Mr. Seward: Let the powers be given to the local authorities.

Mr. TRIAT: That would not do. How could they control the price of goods that came from the Eastern States?

Mr. Thorn: The Commonwealth authorities have control over them. Do not be silly.

Mr. TRIAT: The hon. member should not be silly. A certain individual was manufacturing a very good class of jam in Western Australia. I bought it myself because it suited me. After a period he found that Eastern States jam was being dumped into Western Australia at a price cheaper than his price, even after all freight and charges had been paid. The result was that my friend had to close down his business. We have no control over that.

Mr. Thorn: If we had a law passed giving us the control, then we could control the situation.

Mr. TRIAT: We cannot control the price of goods that come from the Eastern States. Those goods can be sold in this State at a price lower than that at which they can be manufactured here.

Several members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member should take no notice of interjections.

Mr. TRIAT: I do not mind them; they often make a speech. The Commonwealth Government should have power to control and regulate prices in Australia. It should

have full power to say that prices shall not exceed a certain amount, to see that the goods are passed through the proper channels, and organise the trade generally. The Federal authorities are the only ones who can do that.

Mr. Thorn: You remember there was a prosecution in connection with matches.

The Minister for Labour: By the Commonwealth.

Mr. TRIAT: Matches are being sold in the streets of Perth today at 2d. per box. The price fixing business, as at present controlled by the Commonwealth Government, is not operating successfully.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: The price is 1½d.

Mr. TRIAT: I have paid 2d. a box in the street.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: That is a ½d. too much.

Mr. TRIAT: I know, but I cannot inform on people who do that sort of thing. I would not feel disposed to do that.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: You could! It is your job.

Mr. TRIAT: It is not my job, but the job of the officials attached to the price fixing department. Who finds out whether liquor is being sold rightfully or wrongfully? Does the consumer say he does not like such and such liquor or that it is costing too much? When any suspicion on that point is entertained an inspector is sent to see whether the liquor is sold as it should be sold.

The Minister for Labour: There are informers too.

Mr. TRIAT: I do not feel disposed to become an informer.

The Minister for Labour: Even in the case of profiteering?

Mr. TRIAT: No. I would buy what I wanted somewhere else. Matches can be bought in the street for 2d. a box.

Mr. J. H. Smith: You mean from the old man who walks around the streets?

Mr. TRIAT: Yes, that is the man. It is not right that matches should be sold anywhere at that price. Is the hon. member prepared to inform against that individual?

Mr. J. H. Smith: No.

The Minister for Labour: He charges ½d. for delivery.

Mr. Thorn: Quite right too.

Mr. TRIAT: The questions and answers go on to say—

(7) To develop the physical resources of Australia in order to help support a larger

and more prosperous population; e.g., by road development, water conservation and irrigation, soil protection and improvement, and productive public works of all kinds.

We have here all the resources imaginable to maintain a population a hundredfold greater than it is—I do not think! That is not for Western Australia to do; it is purely a national matter. The question of an increase in our population by a further influx of people is definitely a national one. The sooner the Commonwealth Government is given full power to ensure that the population of Australia is doubled and even trebled, and that within a generation or two that population is brought up to a reasonable standard of comfort and living, the better it will be for all concerned. I support the contention that that power should be given to the Commonwealth for a term of five years to see whether it is able to carry out its promise and bring about an increase in the population. We must have more people in this continent. A great many persons could undoubtedly be settled in Western Australia if we could find some method whereby their produce could be disposed of when it is grown. How can this State guarantee that the produce will be marketed at payable prices?

Mr. Doney: The Commonwealth Government could not guarantee that either.

Mr. TRIAT: We should give it a chance to show whether it can do so. It is certainly entitled to consideration in that respect.

Mr. Sampson: We would be able to dispose of our products if that from the Eastern States were kept out.

Mr. TRIAT: That is all very well coming from the hon. member. I guarantee that he is not wearing a suit made from cloth manufactured by the Albany Mills.

Mr. Sampson: I cannot say whether you are right or wrong.

Mr. TRIAT: And yet the hon. member talks about patronising local products. I am wearing a suit made, from Albany cloth, by the Adelaide Tailoring Coy.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: You should not be wearing the vest.

Mr. TRIAT: Why not? I have not had any new suits made since the war broke out. I have all my coupons intact, as I can prove. I should like to see the hon. member's coupon book. Let her compare her purchases of clothes with mine!

Mr. Sampson: You are going a little too far now.

Mr. TRIAT: The hon. member can see my coupons as proof that I have not bought any clothing since the war broke out.

Mr. Marshall: I am quite willing to accept both coupon books, if you like.

Mr. TRIAT: Another statement in the book from which I am quoting is worthy of reference. It says:—

If we ever reached that state where Australia wanted no more goods produced, but was producing all the goods we need without using all the men available, there would still be no need for unemployment.

I sincerely hope that will be so. We have been led to believe that unless people work long hours and on many days of the week everything must stagnate. This is a new idea: it is something for the future.

Mr. Doney: Does the book say how it is to be done?

Mr. TRIAT: I will come to that later. I admire the statement, and think it is wonderful. We are told how it will be done. The book says—

It would simply mean that a little more leisure had become more attractive to us than a little more material production. The Government's role would then be to see that the benefits of the high level of production, and of the leisure, are evenly spread throughout the community.

Does that suit the member for Williams-Narrogin?

Mr. Doney: It is too idealistic.

Mr. TRIAT: The extract continues—

In other words hours of work must be reduced until all men seeking work can be employed. There is no absolute rule for working eight or any other number of hours for each of five or six days in the week, and for 50 weeks of the year.

The hon. member ought to agree with that.

Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.15 p.m.

Mr. TRIAT: I was on the question of over-production and how methods could be evolved to overcome it. In the past it was always considered that unless workers were prepared to work very long hours for seven days a week, the country would stagnate. According, however, to the new ideas of the people who are to draw plans for a new order, including ourselves, over-production can be overcome in a way which the Australian people have advocated for numerous years—by reducing the daily hours of work. When all is said and done, all that the people

of this earth desire is sufficient of the requirements of life such as food and clothing, and in addition leisure to be enjoyed. For years it has been recognised by men who have gone scientifically into the subject of long hours, that such hours do not tend to produce a greater quantity of goods, or goods of equally good type. Swiss, English and American firms have proved by experiments that the shortening of hours resulted in increased production and also increased efficiency. In making highly technical instruments such as lenses, Switzerland increased the production by reducing the hours of work; and today many of the big factories in England offer better conditions and shorter hours than obtained in the past.

In the big munition works of Australia what is called the tea period helps to build up the worker's reserve of strength for the last part of the working day. The idea is not new. It has been applied for some time. However, its application on a large scale is new. As an advocate for miners in the Industrial Arbitration Court I have claimed that reduction of the hours of labour would increase output. However, all the intelligent persons connected with mining companies pooch-pooched that idea. They contended that under ordinary conditions of the mining industry in Western Australia hours of labour could not be reduced without the output falling immediately. However, on account of the unhealthy nature of the work the Arbitration Court agreed that hours of labour underground should be reduced from 44 to 40 hours per week. An increased production resulted in every Western Australian mine! The companies today would not revert to the old system, which ceased in 1936. This shows definitely that the idea is sound. No doubt there is a limit to what is practicable in regard to reduction of hours, but the principle can be adopted with satisfaction to all concerned. There is, of course, a great difference between hard manual labour under bad conditions and mental work under good conditions. I have worked hard at physical labour, and at the end of the day I have felt ill and weak; but I have never felt thus as the result of mental labour.

There is absolutely no rule that governs the number of working hours per day. There is no rule which determines that men must work six days a week for 50 years. There is no fixed rule whatever in that respect. If

the goods required can be produced in a shorter period of work, that period is sufficient. Thus over-production can be overcome. Men work to produce the goods and services that are needed. Once that end has been reached, there is time for leisure. But today there is an effort to increase the daily hours of work, and the number of weekly working days, including even Sunday. On the Golden Mile the men work every Sunday of the year. Here I wish to quote a question and the answer to it. The question is—

Will the gift of increased powers to the Commonwealth operate to favour the larger States at the expense of the smaller?

That seems to be the bugbear in our minds. Many people claim that on account of their larger population, New South Wales and Victoria will be favoured. These are questions that I think should be answered. The answer given by the Attorney General, in my opinion, solves the problem. He says—

On the contrary, the smaller States—by which is meant the States with the smallest populations—have the most to hope. They are the least developed States; and a leading feature of the amendment is the opportunity it offers for the physical development of Australia on a national basis. The possibilities of such development are enormous, beyond the wildest dreams of a few years ago; and in that respect the least developed States are likely to reap a harvest far greater than in proportion to present population. In all other respects, there is no reason whatever why they should not benefit equally with the rest of Australia.

Let us analyse that answer. It does not require a great mind to realise that a State which, like ours, is one of the least developed, cannot reap a greater proportion of benefits than the more highly industrialised States. In New South Wales, the establishment of a small ironworks would not excite any comment; but in Western Australia it would be a big event. When the day arrives on which our Minister for Industrial Development can announce to the House that the first ton of charcoal for the fabrication of iron has been produced here, it will be an event of great importance to the State. But suppose Broken Hill should develop one ton of such iron, no notice would be taken of it. Why? Because Broken Hill is highly developed.

Member: Broken Hill takes notice of any competition here.

Mr. TRIAT: Yes. But the charcoal-iron is going to be produced. That is the position.

The Premier: Broken Hill has given us considerable help.

Mr. TRIAT: That is so.

The Premier: That was stated by the Minister for Industrial Development.

Mr. TRIAT: That backs up my argument that even a small development will result in advantage to the State. The Attorney General's answer is, in my opinion, sound; it appeals to one's commonsense. The next question, on page 113, is as follows:—

Why should the Commonwealth be able to deal with post-war depression better than the States?

The answer is—

Because the Commonwealth is one and the States are six. In the depression of 1929-33 the problems were insoluble because they were Australia-wide problems, and no Government had power to deal with them on an Australia-wide basis.

That is a positive fact. As I said, the States have not the power to deal with these national problems. They have only certain powers within their own borders and these powers they cannot exceed. Unless their ideas are copied by other States, they are confined to the State itself. The next question (page 113) is—

Was that the fault of the State Governments or of the Commonwealth Government?

The answer is—

Of neither—it was the fault of the system—the want of effectual power anywhere. There was no central power to survey the food problem and send food when and where it was wanted—as is done now during the war.

That is obvious. In wartime when the Commonwealth Government asks for special powers to deal with war problems, with rationing and with the effective transport of men or materials, we do not say, "You are not going to have those powers." Instead, we say, "Take them, if they will save the country for us." We do not quibble and say that the State of Western Australia can protect the Commonwealth from the invader. We, as a State, realise we cannot do that. We know we are impotent, because we have not the power. But these people have the power and I have no doubt will use it to the best advantage of the Commonwealth and the States. I fear I am becoming wearisome.

Mr. Doney: Not while you are on that point.

Mr. TRIAT: There is, however, another question and answer which I wish to quote.

They appear at page 114 and are as follows:—

Q.—Do not constitutional lawyers oppose any amendment?

A.—As always, there are lawyers on both sides. But this is not a lawyer's question—it is a human question. It is time it ceased to be treated as a wrangle between the States and the Commonwealth, and was looked at from the point of view of the people, who would be the victims of a wrong decision, and who are the same people with dual citizenship.

Is not that a correct, logical examination of this human problem? As the member for West Perth said, the Commonwealth Constitution is for the benefit of the people. The people are not here as the result of that Constitution; it did not grow of itself, it grew from the people of the States. The Constitution was made by the people inhabiting Australia when the Constitution was framed. The Constitution is a piece of machinery for the benefit of the States of the Commonwealth and it was designed to do what the people wanted. Today, however, we are told that that is not so. We are told today that the Constitution is all-powerful. The Constitution should be framed in language so clear as to make it impossible to admit of more than one meaning. If it is not clothed in such language then it should be altered. If, under the Constitution, we cannot transfer these powers to the Commonwealth for a limited period of five years, surely there are sufficient words in the English language to make the point clear beyond any doubt whatever. What is desired to be expressed is that at the end of the five years period the powers will revert to the States. We have certain rights to which we are entitled, and no legal person—no matter how clear the point may appear to him—should be able to place a different construction upon our expressed intention.

Mr. Doney: Lawyers have done it in regard to other matters.

Mr. TRIAT: I know. Legal opinions are given on both sides of a question. One can go to a lawyer, take his opinion and pay his fee. He is an honest and reliable man and can read into his argument my ideas, but there can be found just as honourable a legal man on the opposing side who can advance just as strong and reasonable an argument in the other direction. Let us put into the Bill words capable of one construction only.

Mr. Doney: That is what I want: how can it be done?

Mr. TRIAT: If people make up their minds what they want they will get it. The language of the Bill can be framed in such a way as to make it specifically clear that the period is not to be more than five years. Let us insert words to make it definite and to clarify the position once and for all. It is strange that during a time of war all the powers required for war purposes are granted without quibble. Of course, some people have heart burnings over them. For instance, some of us do not get sufficient petrol or tyres for our cars, or sufficient beer or Scotch whisky, and some womenfolk perhaps do not get enough silk stockings. There are quite a lot of grouchers as a result of war privations, but there is no serious objection. Yet when it is suggested that the same authority shall be given power in peace time for the protection of the people after the war, there is a quibble. If anybody got on a platform and said that we should take away the power exercised by the Commonwealth Government for defence purposes, he would not last five minutes, because people are war-minded and conscious of the dangers that would result from depriving the Government of that power.

Mr. Fox: It would not be left to private enterprise.

Mr. TRIAT: No. At one time people used to buy armies to fight for them, and after the war the man with the army was the top dog. There is no quibble about powers being given to the Commonwealth during war-time, but arguments are raised against such powers being granted in peace-time. No particular body of men, unless they be united, can carry on any function of importance, especially in war-time. The great dangers of war are hanging over us. An invader could occupy the country and take away our rights altogether. There would be no quibble then as to what the new order and the reconstruction plan would be. The invader would have a reconstruction plan and would not go to the Constitution or the Commonwealth Government to find out how he was going to give effect to it. If the victors were the Japanese they would soon have a plan, which would not be very good from our point of view, for the reconstruction of this country after the war, and there would be no quibble as to whether it would be put into operation in Western Australia, New South Wales, or Queensland, or anywhere else. They would utilise every

resource we have in the Commonwealth with the one idea only, namely, the betterment of their own country. There is another statement which I will quote from this book and which strikes me as being the attitude of most people. It is as follows:—

Commonwealth and States are not antagonists, fighting as to who shall be king of the castle; they are both agents of the people of Australia, who are the same individuals, whether regarded as citizens of the Commonwealth or citizens of a State. It is indisputable that reconstruction is a national matter—a matter in which the people of Australia must pull together as one, making best use of all political and other groupings—Commonwealth, State, municipal, etc.—but properly co-ordinated, for effective working, by adequate central power.

Again there is the same idea, that it must be from a central power. We are not fighting—State against Commonwealth or State against State—for reconstruction. We have all the same ideas. Let us evolve the best plan for reconstruction, a system that is not going to create chaotic conditions after the war, a system under which people, even though they may be maimed or infirm, will be found a position, or if not will be supported by the country for the balance of their lives. That is all we are looking for. If other countries are not prepared to fall into line, I do not know whether we should worry too much, because in this country of ours we have every requirement necessary for the maintenance of human life and for providing shelter and amusement. Probably after the war we shall be in a position to manufacture commodities that we were not permitted to manufacture prior to the war.

I say without fear of contradiction that if this war were not so serious the manufacture of aeroplanes would not have advanced so rapidly in Australia, nor would the invention of mechanical devices have proceeded at such a pace, because the desire for gain inherent in human nature would have prevented us from having the opportunity to do these jobs. Before the war other countries were in a position to exploit us by exporting their goods to us. Today it is possible for us to become competitors in the world market. As a result of this war I venture to suggest that we shall have a much better outlook than before. I have now enunciated most of the problems that were in my mind, and I hope I have made it definite that I am prepared to support the proposals of the Commonwealth Government regarding post-

war reconstruction to the very limit of my ability. Let us give to the Commonwealth Government the right to operate the powers sought for a period of five years after the cessation of hostilities. At the end of that time, if we find that the Commonwealth Government is not carrying out the promises it made, we have the right under the Bill to say, "You shall cease." If the Commonwealth Government honours the promises it is making and is successful in its reconstruction plan in connection with post-war problems, every man and woman in Australia will welcome a continuation of that particular class of legislation.

Mr. Doney: You might be wrong there, too.

Mr. TRIAT: I may be, but I hope I am not. For my part I would welcome a continuation of such a plan. I can see no danger of the Commonwealth's overwhelming the States and taking all power from them. I am not a unificationist; I never was. I am a Federalist. I was never a secessionist. I have heard it said that secession could be brought about but that it would be brought about only by bloodshed. If I thought we would be successful only in that way I would not attempt to support such an idea. Suppose secession were an accomplished fact! Where would we be? Nowhere! We would not have the means and could not obtain the means to carry on ourselves. We have not the population. We have nothing. We would be dependent on other countries for our very existence. People talk about secession, but the moment secession was obtained we would be dependent on the other part of the Commonwealth. We would have no rights that we could enforce.

As a result of this rotten war in which we are engaged all small nations are beginning to talk about federating, because they can realise the danger of remaining single units. When people act as single units they have no power. When they combine they have power. That has been preached to the working people of every part of the world. They have been told to unite into one big body. That has been the ultimate object of unionism. As a working man I could, alone, get nothing for myself. All I could do would be to go to the boss and say, "I want money," to which he would reply, "There are plenty of fellows looking for a job at the wage you are earning. You can get out." When

men organised and sold their services as an organised unit they had certain rights and could make demands with a chance of having them granted through the court. Under those conditions the boss could not say to me, "I will give you 8s. a day, Triat." He would have to look up the award rates and give me 15s. a day. Only by uniting have workers been able to secure that power. I admit that Western Australia has had her ordeals in the past, but I think that in the future the Commonwealth Government will do what it has promised. I support the Bill.

MR. PERKINS (York): I do not feel by any means satisfied that all the powers asked for by the Commonwealth Government under this Bill are really necessary to overcome the difficulties that we can expect when hostilities end. In my opinion the Bill asks this State Government to cede three classes of powers to the Commonwealth Government. Firstly there are those powers, which even in peace time, we agreed that the Commonwealth Government should have and which most of us thought it did have. In that category I would place first of all the power in regard to repatriation of members of the Armed Forces. After the last war the Commonwealth Government went some way towards this end. It could have gone the whole way had it been prepared to advance the money to the State Governments to enable them to deal properly with that responsibility. If the Commonwealth Government can make a better job by having those powers contained within its own Constitution, I, for one, have no objection to giving them. Then there is the matter of air transport. We thought the Commonwealth Government already had full power in that regard. If that is not so, I think that while there is this suggestion of amending the Constitution by the means proposed at the present time, we should take the opportunity to make sure that it also has the power.

The third class of power which comes within the first category is that relating to family allowances. There can be no question that the Commonwealth Government is the only body that can handle such a matter. Many of us hope that in the post-war period it will be able to extend these social amenities to a wider section of the people by going ahead with some type of national insurance scheme. That has already been mooted. Whether it is fully constitutional or not

seems to be open to question, but while we are dealing with this proposal to cede powers, this particular one should also be transferred to the Commonwealth. In the second category I would place powers, some of which the Commonwealth Government has already exercised in wartime under the defence powers contained in the National Security Act, that I think will be necessary for it to utilise for some time at least in the post-war period, if grave dislocation in the life of the community is to be avoided. I would also place in this category other powers in regard to which the wording of the Bill is not entirely satisfactory, but which, if the wording can be amended to ensure that we are continuing only the powers we think we are, should come under the control of the Commonwealth Government. In the third category there are other powers which should not be transferred unless the clauses in which they are included are radically amended or their scope reduced. If that cannot be done then those powers should not, at present at least, be transferred to the Commonwealth Government.

Outstanding in the second category is the power relating to organised marketing. The advent of war practically destroyed all the international trade channels previously existing, and trade between individuals in different parts of the world was to a large extent wiped out. The mere upset of shipping with the advent of hostilities was almost sufficient in itself to do that. But when, in addition, we have national policy overriding any considerations relating to the welfare of particular individuals, then it becomes of paramount importance that the Government should have full power to deal with the marketing, as between countries, of these major commodities. Hence we have the Commonwealth marketing schemes, the largest of which, of course, are those dealing with wheat, wool and meat. I am rather inclined to think that these difficulties in regard to international trade, which we have faced in war time, will still be facing us in the period following the close of hostilities. It is impossible to break down a marketing organisation—whether it was entirely, or only partly right—such as we had in the years before the war. It is something that cannot be replaced in the course of a year or two, and in any case it seems to me that in this period of change it is quite right to take

steps to improve the marketing organisation which we had at that time.

I would like, first of all, to deal with its effect more particularly on the producers of the commodities concerned. If one thing has been conspicuous in the agricultural conditions throughout Australia since the last war, it has been the instability existing. We had a boom period after the last war and then the depression. There have been slight changes up and down since, but the point is that the producers of the commodity in question could never depend, for any length of time, on what the price and general conditions operating in regard to their product would be a year or two ahead. That has been responsible for a great deal of the trouble that has come upon the agricultural industry of Australia—especially the export sections. Quite a number of eminent thinkers have given a good deal of attention to this particular phase. I refer particularly to Professor Wadham, Professor of Agriculture at the Melbourne University. In various statements and writings he has made it clear that, in his opinion, while there is no organised method of marketing our major export commodities then for so long can we expect this instability in the agricultural industry. He has also made the point that if we have a boom period in the industry and prices rise beyond more than payable levels, then there is immediately an influx of capital into the industry, and other individuals, more particularly those most concerned with getting a quick return from it, come in. It is not very long before whatever lag there was in supply is overcome, and then a period of glut follows.

In that period of unpayable prices these individuals who came into the industry merely with the idea of taking advantage of the payable prices existing at that particular time, are the first to get out, and in the long run are probably the only ones who get any advantage from the boom period at all. If they act promptly enough, they can get out with some of the advantages that have accrued during the boom period. On the other hand, most of those engaged in the industry make it their life's work, and they find themselves overloaded with indebtedness. Quite often the latter think—rightly or wrongly, but more often than not wrongly—that the boom conditions will continue for a long time. If they base their expecta-

tions and capital borrowings on that assumption, they soon find themselves labouring under a load of debt, and that is the position apparent throughout the agricultural industry today. The marketing schemes that are being operated by the Commonwealth Government at present, while in accordance with principles with which we agree, do not in practice by any means meet with the approval of the producers. Unfortunately the prices which the Commonwealth Government is paying for commodities under the various marketing schemes represent less than the cost of production.

I shall quote figures relating to the prices of two products to indicate what we are receiving under Federal marketing schemes and the prices on a wholesale basis, compared with what was paid in the base year of 1911. I understand that most economists are agreed that in 1911 the balance between the prices of agricultural products compared with those received for the output of secondary industries and, in fact, for the output of industries generally, were about on a fair basis. For that reason I am informed that economists regard 1911 as a suitable year for comparative purposes. In that year the price of wheat in terms of actual cash was 3s. 6d. a bushel, whereas in 1941 it was 4s. 0½d. The comparative purchasing power of wheat which in 1911 was 100, that being the base year, was in 1941 only 64. Therefore the parity price of wheat would be 6s. 3¼d. per bushel as compared with 4s. 0½d. that farmers actually received in 1941. That discloses a big gap between the actual price and the parity price of wheat, and affords some indication of the explanation of the load of debt on the farming industry. It serves to indicate why the producers are continuously clamouring for more equitable treatment. The opinion seems to be general that wool prices are on a better basis and that the pastoral industry is in a prosperous condition. The fact is that compared with the base year of 1911, our returns are still below the parity price.

Mr. Marshall: Does not the Commonwealth purchase all your wool at the moment?

Mr. PERKINS: What difference does that make? In 1911 the actual price per lb. was 9.5d. and the purchasing power was, of course, 100. The actual price per lb. that we received in 1941 was 1s. 1.43d. The

parity price for wool, if that commodity were to be on a basis comparable with the wholesale price in 1911, would have to be 1s. 5.17d. Members will see, therefore, that in respect of the two commodities I have mentioned, the prices received at present are well below parity compared with those that obtained in the base year. Figures are not so readily available regarding other primary products but, so far as one can make a comparison, the indications are that prices generally received by producers at present are below the 1911 parity.

Mr. Marshall: That applies industrially regarding the effective purchasing power of wages.

Mr. PERKINS: The figures relating to purchasing power are based on wholesale prices and wages enter into the calculation to a large extent. In the circumstances, I am not sure that the argument advanced by the member for Murchison holds good.

Mr. Marshall: The purchasing power of wages has depreciated very appreciably.

Mr. PERKINS: In 1937 a referendum was held regarding certain of the powers that are mentioned in the Bill now before the House. Unfortunately the Labour Party in Western Australia saw fit to oppose the proposals on that occasion. That party is very prone to hurl charges regarding sectional interests at people who represent primary producers. We have quite sufficient justification for representing our sectional interests and raising our voices particularly loudly at a time when the returns for our products are so much below parity, as I have indicated in the figures I have quoted to members. At all events, we could have expected something better from a political party that claims to represent all sections of the community, particularly when we merely ask for the Australian price for our products. However, I am glad that the Labour Party has reversed its attitude and has agreed to help us in that direction. As to the desirability of the marketing powers within the country, whether we have doubts regarding some phases, I believe most members are in agreement. I consider that if National Governments are to carry out their policy as enunciated from time to time, it will be necessary for them to have the powers now sought, otherwise if they should attempt to take over the marketing of our major commodities as between country and country, there would be grave danger that they would not be able to give effect to their

desires in order to achieve greater stability in our economic life.

It seems to be assumed at the present juncture that the British Empire and the United States of America—I think it can be rightly assumed—will be the spearhead in trying to have the terms of the Atlantic Charter carried out. The trouble is that there are many people who read into the Atlantic Charter questions respecting which I have great doubts as to whether those countries accept such matters as being contained in the Charter.

Mr. North: They are couched in such general terms.

Mr. PERKINS: If the Atlantic Charter does mean all the things that some people read into it, some of the statements being made by responsible Ministers of various Governments certainly indicate that there is a good deal of disunity amongst them. An outstanding example is the attitude of Great Britain to its own agriculturists. The Minister of Agriculture not long ago made a statement to British agriculturists that after the war British agriculture would never be allowed to revert to the condition into which it had fallen previous to the war.

Mr. Marshall: That was said also during the 1914-18 war.

Mr. PERKINS: If that statement means anything, it is that Britain is going to try to maintain the volume of its agricultural production. Should that be so, how can we expect to keep the export of many of our major primary products up to the level that existed before the outbreak of the present war, not taking into consideration any expansion in our local production? Consequently there is room for a good deal of clarification as to what the Atlantic Charter means, and I am afraid that many people who are reading their own meaning into the document are going to be sadly disillusioned. Certainly we should not base our policy on anything so illusory.

I believe that the marketing power is the most important one that we shall have to transfer to the Commonwealth. I term it the most important one because it will have the most far-reaching effects, but I believe it is vitally necessary to transfer that power, not only from the point of view of our own agriculturists but also from the point of view of national policy. I see no chance of Governments being able to carry out their considered policies unless they have the con-

trol of exports. Everything points to trade in these major export commodities becoming a matter rather for negotiation between Governments than trade between individuals. We have reached a stage when these exports affect Government policy to such a large extent, as well as the interests of the people themselves, that it is impossible to leave the business in any haphazard channel.

Regarding other powers under the Bill and including marketing provision, there is grave danger that, in the administration of these powers, some injustice may be done to Western Australia. It is our duty to guard against that as far as we can. We should make whatever amendments are necessary to render the Bill more watertight, but even so we shall have to leave a certain amount to the good will and honour of the Commonwealth Government. Unfortunately, the present Commonwealth Government has given us some very bad shocks. Probably all of us can quote instances. An exceptionally bad one is in regard to the recently appointed Meat Commission, whose powers are to be operated in this State in respect to pig meats on the 1st February. On a Commission such as that, which vitally affects all the States of the Commonwealth, all the States should be represented, but in the Commonwealth Parliament, where New South Wales has 28 out of the 74 voting members in the House of Representatives, it has been seen fit to constitute the Meat Commission entirely of New South Wales representatives. There was a man from Queensland who was not a meat producer—he was really a wool man—but I understand he has gone to the United States of America and has been replaced by another representative from New South Wales. When the outlying States receive that sort of treatment in an important matter such as meat production, we at any rate are justified in expressing grave doubts as to the administration of many of the provisions contained in the Bill. We are justified in amending the clause in any way that will make it watertight and more likely to be administered in a fair and proper manner as between all the States of the Commonwealth.

I was impressed by one statement made by the member for West Perth, namely, that the Parliament of this State is a body that is immediately in touch with the people of the State. If any abuse of power occurs, the people immediately become active and

there is a fair chance of public opinion forcing a change of front if the action of the Government is shown to be unjustified. When it comes to the Commonwealth Government, located over 2,000 miles away, however, it is another question. It is practically impossible for the voice of our people to be effectively heard over there, unless they threaten to adopt very drastic measures.

In the second category may be placed the railway gauges proposals, provided the reference is amended to carry out what we believe is the intention. National works, as a Federal responsibility, should mean much in the post-war era. All of us can mention projects, which it would be difficult for the State Government to carry out on its own initiative, but which, backed by the Federal organisation and its great power for raising money, could greatly improve the amenities of life in this State. There are housing and water schemes and other projects that would be of very great benefit to Western Australia but, even in that event, I am not sure that the same results could not be obtained—if the Commonwealth is so much concerned about our welfare—by its making the money available to us and allowing the State Government to carry out such works under the supervision of its own officers.

The Premier: That sounds all right, but would you hand over a lot of your money for somebody else to spend?

Mr. PERKINS: It would not be the Commonwealth's money; it would be money collected from the people, and it would only be handing back something which is really ours by right. Actually there are many benefits accruing to the Eastern States from Western Australia that cannot be measured in terms of public revenue. We purchase a large proportion of our manufactured goods from the Eastern States, and it is only fair that the secondary industries there should be prepared to contribute something towards the development of Western Australia. I consider that we have a fair measure of justice on our side in asking for some consideration in the way of increased grants to this State. In the third category I fear we must place some clauses of the Bill which have apparently been included with the intention rather of extending the power of the Commonwealth Government to carry out its will and whatever radical policies it may decide upon, than to effect immediate improvement of conditions in this State. However, if any clauses

can be amended so as to safeguard our position in Western Australia, I shall be ready to support them upon amendment. I think it wrong to approach the subject from the point of view that anything brought forward by the Commonwealth Government must be wrong. That is not the right standpoint to adopt. We have, however, had so many bad experiences of Federal policy that the Commonwealth Government cannot be surprised at our viewing many of its proposals with critical eyes.

I hold that Dr. Evatt was indeed ill-advised to threaten the States with a referendum if they failed to do as he desires. Such threats are likely to have the very opposite effect to that which he expects. If a referendum is finally attempted after all this wrangling, I am greatly afraid that the people may be influenced more by distrust of Dr. Evatt than by the merits or demerits of the proposals themselves. We are just as much concerned with the welfare of Australia as Dr. Evatt is, and I consider that the Attorney General was not justified in making some of the statements he did make at the Convention, statements which have been repeated here. I say this in view of his official position at the Convention.

The Premier: We are not wrangling very much though, are we?

Mr. PERKINS: I was referring to the proceedings at the Convention, and to the controversy which has since taken place in the Press. That is another aspect I had intended to refer to—the threats of the Commonwealth Government, and of the Attorney General in particular. The propaganda which those people have put up comes very badly from them. It is impossible for us to discover how much the propaganda put up by the Commonwealth Government in regard to these proposals has really cost. Probably the propaganda put out by the Attorney General was rather more costly than anything put out by the opposing party. In any case, in a democratic country, everyone, no matter what his views may be, is entitled to put forward those views, provided he keeps within the law.

To sum up my attitude towards the Bill: I shall certainly support the second reading. I consider it highly necessary that during the Committee stage we should amend clauses as to which we feel any doubt regarding their real meaning. I do not think the Common-

wealth Government is really so honest and sincere in the protestations it has made that it can object to such a course on our part. It would be extraordinary if all the State Governments throughout Australia agreed to identically the same Bill, and the adoption of that course does not seem at all necessary. Actually, if the Commonwealth Government gets the substance of the powers asked for, that is all it needs. In regard to anything we feel justified in amending, I hope that course will be adopted in this Chamber.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan): I regret finding myself unable to support the Bill as submitted. The powers it asks for are greatly in excess of what should be granted by the States. The Bill asks that there shall be power to make laws for the peace, order, and good government of the Commonwealth for the purpose of post-war reconstruction. That is a work to which there is practically no limit. Some reference was made by the member for Mt. Magnet to the virtues of the Commonwealth Government. There have also been references to what the Government has done in relation to infant health. I have yet to learn that the Commonwealth Government has done anything for the infant health movement. What has been done in Western Australia has been done by our own Governments. I know that in other matters the Commonwealth Government may have done something, but as regards infant health work, no!

The Minister for Labour: In every State the Commonwealth Government has established the Lady Gowrie system.

MR. SAMPSON: Probably the Minister is confusing this with the bush nursing scheme. I realise and acknowledge the idealistic view taken by the member for Mt. Magnet. It is a very fine view, but one which in connection with the Commonwealth Government my experience urges me not to accept. I want members to think back over the view taken by this State on previous occasions when added powers for the Commonwealth were concerned. It has been made perfectly clear that the Western Australian people are by no means enamoured of the Commonwealth's work. In fact, the confidence our people have in it is very poor indeed. Back in 1933 a vote was taken on the subject of secession, the question put to the electors being—

Are you in favour of the State of Western Australia withdrawing from the Federal Com-

monwealth established under the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act (Imperial)? And the vote in favour of withdrawal was 138,653, whereas the votes of opponents of withdrawal numbered only 70,706. Thus nearly double the number of the electors would then have preferred, and probably that number would still prefer, if times were normal, to withdraw from the Federal bond. The State having decided by such an overwhelming vote to secede, it is not reasonable to expect that there can have been meanwhile a big change in that viewpoint. As a matter of fact I know of nothing except perhaps a sympathetic feeling which people might have towards the Commonwealth Government because of the war problem that it is facing.

The Premier: And the magnitude of the problem of reconstruction.

MR. SAMPSON: Yes. We had a problem of reconstruction following the previous war. I do not know that any objection was ever raised to what the Commonwealth Government did then.

The Premier: Yes, because we had to face the financial responsibility.

MR. SAMPSON: We had too much to do then. We always have too much to do where the Commonwealth Government is concerned, and even if the Bill is passed that feature will probably repeat itself. We must not allow the war to carry us off our feet, although there is a possibility of that happening. If members will refer to Sections 92 and 99 of the Commonwealth Constitution they will find that, although the powers do not wholly disappear, so far as control by the States is concerned they largely disappear. We know that Commonwealth law deals with industry and commerce, which is a very wide term.

The Bill before us proposes to transfer to the Commonwealth Government power to deal—and this is the first item mentioned in the Bill—with the reinstatement and advancement of those who have been members of the Fighting Services of the Commonwealth during the war, and the advancement of the dependants of those members who have died or been disabled as a consequence of the war. That is a matter which certainly should receive attention. Following upon the 1914-18 war, it did receive attention. Repatriation departments were formed throughout the Commonwealth and much was done to assist our returned soldiers and their dependants. At the time the Com-

monwealth was much poorer, although it did what was in its power, with the money at its command, in that connection. No objection was raised to that, nor is it likely that any objection will be raised in the future. No person is likely to offer the slightest objection to help being afforded to those who have been engaged in the Fighting Forces and doing war work. I am positive that this particular matter is so important as to justify its receiving the greatest consideration and the fullest support.

The next power proposed to be transferred relates to employment and unemployment, another very large question. If everything were done in that regard we should indeed have a change brought about the extent of which could scarcely be estimated. If this power is transferred to the Commonwealth, I doubt whether any great power would be left to the States. If the powers proposed by this Bill to be transferred to the Commonwealth are transferred, then not one step but several will have been taken towards unification. Organised marketing of commodities is proposed to be transferred to the Government by this Bill. I am taking some interest in the Apple and Pear Acquisition Scheme and, if that is an example of what we can expect from organised marketing, then I am certain we would be better off if this power were not transferred to the Commonwealth. The last person to be considered in that scheme is the person who grows the fruit. Prices have been published in the Press which show that under the scheme the growers were paid 2s. 4d. to 3s. 4d. per case, whereas during the day or two the scheme did not operate, the prices received by the growers ranged from 8s. to 15s. per case. Therefore, one must look with doubt and misgiving upon the suggestion that among the powers to be transferred to the Government should be the marketing of commodities. I am not in a position to discuss uniform company legislation. So far as I am aware, we have up to date heard nothing about our own Companies Bill, under which people who in the past have apparently been fair game for "go-getters" would be protected. The transfer of the very comprehensive powers set out in this Bill should not be approved by this House.

Mr. Cross: What rights has the Commonwealth?

Mr. SAMPSON: It already has sufficient rights. If the hon. member desires to see his life-work come to an end, then he should do his best to assist the passage of this Bill into law.

Mr. Cross: Tell us what sovereign rights the Commonwealth has?

Mr. SAMPSON: The hon. member will have an opportunity to tell us what he desires to say.

Mr. Cross: You do not know.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The Premier: Read Section 51.

Mr. SAMPSON: Let the hon. member read Sections 51 and 99; these will give him some knowledge of what is required.

Mr. Cross: You have not read them.

Mr. SAMPSON: If the hon. member is so desirous of being informed I will read the sections to him.

The Premier: No.

Mr. SAMPSON: I do not blame the Premier for trying to steady his too talkative supporter, but if the member for Canning will refer to Year Book No. 37, page 16, he will get the information for which he is asking. But that should not convince him or anyone else who approaches this matter fairly, that this Bill, if passed, will be helpful to the State. We should not transfer these powers. We have had what is colloquially known as a very rough spin. We are a long way distant from the seat of the Commonwealth Government and it seems that the further distant we are the less consideration we receive. This State has been a dumping ground for Eastern States manufactures. Our factories have been closed. We had factories here before Federation that would have no hope of operating successfully today. We have become a mark-time State. I feel sympathy for the Minister for Industrial Development and often wonder how, in existing circumstances, owing to the behaviour of Eastern States manufacturers and legislators towards this State, he can possibly achieve success in securing the production of local goods, which certainly are required.

This is a dairying State. Under the leadership of an ex-Premier, Sir James Mitchell, great progress was made in the development of that industry. But what is happening today? We find that when it is possible for shipping to provide it, this country is being almost overwhelmed with powdered

milk. The manner in which this commodity from the Eastern States has come and is coming into Western Australia is a sufficient commentary on the way this country is treated by factories of the Eastern States. It may be said that we should not object to competition. We would not do so if we had started at the same time, but the Eastern States had many years' start before this State began, and the bringing in of powdered milk is an exemplification of what happens in regard to our products and the difficulty we have in fully developing our dairying industry. The small-populated State works for the bigger States. That, unfortunately, has always been the case. I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that we are the serfs of the Commonwealth. I firmly believe that people here work harder than do those in the Eastern States, because they have to do so. The moment there is an indication that success has come to any factory here, then, or very shortly afterwards it is possible to witness the importation of goods, the effect of which is to bring about the early closing of that factory. We are a primitive people and are not allowed to progress by those who should be supporting us in our development.

Mr. Thorn: We are a market worth £10,000,000 or £12,000,000 a year to the Eastern States.

Mr. SAMPSON: As a market for the Eastern States we are worth about £12,000,000 to £13,000,000, and the reason we have been unable to supply these goods is because of our small population, and also because from time to time those who have shown capacity in any way have been tempted eastwards. If members look back they will recall the case of very many skilled workers, able thinkers and representatives of different industries in this State, who have been tempted to the Eastern States. I repeat that the power asked for under this Bill is not needed. It is not in our interests that it should be given. I hope I am not lacking in confidence and faith, but I am convinced that to give these powers to the Eastern States is to do something that will prove injurious to us. So far as this State is concerned, it seems to me that we might consider the Commonwealth Government in the same way as perhaps a canary might consider a cat. For a long while we have been marking time and have made no progress, and the reason is that we are under

the domination of the East. Under normal conditions it would be very much better if we were an independent State.

I remind members of what happened recently in regard to the lemon-producing industry. It might be said that is not a big matter to introduce in connection with such a subject, but it is symptomatic. The Price Fixing Commissioner established a price of £9 per ton for winter lemons, whereas the price in New South Wales was 50 per cent. more, namely £13 10s. Why this variation in a country which is under one flag, with one destiny and composed of the one people? Again, the price of honey is determined by the Price Fixing Commissioner at 5½d. a pound, but in the Eastern States it is 7d. Why should there be such a big variation? It appears that whatever is done in Western Australia can never be the paying proposition it would be in the other States of the Commonwealth. There is a differentiation of treatment and that is a very serious matter.

The Minister for Lands: Have they been fair in regard to the rationing of newsprint?

Mr. SAMPSON: I have had no experience of that. Talking of newsprint rationing, very early in the war it was said that there were to be no new publications, but it was not long before a new daily newspaper was permitted to start in Sydney. I wonder what would have happened here if something similar had been proposed. It would have been looked on with a different eye. If it is in Sydney or Melbourne a kindly feeling is at once engendered for the proposition. If such a proposition were made here I do not know what would happen, but I would be exceedingly surprised if approval were given.

The Premier: So they preserve the monopoly of "The West Australian" as our only morning newspaper.

Mr. SAMPSON: At the time the war broke out it was competent for anyone else to start a newspaper, but now I do not know that anyone would desire to do so. I do not think it would be either practicable or possible.

The Premier: You have gone into that thoroughly!

Mr. SAMPSON: It is a subject on which I can speak with some knowledge, because steadily income has contracted and difficulties have increased. I want to point out to the Premier that there was no apparent disinclination to give special approval to the

New South Wales proposition which, I believe, was a large Sydney daily. I desire now to read a few lines from a pamphlet which was issued by the Associated Chambers of Commerce of Australia and comes from the civic centre at Canberra. It is headed "Commonwealth Powers Bill" and is as follows:—

The business communities of Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia have recently expressed their views for the benefit of their respective State Legislatures on the Commonwealth Powers Bill. The following condensed report of a broadcast given recently by the Rt. Hon. R. G. Menzies on the subject is of particular and valuable interest at the moment:—

... "Let me summarise by reminding you that, broadly speaking, there are two ways of amending the Constitutional powers of the Commonwealth. One is by popular referendum after the necessary Bill has passed both Houses in the Federal Parliament. The other is by direct legislation by State Parliaments, the provision being that any power transferred by a State Parliament is to be exercisable only in the State or States making the transfer."

At the Convention several of us strongly criticised the Commonwealth proposals on two grounds. One was that unlimited powers were being sought under the guise of particular powers, that is, that the real nature of the proposals was concealed. The other ground was that the statement of the powers asked for was more in the nature of a political programme or piece of propaganda than a true change in the fundamental law. Some of this criticism is entirely applicable to the proposals now being considered by the State Parliaments.

To illustrate what I mean, let me mention three of the powers which the States are being asked to transfer. The first can be described approximately as "the repatriation power." Now, the fact is that this power has always belonged to the Commonwealth and was freely, and on the whole successfully, exercised by it for many years after the last war. Some attempt is being made to suggest that after the last war returned soldiers on the whole had a raw deal and that this was due to some defect in the powers of Parliament. In truth, returned soldiers in this country had at least as good treatment as in any other country in the world, including that in countries where no questions of constitutional limitations upon power existed. That mistakes were made cannot be denied; but I have never heard it suggested that any doubt existed as to the power of the Commonwealth Parliament to do the right thing by those who have fought for the country. It thus appears that the present proposal to hand over the repatriation power is unnecessary and meaningless. There is no reason whatever why the Commonwealth Parliament should not forthwith pass a law giving preference of employment to returned members of the Fighting Services; and a consti-

tutional argument is a poor substitute for the enactment of such a just and necessary provision.

Then take the power which it is proposed to hand over to deal with employment and unemployment. That the Commonwealth should accept far-reaching responsibilities for the relief of unemployment and for the enactment of such matters as unemployment insurance, I have no doubt at all. But when it is proposed to enable the Commonwealth to make any law it chooses bearing upon the problem of employment, I merely want to point out that this power is so wide and far-reaching that nobody can at this stage see its limits.

I do not know that I will read the whole of it.

Mr. Cross: Nobody can hear, so it is all right.

Mr. SAMPSON: If the hon. member cannot hear, I will lend him my copy. These matters are dealt with completely in that address by Mr. Menzies, and I am hopeful that it will be possible for members to read it.

The Minister for Labour: Mr. Menzies took a tremendous interest in the Convention.

Mr. SAMPSON: He did, and it is a good thing he did so. I hope he will continue to take an interest and that some, at least, of his ideas can be carried into effect. One cannot help feeling that the war is being used to make possible the advancement of certain principles. The member for Mt. Magnet stated—following an interjection by the member for Guildford-Midland that the matter referred to was political—that it was not a political one and should not be treated as such. I quite agree with him. But it is a fact that statements which give colour to the charge of propaganda have been made. One was made by Mr. C. G. Fallon, Federal President of the A.L.P., and General Secretary of the A.W.U., who presided over the Federal Labour Conference in Melbourne a short time ago. He said—

It would be impossible to deny that our war effort was governed by an intention to implement the extreme left wing planks of the Labour platform in the form of nationalisation and socialisation. . . . We associate this war emergency with the achievement of nationalisation and socialism. . . . The Labour movement, creating a new civilisation to prevent the perpetuation of the one one, will push the capitalist system right out of the way. . . . Our Government at Canberra is so impressed with the inevitability of this transformation that it has appointed a sub-committee of its own members to plan how it shall take place in this country. . . . We are indeed making use of the war to implement our Labour policy.

Again, at page 365 of No. 12 of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates for 1942, Mr. F. P. Baker, Labour, Queensland, made the following statement on the same matter—

I often hear the cry raised in this House that the Labour Party is using wartime conditions as an excuse to introduce its policy. We make no apology for that. That is why we are here. We can win the war only by implementing the Labour Party's policy, and, furthermore, that is the only way in which we can win the peace. I direct the attention of the Committee to the platform and objective of the Australian Labour Party, which shows that the Labour Party is pledged to control all finance and banking. We make no apology for trying to implement this plank of our platform. The only apology I have to make is that we are going too slowly about it; we should move ahead a great deal faster.

Mr. Marshall: Hear, hear!

Mr. SAMPSON: I am glad that some matter meets with the hon. member's approval, but it would be better perhaps if that particular statement did not receive his approval, because this matter should be approached in a non-party attitude and should not be used to advance the political platform or cause of any party.

The Minister for Labour: It sounds as if the "Kondinin Courier" will soon be under Government control.

Mr. SAMPSON: I wonder how long it would continue then; I hope the Government would do better with it than with the State hotels. I realise that the Bill provides that if there is dissatisfaction regarding the passage of the measure, it will be competent, at a later stage, for a referendum to be taken. That seems to me to savour of what is sometimes termed "poppycock" or "bunkum." Personally, I would, when the armistice is declared have no objection to the referendum being taken on the added powers set out in the Bill. If that were done, there would be ample time before the peace was signed for the vote to be taken, and it would cause no one any anxiety, and would not endanger any war effort. There is no need for the clause dealing with the reinstatement and advancement of those who have been members of the Fighting Services to be included in the Bill. No-one would be against it. It is very alluring, but quite unnecessary.

Mr. Doney: The Commonwealth Government exercised that same power at the end of the last war.

Mr. SAMPSON: That is so, and there is nothing to prevent it from doing so again. That power is definitely associated with defence, and I marvel that it should be included in the measure. Another thing contained in it is a clause dealing with uniformity of railway gauges. We have for a long while heard the member for Claremont urging that this should be brought about. His has been a voice crying in the wilderness. Why was it not done? Everyone knew it was essential. The hon. member has done everything possible to get action.

The last item relates to powers to deal with the aborigines. I have yet to learn that the Commonwealth Government has ever shown any capacity in dealing with racial problems, and I do not consider it will deal with the native question in a satisfactory manner. Personally I would prefer that the destinies of our natives should remain under the control of our own Minister who is charged with that responsibility today. I am sure he would carry out the task much more effectively. He would certainly know of the difficulties of our natives long before knowledge of them could reach Canberra. In fact, I believe that many of these matters in relation to which it is suggested there could be improvements, could be dealt with quite satisfactorily by our own State authorities. Apparently we are to have a new heaven and a new earth. Under the new order it will be possible to have everything. Then we have been told that although the Commonwealth Government desires the powers set out, it will not exercise them. I for one do not believe that.

The Commonwealth Government will exercise all the power it can secure, and one of the first consequences would be to render the people of this State incapable of looking after their own affairs. That is my honest belief. Moreover, I am of the opinion that were it not for State Governments, that result would have been secured in this and other States long before now. The Government may be faulty, but it is not so faulty that the position of the people would be improved if its functions were handed over to the Commonwealth Government. Under these proposals we are to have nationalisation of industries, naked and unashamed. I think I am justified in making that statement. We are to have everything that a dreamer might conjure up in his mind.

The Premier: Where do you find that?

Mr. SAMPSON: In the Bill.

The Premier: Whereabouts?

Mr. SAMPSON: Shall I read some of it?

The Premier: Yes; you will get hopelessly fogged if you do.

Mr. SAMPSON: Very well. There is the reference to "trust, combines and monopolies." Does it not come under that heading? It might be brought under the reference to "national works." The Commonwealth Government will certainly be able to define that under the heading of "trusts, combines and monopolies." and so deal with such industries and enterprises as may still be carried on in Western Australia.

The Minister for Labour: Because of Russia's progress in the war, the bogies of nationalisation and socialisation have lost a lot of their frightening powers.

Mr. SAMPSON: I do not know about that. I do not know whether the Minister is still an advocate of nationalisation and socialisation. In view of his experience regarding the State trading concerns, he should accept it as a warning that along that road is grave danger.

Mr. North: Perhaps he wants to put them in a cold climate.

Mr. SAMPSON: That may be so. The Minister may have very good reasons for dealing with them in that way. I do not think he would maintain his good health if he were to accept the task involved under that heading. There have been times when I wondered if a breakdown in the Minister's health would not follow a perusal of some of the details. I myself felt ill when I examined the figures regarding last year's trading of State undertakings. I am sure any ordinary managing director or shareholder would have felt ill if he had perused the figures for the State hotels and the Fremantle Engineering Works.

The Minister for Labour: And the State Insurance Office?

Mr. Cross: Or the State Electricity Supply Department?

Mr. SAMPSON: We have received no mandate from the people respecting this matter. That is a word that on very many occasions has been much overworked, but in this instance it can be claimed that there has been no mandate at all. Have the people in any way expressed a desire that adequate powers shall be given to the Commonwealth? I do not think so. I have not heard of it.

Some may be prepared to do away with the State Parliaments; but even so, I do not think that would get them out of their troubles. The people of this State have shown by their vote their desire for freedom. While at the present time that objective is unattainable, we should certainly refrain from surrendering any of the powers that remain with us. After the armistice has been declared and the peace treaty signed, there will be ample opportunities to consider the matter further and to ascertain the will of the people. That being so, I have no hesitation in saying that the granting of the powers dealt with in the Bill is quite unnecessary to enable the Commonwealth Government successfully to carry out its work.

MR. J. H. SMITH (Nelson): After listening to the speeches delivered by the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition, representatives of the legal fraternity and others interested in the subject matter of the Bill, during the course of which they indicated that they had delved deeply into the constitutional aspects of the issues now before the House, I propose to be very brief in my remarks. I am irrevocably opposed to granting the powers provided for in the Bill. To my mind the proposal as a whole amounts to pure unification. The suggestions that were submitted by the Federal Attorney General in November as necessary to be submitted to the people by way of a referendum, also amounted to unification unadorned. Dr. Evatt found it was impossible to have his proposals accepted even in the Commonwealth Parliament and much less by a majority of the people in a majority of the States. Therefore he convened the Convention that was held recently and was attended by the Premiers and Leaders of the Opposition in the State Parliaments, together with representatives of the Commonwealth Government. His proposals were amended overnight, and when placed before the Convention were found to embody very minor alterations. To my mind the proposals in the Bill now still amount to unification—perhaps not unadorned but adorned with a very small fig-leaf.

The Commonwealth Government has under present-day war conditions all the powers it could desire. With its National Security Regulations, its Wards and its Deilmans, the Commonwealth Government is doing all sorts of things to take away privileges the

States at present enjoy. The Bill now before the House asks us to give the Commonwealth Government the powers it seeks and to allow it to continue enjoying those powers after the war has terminated. I listened to the member for Avon who placed before the House facts and figures and dealt with constitutional rights. His was one of the most interesting speeches delivered during the debate. He proved conclusively that after the 1914-18 war the Commonwealth Government exercised all the powers that we are now asked to cede to it. I venture the opinion, despite the views expressed by legal luminaries, that the Commonwealth has full power to repatriate the men who today are fighting overseas.

The Premier: A pity the Commonwealth did not do so on the other occasion.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It did, to a great extent.

The Premier: No fear!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I am prepared to go so far as to give the Commonwealth that power because, under the Financial Agreement, the Commonwealth is the only authority that can handle it. We have no power to raise money, having given away that right some years ago.

Let me recall what happened under the financial emergency legislation. The whole of Australia was stampeded by the Imperial and Commonwealth Governments into passing emergency legislation. What was the effect? It demoralised the whole of Australia, reduced the standard of living and put thousands of men and women out of work, and for 10 long years we suffered all the degradation, misery and starvation possible in a civilised country.

Mr. Fox: We are going to remedy all that.

Mr. Marshall: We are a long time doing it.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Now we are asked to part with more of our powers, to give away our sovereign rights and have no say in the running of this State, which all of us love. We are asked to give away those rights for five years. I say they will be given for all time. For five years after the termination of hostilities, a country is prosperous. History proves that there has been no unemployment for a few years after a war. The aftermath comes later. What is the use of giving such powers to the Commonwealth for five years? I say the passing of this Bill will mean handing over those powers

for all time, and I am not prepared to give them away. We have had enough of this cursed Federal octopus; we have had enough misery from being stampeded into doing things in the past. After the 1914-18 war, there was a boom and the prices of primary products reached a higher level than ever before.

The Premier, at the Convention, tried to make the best of a bad job. According to his remarks quoted this morning by the member for Subiaco, he said he was prepared to trust the Curtin Government, but he did not know about trusting another Government that might come into power. This is not a political question at all. I am not prepared to trust any Commonwealth Government. We are so far away from the seat of government that I am not prepared to part with our sovereign rights to any Commonwealth Government.

Mr. Marshall: Those rights have gone already.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: By passing this measure, we shall be placing ourselves entirely under the domination of the Commonwealth Government. All our powers and all our State rights will be given away. All that will be left to the State will be the Education Department, the Civil Service, the police, and the Old Men's and Old Women's Homes. The Commonwealth even proposes to take over our agricultural lands. It has already decided to take our Minister for Lands to be chairman of a commission. The Commonwealth desires to deal with all industrial matters. If we pass the Bill, it will be tantamount to placing ourselves in the position we found ourselves in when we decided to fight the present war. This is what Germany stands for—national socialism. It means that everything will be under the control of the Government; everything will be nationalised.

We would like to have the post office and its revenue for the State. If we had obtained secession 10 years ago when the State agreed to it by a two to one majority, we would have had our post office and would also have had the right to impose excise duties. On this Bill there is a difference of opinion not only amongst the legal fraternity, but also amongst people all over Australia. This morning the member for Mt. Magnet exhibited a book of coupons issued under this domination of the Federal authorities.

Mr. W. Hegney: What would you suggest in lieu of coupons?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I suggest that all that sort of nonsense is unnecessary. What is the use of coupons? This rationing is the most ridiculous thing that was ever known in any country. It has been imposed under National Security Regulations.

Mr. Fox: In order to ensure equal distribution.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: We talk about doing away with dictators, but today we are really living under a dictatorship.

The Premier: Without rationing, the rich people would get all the things they require.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: There is no question of the rich people getting everything. The people working in munition and allied industries never had so much money in their lives as they are getting now. I do not mind whether they earn £30 or £40. The trouble is that when a man has worked for 10, 12 or 14 hours, he is not entitled to get a glass of beer or a pipe of tobacco because of the rationing. People in my district for eight or 10 days each month have not been able to get a glass of beer or a bit of tobacco, because they are rationed under the cursed dictatorship set up under the National Security Regulations. In spite of that, some members are prepared to give the Commonwealth more powers. I will not give away those powers.

Mr. Needham: You have no powers to give away.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The hon. member never uttered truer words. Under existing conditions, the Commonwealth has all the power it needs for the winning of the war. I realise that we have no power. But the member for Perth would go further. He was in the Federal atmosphere for so long that he has not been able to dissociate himself from it. He said that we should give the Commonwealth full powers; it would not matter to Western Australia, which is the Cinderella State, as it always has been.

Mr. Needham: I did not say that.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: That was the impression conveyed by the hon. member's remarks.

Mr. Needham: Then you are very impressionable.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I agree that we shall have to give the Commonwealth powers in respect to repatriation. The desire of every member is to do everything possible for the men who are fighting for our freedom. We

want to give them every opportunity when they return to be repatriated, perhaps placed on the land; but God forbid that they be placed on the land under the same conditions as on the other occasion, under which they have suffered starvation ever since. We want to see them placed in suitable employment. That can be done by the Commonwealth but, apart from that, the State should retain its sovereignty.

I referred to what happened in 1931 when we were stampeded into passing the financial emergency legislation. That came under the same conditions. The Commonwealth Government introduced that legislation without calling a convention. It invited the Premiers and Attorneys General to a conference, and sent them back to the States with that legislation. What has been the result? The people have been discontented ever since. Our courts are full of offenders because of that. Some men were still working under sustenance conditions two days a week until this war broke out. Hundreds of my constituents have gone to the war. They were not, it is true, married men with children. How could men on 25s. or 30s. a week get married and support children? One of our police magistrates has spoken of young fellows of 16 to 18 years appearing before him on charges of burglary. Is not that the fault of the measures adopted during the depression period?

The Premier: That is not a general thing.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The remedy is not to put the power of legislating for this State in the hands of people in Canberra. In the House of Representatives Western Australia has only five members in 75. I do not propose to give away any of the powers of this State. I would not give the Commonwealth Government any more powers than it possesses. I oppose the second reading of the Bill. The Premier does not like the measure, nor does the Leader of the Opposition, or the Leader of the National Party. Certainly the Premier does not like the transfer of the powers in the Bill to the Commonwealth. Then why support the proposal to transfer them?

The Premier: Because of the war!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The proposals include practically everything except education and police.

The Premier: What about the important subject of beer?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Bill embraces that also. However, that fact does not trouble me. The Premier's ears must often burn, though I do not suggest that beer will win the war. Still, the Premier knows he has made some bad friends through his failure to take a firm attitude towards the Commonwealth Government's rationing. In the timber country in my district men work for ten days without being able to get a drink of beer or wine or spirits. I repeat, the Premier's ears must burn when he thinks of men having to work for eight or ten days without being able to get even a glass of beer. I hope that in the Committee stage the Premier will accept necessary amendments, and that we shall then say to the Commonwealth Attorney General, "You must accept the Bill with the amendments we have made. We are not prepared to give you the full powers you ask for. We are not prepared to allow you to industrialise the whole of Australia as proposed by the Bill. We will let you repatriate our soldiers, and after that we will carry on." I reserve to myself the right to vote against the third reading of the Bill.

MR. McLARTY (Murray-Wellington): This is one of the most important Bills that has ever come before the House, and I expect that one's electors want to know the thoughts of their representative regarding it. However, one must be careful in what one says regarding the measure, in view of threats from Canberra that investigations will be made into the opposition to the Bill. That might lead one to believe that there will be investigation into anything said by any member of this Chamber. I regard the threat as a piece of colossal impudence. Still, such a statement would not be published in our leading journals unless there was something behind it. I feel confident that the statement was made to intimidate members opposing the Bill. Many years ago we had a referendum—Andrew Fisher being Prime Minister at the time—and that referendum was accompanied by a threat that if certain proposals were not carried a Bill would be brought down that would cause those opposing the measure referred to in the referendum to fall down with fright. Despite that threat the referendum was overwhelmingly defeated, like most referenda submitted in Australia.

I cannot help thinking that this Bill has a strong party political bias. That is proved

by the fact that five out of the eight members constituting the Drafting Committee for the Bill belonged to one political party. There were five Labour representatives on the committee, and three non-Labour representatives. Despite the fact that the suggestion has been ridiculed, I believe that the Bill, if carried in its present form, would do a great deal to bring about socialisation of industry, which I am convinced the sponsor of the Bill had in view. Mr. Fullagar, K.C., of New South Wales was asked what he thought of these proposed extensive new powers; and the following is quoted from him in an Eastern States paper:—

The Bill, if effective, would give the Commonwealth Parliament powers greatly in excess of the powers which it already possesses by virtue of the defence power. In addition to providing for the reinstatement and advancement of the members of the Fighting Forces, it would have powers to make laws with respect to: Employment and unemployment in any matter whatsoever concerning the relations between employer and employees, or any employer or employees. Power to fix wages independently of the Arbitration Court, or to remove workers from one place to another, or to prevent a worker leaving or changing his employment. Complete control over employment of every kind would be in the hands of the Commonwealth. Organised marketing, establishment of compulsory pools, and engagement by the Commonwealth in ordinary retail trading. Trusts, combines, and monopolies, including power to nationalise mines, public utilities, etc. Production and distribution of goods. Production of a commodity could be limited to one factory, or totally prohibited. Distribution could be limited and export prohibited. Uniformity of railway gauges, or any part of any State railway. National works, including any work the Commonwealth thought fit. Nationalisation of health and medical services. Collective farming. Preference to unionists, prohibiting preference to members of the Fighting Services in this or any previous war. Some of the questions referred, Mr. Fullagar considered, were political rather than legal questions, therefore he did not answer them.

Other eminent men agree with Mr. Fullagar and, if there is any doubt on the point, I prefer to accept his opinion.

The Minister for Labour: Does the member for West Perth agree with it?

Mr. McLARTY: I think he does, largely. The opinion of so eminent a lawyer is sufficient to indicate to members that there is a grave danger, if these powers are transferred to the Commonwealth, that nationalisation of industry will be one of the first great matters to be considered by the Commonwealth and ultimately brought about.

Mr. W. Hegney: Would you like to see things after the war as they are now?

Mr. McLARTY: No. I want a start made now, but I propose to deal with those matters later on. I do not believe for one moment that these powers will be transferred for a five-year period only, nor do I think any member of this House does. I am sure the Premier does not believe it. For example, would company law be handed over to the Commonwealth for only five years? Does anyone seriously believe that uniform company law would operate for that period only? It is ridiculous to think so. Notwithstanding that it is the considered opinion of some eminent people throughout Australia that these powers will be transferred for a term of only five years after hostilities cease, I contend that that is not believable, because the powers could not be carried out effectively in that time. A start would hardly be made before there would be a request for an additional term. I personally believe that, once given, the powers will be lost to the States for all time and will be irrevocably written into the Commonwealth Constitution; unless the States become dissatisfied, particularly this State, on account of its long distance from the seat of the Commonwealth Government. There will then be a stronger move than ever by this State for secession, and something will have to be done to return the powers to the State as the result of such a move.

Mr. Fox: We will get different treatment in the future.

Mr. McLARTY: I am glad to learn the member for South Fremantle is so optimistic. If any State needs different treatment, this State does.

Mr. Fox: Whom do you blame?

Mr. McLARTY: I blame the Commonwealth Government, irrespective of parties. I am afraid that the hon. member's party bias is so strong that he cannot overcome it. I shall vote for the second reading of the Bill. I told the member for Pilbara that we ought not to wait until after the war before making a start in preparing for our peace problems. I know those problems will be difficult. I have no wish to see thousands of men walking the streets without work, nor do I want to see the disorganisation which would follow. But I do not think it necessary to give the Commonwealth all the powers for which it is

asking. I agree that the Commonwealth should be given power to deal with the reinstatement and advancement of those who have been members of the Fighting Services and the advancement of their dependants. Should there be any doubt about the Commonwealth's having that power already we should resolve it. I am also prepared to give the Commonwealth power to deal with organised marketing of commodities, and particularly—as the member for Greenough suggested—exportable commodities; but I would not give the Commonwealth power to start trading concerns, as Mr. Fullagar suggests it will be able to do if this power is transferred. I hope we shall be able to pin the Commonwealth down to the organised marketing of commodities. I would also agree to the transfer of power to the Commonwealth to deal with oversea exchange, but no more. I do not think the Commonwealth should control oversea investments.

The Premier: Large sums of money are sent out of Australia.

Mr. McLARTY: Is it done to a very large extent?

The Premier: Yes.

Mr. McLARTY: Then it is done by people trading with other countries. I do not believe that large sums of money are being sent out of Australia. It is less likely to happen in the future.

Mr. Patrick: It does not go out in the form of money, anyhow.

Mr. McLARTY: No, but in the form of wool, wheat, gold, timber and our other exportable primary products. Here, again, we must be careful. I am not prepared to go beyond the transference of power to deal with oversea exchange. I would transfer power to the Government to deal with air transport. I do not see how it is possible not to give the Commonwealth that power, although when the question was submitted to a referendum, the people rejected it.

Mr. Patrick: The present Government opposed it.

Mr. McLARTY: Yes. It was rejected. I am prepared to agree to the transfer to the Commonwealth of power to control air transport, which has developed to a tremendous extent since that referendum was taken and which must play a most important part in the transport of this country in the future. I am also prepared to agree to the transfer of the power relating to family allowances. It has been suggested that the Com-

monwealth already possesses this power. I do not know, but I know that the States cannot carry out their financial obligations in regard to family allowances. Therefore I would agree to allow the Commonwealth Government to take power in those directions. It was suggested by a previous speaker that we had not any powers to hand over. That is not correct, or this Bill would not have been brought down. There are powers we can hand over, and they are all-important powers. In regard to these other matters—particularly employment and unemployment—there is no reason in the wide world why the Commonwealth Government cannot make money available to us to carry out our great public works. It has done so in the past; why not in the future? I would oppose the handing over to the Commonwealth Government of complete control of all our public works and the future development of Western Australia. The Federal authorities do not know sufficient about us, and in the past have not shown sufficient interest in us, and to give them control of employment and unemployment would not be in the best interests of this State.

Mr. McDonald: It is the first time they ever thought about aborigines in 40 years.

Mr. McLARTY: I was talking about employment and unemployment. I think we have power in regard to trusts, combines and monopolies. This sounds very well in print. It tickles the ears of certain people. The words "combines, trusts and monopolies" appeal to some people, and they see red immediately; but I am not prepared to hand this power over to the Commonwealth Government, particularly with the class of Minister in the present Commonwealth Government. I would not like to say what will be declared a combine or a monopoly. I would prefer to leave it to the judgment of our State Ministers. As has been frequently said, we have power to deal with combines and monopolies. Then again, with regard to profiteering! I think the department of the Minister for Industrial Development has prosecuted certain people for profiteering, and I am not prepared to give power to people in far-away Canberra to say who is profiteering in Western Australia.

The Premier: Would you be prepared to give us power in Western Australia to do it?

Mr. McLARTY: Yes.

The Premier: In peace time?

Mr. McLARTY: Yes.

The Premier: That is a concession; we have never had that before.

Mr. McLARTY: I think so.

The Premier: No.

Mr. McLARTY: Well, I have told the Premier that I would be prepared to give our own Government power necessary to deal with profiteering. I am prepared to support the second reading of the Bill, but I hope that the Government has not determined that it shall pass just as printed. I have heard appeals to members not to treat this as a party political matter. If it is so treated and the Bill goes through as printed, I will vote against it on the third reading. A suggestion has been made that it should be sent to a Select Committee. I favour the suggestion. I hope the Premier will agree. I do not think we can give too much time to the consideration of this Bill. There is no need to rush it through.

The Premier: There will not be any attempt to rush it through.

Mr. McLARTY: I give the Premier full credit in that direction. He is not attempting to rush it through and has given members every opportunity to discuss it. I hope he will accept the suggestion to send it to a Select Committee, where it can be thoroughly examined. We are in the dark in regard to certain of the clauses. There is a great deal of difference of opinion about the measure. Eminent men disagree and we should know what we are voting on. I venture to say there are a number of members in this House—if not all—who have grave doubts in regard to certain clauses of the Bill. That being so, it warrants consideration by a Select Committee as has been suggested. On those conditions, I support the second reading.

MR. SHEARN (Maylands): Like previous speakers I listened very carefully, first of all to the speech delivered by the Premier and then to that delivered by the Leader of the Opposition. I am sure that other hon. members, like myself, appreciated the opportunity afforded of hearing on the one day two separate viewpoints in relation to the deliberations of the Convention. It materially assisted us to appreciate the atmosphere in which the Convention was approached and the attitude in which subsequent proceedings were held. There have

been a considerable number of speakers since, amongst whom the foremost were those with legal knowledge, and we as laymen rightly sat back to hear their opinions. I have given much consideration to the opinions and the doubts they have expressed in regard to the application of some of the powers being sought under the Bill. As a layman I feel that one has to get the whole situation into its proper perspective in order to arrive at some conclusion, excluding for the time being what has probably very aptly been termed the legal technicalities associated with the operation of the powers proposed to be transferred to the Commonwealth authorities.

I believe that I am correct in saying that besides myself most members—if not all—from time to time have not only expressed a desire for but have very rightly pointed out the need in the interests of humanity for a re-alignment of the whole of our economic and social edifice, if the conditions of the people we represent are to have any material improvement. Side by side with that consideration comes the paramount question of how that purpose is to be attained. May I in that connection be permitted to observe that my mind goes back to consider just what power, if any, lies within the compass of this State's policy or that of any other State adequately to deal with any or all of the propositions involved in this Bill? One of the most foremost problems is the housing of the people of this State and other States. Recently one who is a very much greater authority than I would ever presume to be said that there was or will be on the cessation of hostilities a shortage of anything from a quarter of a million to half a million homes. Even allowing for the fact that there has been a considerable exodus from the country. I know from personal experience that there is an acute shortage of houses today. There will be those who will say that that state of affairs can be accounted for by the restrictions introduced by the Commonwealth Government in order to conserve manpower and materials. But even before then there was an acute shortage of homes. Rents had been high and the conditions of many people who claimed to have homes were not only often unhygienic, but a disgrace to our State. That question alone is one that must be tackled. I am wondering, irrespective of a consideration of this Bill, what the powers

that he will do to adjust temporarily the critical condition brought about by the present shortage of houses.

To give an illustration of the situation, a week or two ago in my electorate a woman with four children was, after the regularities of the law had been complied with, put out into the street. That woman had no cover over her head for 24 hours. As a result of the efforts of the Child Welfare Department the children were provided for, and some temporary assistance given to the woman. There was a woman and four children desperate for a home! Even now she has not one, but only temporary accommodation. One could go on ad infinitum quoting cases, not so critical, but requiring equally urgent attention. So I ask myself, initially, if this important matter of the promises justifiably made to the men and women of the Fighting Services, to take care of their positions after the war, will be observed more faithfully than characterised the position at the end of the last war. I do not say that at that time the returned men and women were entirely neglected, but I make this emphatic statement that they were a long way from being catered for in accordance with the promises given. "A land fit for heroes to live in!" That was a popular slogan, but the conditions in this State, and I believe they were similar to what obtained in the other States, were no credit to constituted authority at that time.

It is, on this occasion, the duty of the responsible authorities in Australia to do all they can to co-operate, and to co-ordinate some plan to ensure that better conditions will obtain for these men and women, and the munition workers, than was the case after the last war. I had the misfortune, on the one hand, and perhaps the good fortune on the other, to be representing Maylands during the latter part of the depression period. I would deplore the mere possibility of a recurrence of those conditions after the cessation of the present hostilities. Members must pay keen attention to the fact that the unemployment problem would still exist if it were not for the actual hostilities. The problem of suitable employment for our men and women is, therefore, one starkly real today as it was in 1940. So we ask ourselves, "What can this State do about it?" Western Australia, in common with the other States, signed the Financial Agreement, and

subsequently agreed to the uniform taxation proposal, and by so doing nine-tenths of our financial resources passed from our keeping.

Whilst we still retain considerable powers, we have lost the necessary and elementary ones with which to finance—and without finance we can do nothing—any of the schemes mentioned in this or any other measure which postulates having the necessary financial resources available. Since the Commonwealth Government has the control of finance, foreign exchange and all means to handle the financial structure of Australia, it seems to me that we are faced with the position of having to take into consideration our responsibilities towards our people, and at the same time of being able to realise that, as we have not the financial resources with which to ameliorate present conditions, we must find some way to co-operate with the Federal authorities who can provide these facilities. So that, jealous as I am as a Western Australian of the powers that this State does or should possess, I have an equal responsibility to safeguard the position as it exists; in other words to face up to realities and not indulge in what might be termed a mere expression of platitudes.

Members have said that they will not be parties to giving away our sovereign rights. No member is inclined to do that, but we must be equally sensible of what, after all, are the sovereign rights we possess at the moment. We do not possess control of our finances, and that is a material portion of our sovereignty already ceded.

I supported the secession movement some years ago, and I will be honest enough to say shortly why I did so. It was not because I believed that it would be in the best interests of Western Australia to secede; far from it. I am satisfied that nine-tenths of the people who, like myself, voted for secession did not for one moment do so with any idea of having it carried into effect. We did it so that it would have a salutary effect on the people of the Eastern States who, we felt, were not giving us, as a State and part of the Commonwealth, a fair deal. The result of that referendum fortified the Government of this State and had a satisfactory repercussion in the attitude of the Commonwealth Government at that time. This matter must be approached from an attitude entirely devoid of any party political flavour.

All members are sensible of the fact that this is one of the most momentous

decisions that we have been or will be called upon to make. It behoves us, therefore, not to allow any party influences or tendencies to sway us in our judgment. We, too, must be aware of the fact that we are assuming responsibilities which, under ordinary circumstances, would rightly rest upon the electors. I have to make my decision in the interest of some 8,000 people. I have to form my judgment not for the benefit of a few people who have particular ideas, but in the best interests of the people as a whole. In other words I am attempting to approach it from what is the humanitarian outlook. Today we have people writing letters to the paper, speaking over the air or addressing meetings, all expressing their views on this vital subject. Unless we are to be hypocrites, we must analyse these matters in the interests of humanity and, incidentally, in the interests of all the people even though they may be found inimical to the interests of a few.

To those people, some of whom live in my own electorate, who are organising meetings of protest against the transference of these powers to the Commonwealth, I should like to put several questions. One question is: Why have you not taken the trouble to ascertain what my opinion is, knowing that I represent the Maylands electorate and may be called upon today or next week to give a decision on a matter of outstanding importance? In putting that question I am putting it personally. Some of these people have not taken the trouble to ask me how I intend to vote. That is indicative of how much interest they take in the matter. I do not mention this in an egotistical sense, but with a full appreciation of the responsibility that attaches to arriving at a decision that may affect the interests of 8,000 people within my electorate. There are those who are addressing meetings and talking over the air, who have not sufficient interest in the well-being of my electors to ascertain my views. Possibly their answer to my query would be that they do not think my views are worthwhile. If that is their attitude, my answer to them is that there can well be a mutual admiration society as between them and myself.

With regard to the question of sovereign rights, I do not desire to go extensively into that phase. Some who have been members of this Chamber for a much longer period than I have will appreciate as much as I do

that there is much useless talk about the sovereign rights that we possess. Assuming that people who are speaking in opposition to the transference of powers are honest in their desire to fulfil all the promises that have been made to men and women who are in the Fighting Services on their return to civil life, I put a further question: If the people of Western Australia decide, in their wisdom or unwisdom, to reject the Bill in its entirety, what do you propose to set up in its place? It is all very well to adopt an insular attitude, but where will that get us? I would like to ask particularly the gentleman whose name appears so prominently in this morning's issue of "The West Australian," whether he proposes at tomorrow night's meeting to present a definite and unequivocal alternative to the proposals that are submitted to us in the Bill. If he does, I shall be very pleased to follow him. It is all very well to stand up and criticise proposals such as those embodied in the Bill, but we have to bear in mind that this is a matter that can very well affect the destinies of the State, and in those circumstances such people should be prepared to submit alternative proposals.

If I hazard a guess as to what the effect of any alternative will be, it is that this State may find itself left out of any arrangement reached. I do not share the opinion expressed that the Commonwealth Government will, should there be strenuous opposition to the proposals, consider that Western Australia is not interested in its proposals. I fancy the Premier made that suggestion. Another member said that, if Western Australia did not participate, it would be deprived of the advantages of any arrangement that was arrived at. I do not think the Commonwealth Government would exclude Western Australia from any benefits that were available. I think, however, it most important that this State should see to it that its special difficulties are placed prominently before the Commonwealth Government. In the past Commonwealth Governments have not properly understood them. I do not know that they wanted to understand them. Certainly they have not given much evidence of their desire to appreciate them, and in the circumstances it is imperative that Western Australia should have adequate representation at the conference table and make our difficulties and differences known to those in authority.

I am satisfied that the representatives we had at the recent Convention achieved some results in the interests of Western Australia. Despite all that was said to the contrary, it seems almost impossible to obtain the consideration of our major problems that is so essential in the interests of Western Australia in its relationship to the Commonwealth. In the circumstances, would we not be extremely foolish if we adopted an obstructive attitude and refrained from participating in any future deliberations that I assume will take place between the representatives of the Commonwealth and the other States? Should we run that risk seeing that we are desirous of doing everything possible to secure the social and economic rehabilitation of our men and women on their return from war service? Were we to do so, we would find that Western Australia was without the necessary resources to enable us to give effect to our desires. I would not like to be party to any such attitude. Therefore I regard it as imperative, in the interests of Western Australia and of Australia generally, that our attitude should be such as to enable us to have representation at future conferences. We must remember that the State Government is responsible for the well-being of one-third of the Continent but in our functions as a State we have a responsibility to Australia as well as to Western Australia. I am assuming that there will be a further Convention at which plans will be discussed for the post-war reconstruction of Australia's economic and social conditions.

I shall support the second reading of the Bill, not because I am in agreement with all its provisions and not because I believe the Commonwealth Government has not at present all the powers it seeks to have transferred under this legislation, but because I see in this move an opportunity to secure a proper alignment of matters that arise between Western Australia and the Commonwealth. I believe that we must see to it that we have representation at any such gathering so that Australia's obligations to Western Australia may be put on a proper basis and that we may make certain that, on their return from active service, men and women who have participated in the war effort shall have ample provision made for them out of the financial resources that are possessed by the Commonwealth. In order to make my position clear in the

absence of any other alternative and to meet the situation we shall inevitably be involved in on the cessation of hostilities, I support the second reading of the Bill on the definite understanding that it will be referred to a Select Committee. I would like that Select Committee to consist of members of both branches of the State Legislature in order to secure the viewpoints of all, and to make certain that the combined wisdom we can bring to bear on this matter in relation to the difficulties of Western Australia, is devoted to its consideration so that the whole matter shall be properly analysed and all the ambiguities that it is suggested are to be found in the Bill—that there are some is obvious even to a layman—shall be ironed out.

The Bill should be dealt with in that way so that people who have voiced objections to it shall have an opportunity to secure an adequate hearing, and that proper and full consideration may be given to their views by the Select Committee. In turn, that body can furnish a report to this House and another place and ultimately we may submit our views, in the light of the inquiry, to the further conference that I take it will be held between representatives of the Commonwealth and the States. By that means we will, as far as is humanly possible, deal with the bogies that have been raised, and investigate the possibilities of the misuse of powers respecting which we shall be able to provide adequate safeguards. On these conditions alone I shall support the second reading of the Bill.

THE PREMIER: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Mr. SPEAKER: I point out to members that, if the Premier moves the motion, he will have the right of pre-audience and will close the debate if he speaks.

Mr. Marshall: That is not necessarily so. He may not speak. He may give way to someone else.

Mr. SPEAKER: If the Premier exercises his right of pre-audience, he will close the debate.

Motion put and passed; debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE PREMIER: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday next at 11 a.m.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 5.1 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 26th January, 1943.

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

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills—

- 1, Local Authorities (Reserve Funds).
- 2, Lotteries (Control) Act Amendment.
- 3, State (Western Australia) Alunite Industry Partnership.
- 4, Constitution Acts Amendment.
- 5, Industries Assistance Act Continuance.
- 6, Road Districts Act Amendment (No. 2).
- 7, Financial Emergency Act Amendment.
- 8, Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act Amendment.
- 9, Health Act Amendment (No. 2).
- 10, Fire Brigades.
- 11, National Emergency (Stocks of Goods).
- 12, Loan, £310,000.
- 13, Pig Industry Compensation.
- 14, Rural Relief Fund Act Amendment.
- 15, Stamp Act Amendment.
- 16, Appropriation.
- 17, Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act Continuance.
- 18, Income and Entertainments Tax (War Time Suspension).

BILL—MOTOR SPIRIT AND SUBSTITUTE LIQUID FUELS.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to the Council's amendments.

BILL—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Request for Conference.

Message from the Assembly received and read requesting a conference on the amend-