The Premier: No. It is a recent draft.

Mr. PATRICK: I am very glad to have that information.

The Premier: The present company law consists of an Act and about 15 amendments.

Mr. PATRICK: I regret to notice the falling off in subscriptions to the charities consultations, as these consultations have been responsible for much of the finance required by a number of our deserving charitable institutions. Probably one of the reasons for the falling off is the tremendous call for contributions to local patriotic funds. The Ministry could assist the Lotteries Commission considerably by cleaning up starting price betting. Starting price bookmakers are a blot on this community, especially in wartime.

Mr. Fox: Why not extend that to horse-racing as well?

Mr. PATRICK: That can be done, if the hon. member so wishes. I do not know whether this will interest the Minister for Labour, but recently when I was in the Eastern States I was told in the various capitals that starting price betting was Western Australia's greatest industry. I agree with the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald) that sufficient advantage has not been taken of the services of members of this House, and that some use could be made of them on committees and in other directions. In view of the present war situation there is no time for party bickering; we must all stand absolutely together. While the position is grave, at least we know to-day where we stand. We have discovered by experience that elaborately built alliances are brittle things when put to the test, and we must learn to depend on ourselves. We have realised also that democracy can survive only as a result of constant preparation for defence. I endorse a great many of the remarks of the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Tonkin) along those lines. It is expensive and dangerous to wait for an attack before preparing for defence. It is obvious, as the member for West Perth pointed out, that Australia will not be in a safe position until it obtains a larger population. At the same time when immigration is resumed we should be careful to ensure that we have only the right type of people. Personally, I would keep out altogether certain types of Europeans who, if not openly against us, are at least not a source of strength in time of trouble.

On motion by Mr. Hill, debate adjourned.

## STANDING ORDERS.

*Report of Committee.*

Mr. Marshall (Murchison) brought up the report of the Standing Orders Committee.

Ordered: That the report be printed and its consideration made an Order of the Day for the next sitting.

*House adjourned at 5.47 p.m.*

# Legislative Council,

*Tuesday, 6th August, 1940*


| | PAGE |
|---|---|
| Questions: Wooroloo farm clearing .... .... .... | 98 |
| Superphosphate, etc., stocks and imports .... | 98 |
| Railways, Commissioner's tours of inspection .... | 99 |
| Address-in-reply, fifth day .... .... .... .... | 99 |


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

## QUESTION—WOOROLOO FARM CLEARING.

Hon. G. B. WOOD asked the Chief Secretary: What is the average cost per acre, to date, of the clearing being carried out for the Government at Wooroloo?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: Four hundred and thirty-three (433) acres have been cleared at Wooroloo Farm at a cost of £18,106, or £41 16s. 4d. per acre. It is heavy jarrah and redgum country, and the work has been carried out by men who are medically classified as "C" class, unable through their physical disabilities to do ordinary relief work, such as road construction, railway work, etc.

## QUESTION—SUPERPHOSPHATE, ETC.

*Stocks and Imports.*

Hon. H. L. ROCHE asked the Chief Secretary: 1, What quantity of phosphatic rock was held in this State on the 1st September, 1939? 2, What quantity of manu-

factured or part-manufactured superphosphate was in the hands of the Phosphates Commission in Western Australia, or local manufacturers on the 1st September, 1939? 3, What quantity of phosphatic rock has been imported into Western Australia since the 1st September, 1939, and how much of these imports has been carried in British or British-controlled ships? 4, (a) What quantity of sulphur and sulphuric acid was held in stock by the superphosphate manufacturing companies in Western Australia on the 1st September, 1939? (b) What quantity has been imported into the State since that date? (c) What quantity of (b) was of Australian origin?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, This information can be obtained only from the Commonwealth. 2, Answered by No. 1. 3, 2,157,220 cwts. of phosphatic rock were imported into this State from 1st September, 1939, to 30th June, 1940. Separate particulars of ships which carried this cargo are not recorded. 4, (a) Answered by No. 1; (b) and (c) The statistical item under which sulphuric acid is recorded also covers muriatic and nitric acids, and values only are reported. Importations under this heading for the period 1st September, 1939, to 30th June, 1940, were as follow:—Australian origin, £178; oversea origin, £143. Quantities of sulphur imported during the same period were:—Australian origin, 1 cwt.; oversea origin, 516,667 cwt.

## QUESTION—RAILWAYS.

*Commissioner's Tours of Inspection.*

Hon. E. H. H. HALL asked the Chief Secretary: What is the total cost of the whole of the annual tours of inspection made by the Commissioner of Railways for the years ended the 30th June, 1939, and 1940 respectively?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: Cost of inspection tours are not kept separately.

## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Fifth Day.*

Debate resumed from the 1st August.

**HON. W. J. MANN** (South-West) [4.38]: At the outset I should like to associate myself with the expressions of welcome that have already been voiced to the three new members who are with us this session. I have known two of them for a number of years, and I feel sure that their advent to this Chamber will be for the betterment of the State and that their experience will be extremely valuable. I have not had the pleasure of knowing Mr. Roche for very long, but if his remarks on this debate may be taken as a criterion, I am satisfied that he will prove a very valuable acquisition to the House. At the same time I should like to add a word of appreciation of the services of the three members who retired. Each of them has left behind a record of service that we recall with pleasure, and I feel that we are the poorer for not having them with us.

Not a great deal is to be gained at a time like the present by following along the lines usually adopted on the Address-in-reply debate. I do not mean to indicate that we should stifle criticism where criticism may be desirable, or that we should follow the Government blindly, but we are in such a position that we should bend our minds to a consideration of the very serious problem that confronts the nation. We as a nation are in a position of, one might say, a lone force facing a hostile world. During the past two months the enemy has been reinforced by all the valuable fighting material, all the available means of production, and all the man power of perhaps a dozen large and small subjugated nations. I believe that never in the history of war has there been a parallel to the position in which the British Empire finds itself to-day. That position, moreover, is rendered even more serious by the fact that standing behind those who are opposed to us are two other great nations, both of which are observing a very thinly veiled neutrality, and concerning whose actions in the future I have not the least doubt in the world. It is extraordinary that many people seem to have the idea that the events of the last year or so are simply mere accident. Rather the reverse is the fact: all the successes that have been gained by those in opposition to us have been scheduled for a long time and have taken place without any serious loss or stoppage; that is, until the capitulation of France some time ago. I wish here to say also that we in this part of Australia are perhaps one of the minor units from the aspect of numbers, but are one of the major

units insofar as we have at our disposal means and resources that are extremely valuable at such a time as this. The utilisation of these resources can play a very large part in assisting our country.

Probably most of us have at one time or another expressed feelings of impatience at what the Australian Government has done or is doing in the direction of war effort. In this regard I expect I have been guilty as have many others, but I hold that when we examine the position we must realise that we ought to be very patient and not cast reflections upon those who carry the burden of government, because, after all, they are merely a handful of men who have shouldered a colossal task of the widest ramifications. It is pleasing to know that slowly but, I think, surely the forces that can be harnessed are being recognised and that in many directions they are being made to contribute a great deal more towards the sinews of war than has been the case in the past. When criticising the Federal Government we should remember that the only real criticism we might offer is that probably Federal Ministers are personally attempting to do too much and should have called in earlier far more of expert assistance.

As regards war I always have been a conscriptionist, and there is not much chance of my ever changing. I do not mean merely conscription of manhood. That is only one phase. I hold that on the outbreak of hostilities we should have conscription of wealth and conscription of industry; conscription of man power and of all those things which can be utilised for the common good in war time. Without such control, without harnessing such resources, we cannot logically expect to prevail against those who have made more than a speciality of conscription of all forces. Unfortunately, as regards the idea of all-round conscription I am one of a minority; but I do not intend to let that circumstance prevent me from expressing my opinions. If we cannot have complete conscription, then I think those of us who are in the minority can still do our best to endeavour to impress upon the people the need of more action and fewer words. Because our life in the main has been easy and comfortable, a great number of people in this country seemingly fail to realise the extent and seriousness and the possibilities of the present conflict. If one looks around, one might almost arrive at the conclusion that nothing short of invasion of Australia will bring some of our people to realise what is before us. Distance, and the fact that we are somewhat outside the orbit of hostilities, have prevented us from getting the right perspective. When we read of some of the statements and actions, fortunately not in this part of Australia but elsewhere in the Commonwealth, concerning the war, when we learn of the obstructive efforts that have been made in some directions, we feel angry. We wonder sometimes just how long some of these people will be permitted to continue to act in this way and to practise their pernicious doctrines; because, after all, these obstructionist tactics definitely are to our own disadvantage, while giving the enemy cause for rejoicing. The call in Australia today is for unity, unity in deed and unity in action. We should drop all party shibboleths that have been indulged in our Parliaments for some years past. To be told that party considerations prevent the inauguration of a National Government at Canberra is to me an exceedingly sorry admission. At the present time party politics throughout Australia should be put into cold storage and kept there.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Quite right.

Hon. W. J. MANN: We have no use for party politics anywhere in the world as we know it. I hope our Government will order its proceedings during the present session on non-party lines. The Lieut.-Governor's speech—one of the weakest and least constructive that I have ever perused—does not give us much idea of what is before us; if it does, we are in for a lean session. The Government ought to be castigated for not having taken Parliament into its confidence. For years past I have been of opinion that Governments here have lost much of their effectiveness and have made their path much more thorny than it might otherwise have been because of the fact that they did not take this House more into their confidence with respect to legislation: I sincerely hope we shall have no legislation this session of a contentious nature; but should it prove to be so then I hope no time will be lost in unseemly debate. I trust the Government

will not hesitate to confer with this Chamber, so that the legislation may be passed as quickly as possible.

We have been at war nearly a year and very little has been done so far to organise for the production of food, clothing, weapons, transport and munitions, all of which are essential if we are to keep our fighting forces at the front at the highest pitch of efficiency. Read as one will in an endeavour to sum up the situation, I cannot see anything but a long conflict ahead of us. I believe we are wasting valuable time, because we are but slowly recognising the fact that in this war more than in any other it will be the forces on the home front that will play the deciding part. I understand that the Australian Agricultural Council meets in Sydney next week and will discuss an all-in war-time effort. I sincerely hope that that all-in war-time effort will get past the discussion stage and that out of it will come very rapidly further means of augmenting the essentials of war. Western Australia merely awaits an opportunity to be able to assist in many ways. We can produce in this State a long list of extremely important commodities. Here I may say that I am in full accord with the idea of stabilising the prices of our primary products as soon as possible and getting down to some concrete proposal with regard to the production of cereals, butter, cheese, bacon, eggs, meat and fruits in the future. We should commence on a long-range programme, not a programme from year to year, because unless the primary producer can see some encouragement ahead there is a possibility that he may slacken his efforts rather than accelerate them. Better a hundred times that we should have a surplus of these commodities rather than a deficiency. Even though the surplus may cost a few million pounds, money that is expended on primary production immediately goes back into circulation.

Reference has been made to the fact that we have 6,000 unemployed persons who are members of recognised trade unions in this State. I suppose if it were possible for one to obtain figures, it would be found that we have at least another 6,000 unemployed persons who are not members of unions and many of whom are middle-aged and in advanced years. I desire to pay a tribute to the hundreds of young men who have enlisted for service, a large proportion having come from our country districts. There will be an aftermath, and that will be a very serious labour problem for the people in the country. It was bad enough in all conscience last year, but for the future it seems to me that it must get worse. One of the directions in which the State Government can help without waiting for a lead from the Federal Government or anyone else, is to take stock of these unemployed people and ascertain how many are available to go into the country to assist the farmers by providing the labour that the farmers must have.

Hon. G. B. Wood: The Government will not do that.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I believe the Government will have to do it because unless labour can be secured, then production must decline. Whilst a proportion of the unemployed may be unsuited for work in the country, I am certain from my own knowledge—I have seen hundreds of these people—that they would make useful rural workers.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Some of them are farmers.

Hon. W. J. MANN: Quite possibly. I have every reason to appreciate much of the work that has been done by these unemployed in the province I and my colleagues represent, but the work that is being carried out by these people in the country, while it is useful, can afford to wait and the men engaged on it can be employed to better advantage. We must speed up primary production. We have immense fighting forces to provide for and we cannot afford not to continue to produce. If the Government is able to spend money in what I might call—I do not say it in a derogatory sense—non-essential work to-day it can afford to subsidise the farmers.

The Chief Secretary: Can you enlarge on that idea?

Hon. W. J. MANN: Yes, if necessary. I am not thinking of the individual; I am thinking of the great task before us, and if we have to offer subsidies in the manner suggested, it is better to use the money in that way. I do not consider anyone will raise any objection to such action. While there may be some people who would possibly be inclined to take advantage of a scheme such as that, we know that it has been done in the past, as the Chief Secretary has said. Surely it is not beyond the ability of the

Government to devise a scheme to deal with this class of people. There is a word that has not been much heard of in the past—ideology. I have been reading quite a lot lately about ideology and there appears to be an inclination to interpret it as a term to cloak some kind of "ism," nazism, fascism, pacifism, or some sort of democracy. But there is another ideology coming and whatever it is, it is going to bring a great change to the people of all nations. It might be a compromise, a coalition or something between the forces to which I have just referred, but whatever it is, no man can say; he would be foolish indeed to try to make a prediction.

The Chief Secretary interjected.

Hon. W. J. MANN: There are even good things in the Labour Party, but there are others with which I should be sorry to be associated. However, we will not discuss that now because, as I said earlier in my remarks, party politics should be put into cold storage.

Hon. G. Fraser: This is not a party House.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I am glad to hear the hon member say that.

Hon. J. Cornell: I am afraid you are digging in barren ground.

Hon. W. J. MANN: Even barren ground can be made productive if we go the right way about it. This barren ground may be productive. I do say, however, that the problem of Parliament is not so much putting through new legislation as it is to give the people a lead. They are looking for a lead and this State can give it and should give it. Therefore, this House should assist in that direction, especially if it is something that will make for the common good.

**HON. SIR HAL COLEBATCH** (Metropolitan) [5.11]: I am deeply appreciative of the kindly welcome extended to me on my return, after 17 years, to the scene of my earliest political activities, activities that have been of an unusually varied character and which have carried me far afield, and through experiences in a period of unusual world turmoil. Those experiences, I hope, have not been entirely thrown away. I value particularly the welcome I received from those four hon. members, the only four who were members of this Chamber when I was elected to it 28 years ago, yourself, Mr. President; our worthy Chairman of Committees; Mr. Drew and Mr. Hamersley. It is too, a pleasure to renew association with those who were elected during my early membership and from whom I received cordial co-operation during the seven years I was a Leader of this House. I wish to take this opportunity of again acknowledging the extreme courtesy and consideration that I received from different Governments during the whole period I occupied the office of Agent-General in London. For almost the whole of those nine and a half years the Treasury benches in this State were occupied by men who had always been my political opponents; but it would have been impossible for me to receive more confidential and kindly treatment had I been a leading member of their own party. Because of that circumstance and because of the splendid loyalty and exceptional efficiency of the entire staff of Savoy House, and the co-operation that existed at all times between the High Commissioner and the Agent-Generals of the different States, my stay in London was a particularly pleasant one.

The Speech of His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor is frankly, and I think wisely, couched in very general terms. In these days of chance and change when no one knows what the circumstances of to-morrow may bring forth, the Government might well be diffident about setting out a cut-and-dried programme of sessional proposals. I shall follow that example and speak in a very general way. It has been said that one of the weaknesses of Democracies, is that political parties, not one political party, but all political parties in all Democracies are prone to tell the people those things they think the people would like to know. They are very shy of telling the people unpleasant truths that they ought to be made to understand. Since I regard this as a non-party House, it is surely a place in which one might indulge in saying those things that seem to one to be the truth, even though they may not be particularly pleasant. Altogether apart from the present emergency of war, no one can feel at all satisfied with the course of events in Australia, as well as in this State, over a long period of years. I can at all events claim that during my 28 years in

politics I have consistently opposed what may still be regarded as the dominant features of Australia's policy. That policy is based on the assumption that by means of high protective tariffs, cutting out outside competition, and arbitration courts designed to assure to the worker a fair share of the profits earned, it is possible to build up and maintain a high standard of living and promote the general prosperity of the country. I have no hesitation in saying that that policy has hopelessly failed, apart altogether from this present emergency of war. It has been bolstered up by huge public borrowing. We all listened with interest to the review of our State public borrowing that Mr. Holmes furnished to us the other day. For a young State, sparsely populated, and in the early stages of its development, it may be entirely fitting that there should be extensive borrowing. It all depends on how the borrowed money is spent. Borrowed money spent on wealth production finds its own means of paying interest and sinking fund. Borrowed money spent in any other way cannot fail to become a permanent burden upon the community. Where has this policy brought us? Taking Australia as a whole, it has meant the building up of a number of great cities. Our own city of Perth is one of which we may well be proud. When walking around Perth I sometimes think there is only one street worthy of a great capital, namely, St. George's-terrace. If we walk along the Terrace we find that most of the fine buildings are the result of the activities of organisations, not to create wealth but to look after the people's money. If we contrast those magnificent buildings with the conditions obtaining throughout the country, where the wealth of the State is produced, we cannot fail to come to the conclusion that there is something wrong with the policy we have followed.

We cannot help feeling that the prosperity of the State is to a large extent artificial and cannot possibly continue under present conditions. Consider what would be the position of Western Australia to-day if it were not for the stimulus that circumstances have given to our goldmining industry. I venture to say that our position would be deplorable, worse than it has ever been at any period in our history. In this connection I should like to express regret that a more emphatic protest was not entered against the monstrously unjust system of taxing gold production, a system that is applied to no other industry. It is a system that imposes an utterly undue burden upon what is almost entirely a Western Australian industry. Some people may say, "What does it matter? The burden falls upon the London shareholders." It must be remembered that British taxation itself is on a higher level than ever before. So far from the war having brought greater profits to the goldmining companies, very few of them have not seen a fall in the value of their shares. They are all quoted at a lower figure since war broke out. We have to consider the possibility of the effect of that burden upon the goldmining industry. We know what followed the plundering of that industry during the last war. By acquiring gold at the old price and selling it at its world value, the Commonwealth authorities played an important part in bringing the industry to a state of stagnation a few years later. There is still a danger of the withdrawal of that interest in our goldmining industry that has done so much to keep Western Australia afloat through a time of great difficulty and trouble. I notice in the "West Australian" this morning that an appeal is being made to the Federal Arbitration Court for an increase in the basic wage in 70 key industries. The advocate of that increase, by the way, is an ex-lecturer on economics in the University of Western Australia. He pointed out that the 70 key industries in question had increased their profits in the last three years by 36.8 per cent., and their reserves by 40 per cent. I hope before that case is concluded the judge in the Federal Arbitration Court will want to know what these industries are, so that both he and the public may see the profits that are being made, and to what extent they are the result of some form of political privilege. If he is going to increase the basic wage because of the high profits of certain protected ventures, what will become of the other industries in Australia not enjoying such advantages? We are in danger of being ground between the upper and the nether millstones. At the top we have privileged big business flaunting before a growingly discontented people, exorbitant profits resulting chiefly from some form or other of political privilege. At the other end we have cast-iron trade union regulations, hamstringing industry and discouraging enterprise, and with it

all an apparently insoluble problem of unemployment. It is a grim commentary on Australian policy that in a young country of such great resources, and so much work waiting to be done, there should be this widespread unemployment.

It is very dreadful to think that in Australia we have so many thousands of people who are uselessly employed. That is a problem that is being considered in the Old Country to-day. Some months ago published statistics showed that during the last 20 years the number of people employed in distributive and other unproductive avocations in England had increased by no less than 3,000,000. There is now an agitation in the Old Country that that surplus 3,000,000 persons should be weeded out of those useless avenues of employment and put to work in occupations that might help the country in the present state of emergency. All sorts of extraordinary attempts are being made in Great Britain, as here, to counteract the difficulties and disabilities that have arisen as the result of recent policies. In England there is a Milk Board, just as there is here. I remember not long ago, soon after the Milk Board came into existence, a manufacturer of ice cream on a large scale had 1,500 gallons of skim milk to dispose of every day. He had been selling it daily very cheaply to hospitals and charitable institutions. When the board came into existence, it said to him, "You must not do that." He replied, "Then, I will give it to those institutions." Again the board said, "You must not do that." Finally, special permission was obtained from the local governing authority for the manufacturer to dilute the 1,500 gallons of good rich skim milk with four times the quantity of water, and pour it down the drain—and that in a country where there are hundreds and thousands, if not millions, of children suffering from malnutrition. In the past every effort on the part of the British Government to reduce the number of people uselessly employed in distributive trades—such as the more economic marketing of milk—came to nothing. In this country, as well as in England, there are not many industries, from milk to motor cars, in which the cost of distribution does not impose a tremendous burden, borne particularly by the producer and the consumer. I remember on one occasion walking through Soho markets. The day before I had been to Covent Garden, and had been sad to see our beautiful fruit sacrificed at extraordinarily low prices, about 6s. or 7s. a case for first class apples. In the Soho markets those apples were averaging a fine price per lb. I approached one of the vendors and said, "I know what you paid for these apples in Covent Garden yesterday. Surely you could sell them for less." He smiled, and took me out to walk through street after street. After a while he said, "I have brought you out here to show you how many of us have to live on the sale of those apples. That is the whole reason why the profit on the sales has to be so large."

We hear a good deal of talk about the iniquity of the proposal to ration petrol. Most of the objection seems to be concentrated on the question of the number of people who may be thrown out of employment. A great many of those people are at present uselessly employed. I have never possessed a motor car, and do not suppose I ever will possess one. I have no desire to do so. Wherever one goes, one can find two or three bowsers where one might readily suffice. It is considered a dreadful thing to ration petrol, and throw out of work a lot of people who are doing nothing really useful.

Hon. J. Cornell: There were 13 bowsers in Esperance a few months ago.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: I do not know to what the hon. member is referring.

Member: Do you mean motor cars?

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: All this duplication does not mean cheapness to the consumer. Where competition is free, through a large number of persons being engaged in a particular business, the public generally gets the advantage of it. When persons are competing against each other the benefit lies with the consumer. In the instances to which I have referred—apples in Soho market and petrol here, the price to the consumer must be higher because more people have to live upon the trade. We hear very little protest about the price of petrol in this country. I am not going to touch now on the question of the exorbitant prices we have had to pay in Australia, but to take a simple instance of what happens in this State. The people are paying 2s. 4d. a gallon for petrol in Perth and 150 miles

away the price charged is 2s. 10d. a gallon—an extra 6d. But those people who, being large consumers, can afford to equip a truck to carry down their petrol supplies, have assured me that the extra cost to them is not more than a penny per gallon. Yet the industries of the country have to bear the extra cost of 6d. a gallon! How can it be expected that our industries can be profitable under conditions of that description?

I think, however, that the most alarming evidence of retrogression is to be found in the report of the Education Department which was tabled in this Chamber a few days ago. On page 34 of that report will be found the annual records of our school population. I have skipped that period of extraordinary development in the life of our State when people were rushing to the goldfields. I have deliberately chosen the year when the gold rush was over and we were beginning to feel a depression, not one so severe as that recently experienced but still, a very real depression. I shall start with the year 1906. I have divided the period that has passed since then into two equal spans of 17 years. From 1906 to 1923 there was an increase in our school population of 22,042, or an increase at the rate of 75 per cent. In the subsequent 17 years, from 1923 to now, instead of an increase of 22,042 we have one of only 4,610. Instead of an increase at the rate of 75 per cent. the increase for the later period is at the rate of only 8.9 per cent. For the last five years there has been a small but steady drop in our school population. For last year there was a total of 3,500 below the record for 1933, and there were 66 fewer schools in operation than there were five years ago. The private schools between 1906 and 1923 increased their number of scholars by 50 per cent., but between 1923 and now by only 26 per cent., and their numbers have been declining during the past two years. The extraordinary decrease in the rate of increase of scholars at our public schools has been experienced notwithstanding the fact that there is a larger number of students over 14 years of age attending the schools and notwithstanding the fact that in recent years in several districts a considerable number of foreigners have settled, people who are most desirable settlers from every point of view, and have large families. Notwithstanding both these factors, we find this tragic decrease in the rate of our school population.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: And how much less is the Education Vote?

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: I do not know how much less the Vote is, but I know that the Vote is very much less than it ought to be. I well remember soon after I entered this House in 1912, during the Address-in-reply debate my friend Mr. Cornell made a very interesting speech, in the course of which he expressed warm approval of the action of the then Federal Government in providing what was known as "the baby bonus." I remember quite distinctly the hon. member's reference to the general character of that bonus, to its freedom from any kind of class restriction. He said that "the richest lady in the land can go along and collect her £5 bonus, and no questions asked." There is one question I should like to ask now, and it is: Where has it got us? In 1912 the birth rate in Australia was 27.10 per thousand; now, after 28 years of the operations of "the baby bonus," the birth rate is down to 17.50 per thousand. Already it is down below the percentage required to maintain our present population, and within a very short period of time we must see but one end, the decrease in our total population so far as the difference between births and deaths is concerned, with a steadily growing increase in the number of old people. If we were living in a period of profound peace, I maintain that conditions like these could be regarded only with alarm by any thoughtful mind; yet we accept them quite complacently, and this notwithstanding the fact that the war, as the results of events of recent weeks, has been brought almost to our very doors.

Of the last 17 years, I have spent 10 years in England and in travelling abroad. I have visited a great many of the continental countries. I have had opportunities of seeing what was happening. I have been to Germany on several occasions. It is fashionable to cast a lot of blame upon the small European States. I cannot endorse that sentiment for one single moment. For the most part, those small European States were pursuing a policy that should have protected

them against aggression on any hand. In many instances they had been, for many years, spending more than they could afford on armaments, knowing full well that nothing they could do would protect them against their powerful neighbours if those neighbours became aggressive. The blame rests with the great democracies, with Britain, America and France, and with the British Dominions as well. I venture to remind the House of the warnings that those democracies received, for the reason that, to my mind, very similar warnings are being regarded far too indifferently by us in Australia to-day. In 1919, very shortly after the termination of the war, the Nazi Party was formed, which eventually lifted Hitler into power. It was in 1920, at a conference in Munich, that the party adopted the 25 planks of its policy, which included the re-arming of Germany as quickly as possible, the destruction of the Treaties of Versailles and St. Germain, the recovery of the German colonies and the recovery of those portions of Germany that had been taken from her after the war, the expulsion of the Jews and many other features of a policy that has been adhered to, letter by letter, ever since. In 1924 Brigadier General Morgan, reporting on behalf of the British Government after a long visit to portions of occupied Germany, declared that the Germans were re-arming as quickly as they could and he urged that the British and French armies of occupation should not be withdrawn until Germany had been compelled to observe the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles. We know that in 1933 Hitler came into power, having in his book "Mein Kampf" told the world what he intended to do. In 1934 the Gestapo was already active in every country in Europe. It was the year of assassinations. Dollfuss had been assassinated and Hitler would have marched into Austria then and there had he not been deterred, not by the great democracies or by the League of Nations but by his fellow dictator, Mussolini. In 1935 he imposed conscription upon the German people in defiance of the Treaty of Versailles.

In that year, 1935, I was privileged to attend a conference of the International Chamber of Commerce in Paris. The theme of almost every speaker on that occasion was that Europe was tottering towards trouble and that unless something was done in the way of stabilising currencies and removing barriers against international trade, there must be absolute bankruptcy in many countries, leading inevitably to war. In 1936 I had a most interesting visit to Berlin. I was privileged to be one of a delegation of four from the British Section of the International Chamber of Commerce. The delegation was headed by Lord Riverdale. Members will have noted from the reports in the Press that that gentleman has been appointed to many extremely important offices in connection with Britain's war effort. I have very vivid recollections of the half-dozen discussions that we had during the week. The conference, with leaders of German industry, was held towards the end of February and the beginning of March, 1936. On one occasion I sat between Dr. Schacht and Herr Fritz Thyssen, and on another occasion I sat between Ribbentrop and Dr. Fischer. I had an opportunity of seeing what was going on, and it was obvious that in Germany a struggle was proceeding between the section that was prepared to go a long way towards establishing a friendly relationship with the rest of Europe by means of a re-establishment of trade, and that other section, bound to the 25 points of Nazi policy, that wanted nothing but revenge. I well remember our final dinner during that week at the palace of the Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha. There were 12 people at the table, we four delegates from England and eight of the leading German industrialists. We four delegates went to our hotel from that dinner and sat talking for a long time. We were wondering what was going to happen on the following day because it was well known that Hitler had called Parliament together, and something was to be done. What happened? On that Saturday Hitler sent his troops into the Rhineland. I walked the streets of Berlin that evening with an Australian friend who had lived for many years in Berlin and knew the German language well. He told me what the people were saying; he knew what they were thinking. They were thinking that the sending of the troops to the Rhine was not just an incident, not something done for the protection of Germany. The people knew it was the beginning of the new war of revenge. In Brussels and Paris the same idea prevailed. Only in Great Britain was the news received with a shrug of the shoulders.

In 1937 we had a further conference—a huge conference—in Berlin. The hospitality extended to the visiting delegates was extraordinary; it was princely. But it was obvious that the party led by Dr. Schacht and Dr. Fischer and one or two others had ceased to carry any influence whatever. It was Ribbentrop, Goering and Goebbels who counted. I remember walking back from the first meeting of that conference—a meeting that Hitler had attended—with Lord Riverdale, and the only two words he used were "Too late." A few months later I attended a conference of the League of Nations in Geneva. It was the opening of the Hall of Peace. The Aga Khan was President that year and had arranged the ceremonies with true Eastern magnificence. Thousands of pounds were spent in a great reception at the opening of this Hall of Peace which had cost a million of money and was supposed to symbolise the peaceful spirit dominating the world. To me it seemed just a travesty, when all Europe was in arms; when I had motored through a portion of Germany, through France and Switzerland and a part of Italy and everywhere had seen troop roads cluttered with troops and the small hotels in every little village crowded out with officers. And after having seen that, I attended this great, this incongruous, ceremony, the opening of the Hall of Peace! The following day I heard the representatives of the then Government of Spain pleading for the aid of the League against Franco and the troops of Germany and Italy. I heard the representative of the Government of China pleading for aid against Japanese aggression. If those pleas did not fall upon deaf ears, they at least fell on unresponsive hearts.

In March, 1938, Hitler had sent his troops into Austria and in September we had the tragedy of Munich. The world knows now the enormous resources that Hitler obtained as a result of his entry into Czecho-Slovakia. He secured 1,500 aeroplanes, something over a million rifles, a countless number of machine guns and. big guns, all the paraphernalia of war, and some of the finest armament factories in the world. But he gained far more than that. Munich and what followed after Munich to a large extent shattered the faith of the small European countries in the League of Nations and in the power of the great democracies, and we know now what happened in 1939.

Consider the position of France. From the termination of the last war France has been torn by political discord, Government succeeding Government in quick succession, each exhausted in an effort to try to satisfy the demands of the most clamorous section of the population. In Hawaii there is a good deal of leprosy, and some time ago it was decided that the lepers should be given a vote The first candidate for election promised that if he were returned he would guarantee that every leper should receive 1 lb. of poi per day, poi being a very delectable substance in the eyes of the Hawaiians. He won the election. At the next election campaign his opponent guaranteed 2 lbs. per head, and he won the election. When Dr. Heiser of the Rockefeller Institute visited Hawaii to try to grapple with this scourge of leprosy he found that each leper was receiving 7 lb. of poi per day—far more than he could possibly consume, and an agitation was on foot to enable the lepers to sell the poi and make other use of the proceeds. I do not think it is only in Hawaii that poi is promised to the people. At any rate, it was the case in France. In 1934 we had the Stavisky scandals in which members of the Ministry and members of Parliament were undoubtedly involved, and heavily involved. The Government had to resign. An investigation was commenced and it looked as though the affair was to be probed to its depth, but the investigating judge (Judge Prince) was assassinated. Afterwards, one or two minor offenders were brought to justice, and that was all that happened. Then there was a successful clamour in France for a 40-hour week. I do not intend to argue whether a 40-hour week is good or bad, but at that time—when a vengeful neighbour was exerting every possible effort to outdo her both commercially and industrially and from a military point of view—a 40-hour week for France was nothing less than midsummer madness and was so recognised by a large section of the French people. Then there was the closing of shops for two days in every week, which resulted in Paris becoming unattractive to that large section of people from other parts of the Continent and the United States that had formed so

large a feature of the city's domestic economy. Even when war came there was still the same disunity of purpose. The Communists—many of them members of Parliament—were thrust into prison, while the Fascists were left free to complete the dishonour of their country.

I do not hesitate to say that to-day we are confronted with warnings similar to those that passed neglected by the great democracies during the few years preceding this war. There is no need to draw attention to the latest developments in Japan. But what are we going to do about it? That we should exhaust every effort to cultivate good relationships with Japan goes without saying. I noticed the concluding paragraph in the leading article of last Monday's "West Australian." It read:—

> If Japan would renounce attempts and dreams directed to the conquest of other peoples she would find a larger, safer destiny in entering into the Anglo-American conception of world reconstruction through the freeing of trade.

That is an admirable sentiment; but what has America done, what has England done, what has Australia done to commend such a sentiment to the people of Japan? Those are the countries that have stood in the way of the freedom of Japanese trade. Happily, America seems to have repented. Both the candidate on the Democratic side and the candidate on the Republican side are telling their people and the world that there is no future for America, and no future for democracy until it is recognised that their standard of living can be improved only by raising the standard of living of other countries throughout the world. Is there a like disposition in Australia? I am sorry to say I have not seen it. The recent performance of the Federal Government in regard to the motor contract undoubtedly suggests that we are still clinging to that idea of economic nationalism which has been the chief factor in bringing the world to its present pass.

Apart from endeavouring to cultivate friendly relations with Japan, what else must we do? We must put our own house in order. We must make ourselves strong enough to be respected, though not necessarily feared. And what are the things we should do in order to bring that about? First of all, there should be the training of all fit men. We must not stop at that, because what we are faced with is not an emergency of the moment. We have to look a long way ahead and consider the troubles that can possibly come to light only in the time of our children's children. So we must try to breed up a fitter population. Shortly after my return from Germany in 1936 I visited a number of centres in England, and I strongly advocated the adoption there of that law which is at present on our statute book but which no Government seems to have the courage either to repeal or to enforce. I refer to the Defence Act of 1904 that provided for compulsory universal training of our young lads from the age of 12 to the age of 19. A distorted report of one of my utterances was cabled to this country and the Trades Hall demanded of the Government that I should be recalled because I was preaching conscription. I am happy to say the Government had too much commonsense to take any such action. Since I have been back I have missed no opportunity of urging that at the earliest possible moment that Act should again be put into operation and our boys between 12 and 19 years of age should start training. I do not care whether you call it military training or not. I do not advocate it as military training or as a measure of defence or something for the country or the Empire, but simply as something essential for the well-being of the children themselves. Discipline, self-discipline, is one of the things lamentably lacking in our country to-day. I wonder if hon. members read the following statement which the Commissioner of Police made only a few days ago:—

> I have no hesitation in saying that 75 per cent. of the serious crime in the metropolitan area is committed by juveniles.

What is the reason for that? Is it not because there is a lack of that training that leads to self-discipline? I know there are not very many directions in which we can copy our enemies, but one thing we can emulate is the determination with which Hitler has approached the problem of catering for the youth of his country. His strength lies in the backing he has from the youth. Having seen a good deal of the youth movement in Germany, I have no hesitation in saying that, stripping it of its aggressive and military character, there is much of it that might with great advantage be adopted in Australia, though not all of it. I was permitted to spend a half-day in a labour camp and a half-day in a concentration camp, and I

know all the things in German policy that it is worth every possible sacrifice to avoid. But when other activities are taken into consideration such as the magnificent sports opportunities and the universal training of both boys and girls, I repeat that there is much that we might with advantage copy from Germany.

So the first thing which, to my mind, should be proceeded with all over Australia to-day is the training of our boys and girls with the idea of doing away with a condition of affairs in which 75 per cent of serious crime is committed by juveniles, and building up a more self-respecting community.

The second thing we want is work. It is extraordinary that in England to-day notwithstanding the enormous number of men drafted into war occupations, there are still three-quarters of a million of men unemployed. It is equally extraordinary that in this young country of Australia—notwithstanding the number of men who have enlisted—there are still a great many sustenance workers. To my mind the sustenance camp is only a little less demoralising than is the concentration camp in Germany. I am not going to speak of the conditions that are hampering a return to work, but I think that appeal might be made to the trade union authorities that, because of the war and for the period of the war, all restrictive regulations should be examined from this point of view, namely do they interfere with the maximum performance of Australia's effort to win the war? If the position is examined critically and impartially from that point of view, surely it would be a very small matter to say that those restrictions must stand over for the time being in the full knowledge that, unless we win this war, not only those privileges but also countless others will be lost for generations whereas, if we win, we shall at least be free to endeavour to make the best we can of the resources of our country in the interests of the whole of the people.

The third thing we have to do is to provide the money. As the vice-chairman of the State Executive Committee for the raising of war funds, I have visited many parts of the State and have been amazed at the generosity of the response in districts that have suffered long periods of adversity, districts for which the future is clouded and without any encouraging prospect, and yet in those districts I found people coming forward and giving to the last shilling. But the number of war savings groups in and about the cities is far smaller than it should be. I heard the chairman of one of the larger organisations near the city say, that, in his constituency of 25,000 people, it had been almost impossible to get a meeting for war savings purposes. The only satisfactory way of financing the war is out of savings, and for that reason I have deemed it a privilege and a pleasure to do all I could in the war savings certificate campaign. This system of war savings certificates has the double advantage in that it provides the money and implants into the people the habit of thrift and saving, while the savings they make now will be of great benefit to them and to the country when the time comes to face the difficult problems arising out of the war.

Personally, I share the confidence that other members entertain in ultimate victory, but we shall not be entitled to that victory unless we deserve it. We shall not be entitled to victory unless we do the utmost that is within our power to win it. We in Australia have a very long way to go—though I think the record of Western Australia is quite as good as that of any other State—before it can be said that as a community we are doing our utmost either for the help of the Empire or for the defence of Australia. After the war is over, what is going to happen? Are we going to have that same burden of unproductive debt crushing the industries of every country? Are we going to have the same dishonourable expedient, synthetic currencies, manufactured by Governments to tide over difficulties, destroying the savings and the confidence of the people? Are we going to have those restrictions of trade by tariffs and other methods that have destroyed, first prosperity and now peace? Or are we going to have that co-operation so eloquently advocated by a man whom I regard as the foremost statesman in the world to-day, Cordell Hull. I hope that will be the case.

During my absence and during my travels I acquired the very vicious habit of keeping a diary—an extensive diary. I happened to look up a date in March, 1936, a page written after a visit to the Leipzig Fair, the greatest fair in the world having an unbroken history of nearly 1,000 years. I saw in that fair evidence of remarkable German efficiency;

I saw the direction it was all taking. At the bottom of the page I wrote these observations—

You might as well try to throttle down a steam engine with a sheet of tissue paper as attempt to keep 67,000,000 of such people confined within the narrow limits of their own country, particularly of post-war Germany.

What a wonderful world this will be for our children's children when the so-called civilised nations recognise the wisdom of making the achievements of all countries available to the people of all other countries without let or hindrance!

**HON. E. H. H. HALL** (Central) [6.7]: I feel somewhat disinclined to proceed with the debate after the excellent address we have had from Sir Hal Colebatch. As I have stated on previous occasions, I consider that we are sent here to carry out our duties as we think they should be discharged. Some people say that because the Empire, of which we form a part, is engaged in the most deadly struggle of its history, we should give the Government its head and let it carry on, but I cannot approve of that attitude. Therefore, at the risk of being called petty, I propose to say my piece, believing that the people who returned me last May expect me to do so, and I have no doubt that members, whether they approve of my action or otherwise, will give me the consideration that I always extend to them.

I wish to join in the congratulations extended to the new members and utter a word of sympathy for those who fell by the wayside. Without making any invidious distinctions, I might mention Sir Hal Colebatch and say that all shades of political opinion represented in this House welcome the return of such a distinguished gentleman. He has had experience in the Parliament of the State and in the national Parliament of this country; he has had the advantage of representing this State at the seat of Empire, and he must surely be in a position to give us the benefit of great experience. I, with many other members, have not been privileged to enjoy similarly varied experience, but we have members in this Chamber with lifelong experience as business men and as legislators and often find that their opinions are ignored. I am wondering whether any advice that Sir Hal is able to give us will receive the consideration that it should. Again without wishing to make any invidious distinction, I should like to mention the pleasure I felt at the return of Mr. Seddon. I do not always agree with the hon. member, but that he is a member of whom we are all proud goes without saying. He sets an example of conscientiousness and devotion to duty that is excellent in every way, and doubtless every member was pleased at his return.

One matter touched upon by Sir Hal Colebatch was the cost of distribution, a subject on which I have often spoken. Nearly every milkman, butcher, baker and other distributor in the metropolitan area appears to have a motor vehicle to deliver his goods. Although the duty of imposing embargoes of one kind and another falls within the province of the Commonwealth, I have sometimes thought it a pity that, despite our desire for freedom, something was not done to discourage the use of goods from overseas, the transport of which to Australia results in one-way traffic.

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

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Another reference made by Sir Hal Colebatch this evening was to democracy. Western Australia's present Government has been in power sufficiently long to allow me to give consideration to the system by which we are conducting our public affairs. It has been borne in on me by present Ministers' long occupancy of the Treasury benches that this democracy of ours is not a real democracy. True, it may be government by majority; but my conception of an efficient democracy is not that a country should be ruled by so small a majority as that which has permitted the present Ministry to control the destinies of Western Australia for three years with a majority of one. I have taken the trouble to cast up the votes given at the last general election in contested districts, omitting seats for which members were returned unopposed; and I find that the combined Country Party and Nationalist votes numbered 109,212, whereas the Labour votes totalled 92,074. I repeat, this is exclusive of uncontested constituencies. Nevertheless I realise that this state of affairs is not peculiar to Western Australia, but obtains throughout the Commonwealth, and probably throughout other democracies. Do not you, Sir, who have spent half a lifetime in politics,

and other members of the House with similar experience enabling them to give close study to this question, agree that it is just about time the minority got some sort of a say in Western Australia? The minority has not any say under this great democratic system of ours. Unless the minority is allowed some voice in the conduct of affairs, we cannot expect those results which we have a right to expect from democracy. The only means by which what I desire could be achieved would be to adopt the system of elective Ministries obtaining in Switzerland. In the Swiss popular Chamber the Ministry is selected from all round the House. Let us visualise what would happen if such a system were in force here. Let us deal with this Chamber. Take into consideration the wise things said by members of the Legislative Council, men with a lifetime's experience in business, while present Ministers have had no experience in the handling of commercial affairs—which is not their fault; it is nothing to their discredit. However, not one of the gentlemen now in charge of the destinies of Western Australia has had even five minutes' experience of putting in his own cash and obtaining a return. Yet they are appointed to rule the affairs of the State. They are placed in positions which enable them to treat with contempt if they so desire—and mostly, it appears to me, they do so desire—any suggestions coming from various sides of this and the other Chamber. No wonder our system of democracy has fallen down. It has not delivered the goods. What we have heard from Sir Hal Colebatch to-night does not leave much to our imagination. It has been stated and repeated for years—long before I entered this Chamber—by members possessing Ministerial experience that unless we altered our ways we would come to an unhappy end. Therefore it would be an advantage to Western Australia if the men with experience at the helm saw their way to come together and reason out a more equitable system of government than exists here at present.

Now as regards enemy aliens. Like other members I realise that this is a matter over which the Commonwealth has full control. However, exactly where do we State members stand in the matter? We are all State taxpayers, and some of us are Federal taxpayers; we are not two different sets of people. When someone comes to me about an old age pension or invalid pension difficulty, or some post office or telephone matter, it is not my part, I consider, to say, "That is a Federal matter; write to your Federal member." I have never questioned other State members as to what they do in this respect. Naturally, in my electorate not many Federal members are seen; and a large section of the people there would rather get hold of a horse or cow or plough or other implement than handle a pen. Sometimes an elector of mine says to me, "I have been wanting to see you." I say, "Why didn't you drop me a line?" The reply is, "I don't care for a pen." In such cases I never refuse to take up the matter with the Commonwealth Government.

Just a brief quotation from the "West Australian" of the 25th July. It is a telegram from Sydney stating that a meeting of ex-soldiers held at the Town Hall there demanded internments. The issue was raised by Mr. Keith Todd, of Griffiths, a country vice-president of the R.S.L. That gentleman stated—

> We have between 2,000 and 3,000 aliens in the irrigation areas, and of that number only 12 have been interned.

Well, what is the trouble? We all remember the night on which the Federal Parliament passed emergency legislation known as the National Security Act. On that day I had specially come to Perth about certain business in regard to which I found wrong instructions had been given. Though not because of my visit, the mistake was discovered. At all events, instructions which had been given were countermanded. When the Federal Parliament passed the National Security Act in the small hours of the morning, certain orders were flashed over to this far-distant State. Two military officers, mobilised from their civic occupations, came to Geraldton, and there was a round-up. Motor trucks went out and took away men who had been furnished with credit to enable them to grow tomatoes during the growing period. The tomatoes were all ready to be picked; some had even been packed ready for the Friday night's train to Perth. All right. The safety of the realm must come first. But there is always a right and proper way of doing an unpleasant job. Now I ask hon. members to listen to this, published on the 6th August. With all due

respect to the Defence Department of Australia, I declare that I never heard or read any greater piffle.

Interned Aliens. Control of Business Activities.—Interned aliens are in the position of persons confined to hospital. That is, they can carry on their own business by means of letter or agent.

That is wonderful. The same thing might be said about persons confined in lunatic asylums.

This explanation was given at the headquarters of the Western Command yesterday in reply to many inquiries regarding the effect of restriction on aliens' business activities.

A sudden emergency might arise—say a big tidal wave, or an earthquake—which would justify, and alone would justify, a happening of this sort. On the 2nd July, well over a month after these people had been put away, I received a letter from a Federal member acknowledging receipt of a communication from me on this subject. The local people had told him that he would have to communicate with Canberra. Then, on the 12th July, I received the following communication from the Prime Minister, or from his office:—

I desire to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 4th July in which you have drawn attention to the condition of the crops of a number of enemy aliens in Western Australia who have been interned. I have noted the position as explained by you and am arranging for your representations to receive consideration. I shall get in touch with you again as early as practicable.

On the 22nd July, in answer to a letter from me asking what had been done, I received a communication stating that my correspondent was still awaiting the receipt of news from the Prime Minister. On the 6th August we are given the illuminating statement from the Western Command, that interned aliens can transact their business in the same way as people who are in hospital.

Member: What happened to the tomato crops?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The tomatoes were allowed to rot on the vines. I hold no brief for enemy subjects, but hope I am prepared to treat every man decently. That is what we are fighting for.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: What were you first told?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I refuse to take notice of a member who is also an officer of the branch I am criticising.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: I want to correct your errors.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The hon. member can do that when his turn comes.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Do you think you are doing any good to the war effort?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I am doing my job as I see it. It is disgraceful that a statement of that sort should emanate from a supposedly responsible authority.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: It is disgraceful that you are distorting the facts.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Is there any distortion of the statement that enemy aliens are permitted to transact their business in the same way as people in hospital?

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: No.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I now wish to touch upon a subject to which I have referred on previous occasions, but that is no reason why I should not deal with it again. It is the subject of youth employment. In the "West Australian" newspaper of the 16th June, 1937, appears a report of evidence given before the Royal Commissioner, Mr. Justice Wolff, who was appointed to inquire into this important matter. Quite recently I read a statement from the Australian High Commissioner in London to the following effect:—

The individual facing starvation and undeserved suffering would willingly barter vaunted principles for a sure livelihood. Democracy should be directed to higher standards of living and greater prosperity.

Perhaps I will be told that that is a platitude; but why a Government that has been in power continuously for a long period has so little to show on the credit side of its realisation of this extremely important subject, passes my comprehension. The matter is one that has received careful and earnest consideration by all Governments throughout the world. I shall, however, confine my remarks to our own Commonwealth. True, we are told—and with a certain amount of justification—that youth employment is a matter for the Commonwealth Government. When Australia decided to federate, it was agreed that certain matters should be handed over to the Commonwealth, but youth employment—a matter which did not exist at that time—was not one of them. It was thought right and proper to scrap compulsory military training; and that of course was something over which the States had no

control. The State Government could, however, without great expense, have introduced a system of compulsory physical training, but it did not do even that. We are reminded that our own Police Commissioner deplores the amount of juvenile delinquency prevailing in this State. I have read similar statements by Police Commissioners in the other States. Twelve months ago I said in this Chamber that expenditure on technical education in this State is the lowest in the Commonwealth. That is another matter about which our Government should not feel proud. Hitler is said to sneer that democracy is decadent and corrupt; so it is, if its political and economic systems permit thousands of our young people to become so much flotsam and jetsam drifting about the State, jumping trains and looking for jobs that do not exist. For many years past I have maintained that when the ordinary wage-earner has fed and clothed his children and kept them at school until they reach the age when they may leave, he has done all that can reasonably be expected of him. When the law of the land provides that a child must attend school until he reaches a certain age, then, on attaining that age, young people are entitled to the means of earning their livelihood. It is the duty of their elected representatives, that is, the Government, to provide them with a livelihood. That I think cannot truthfully be gainsaid; surely it is a common, humane principle. If we tell a boy that he must go to school until he reaches the age of 14 years, then when he attains that age he has the right to say, "I belong to this country and I expect it to give me a chance to lead a decent, ordinary life." But that has not happened. The working man's son has been told by representatives of the Government of this State, "Your father is working, let him keep you." A nice state of affairs! Many people say the school-leaving age should be raised. I am not averse to that, but I do not hear many people expressing themselves as in favour of making some allowance to the wage-earning parents—very likely on the basic wage—to compensate them for the loss of wages which the child would have earned had he left school at the age of 14 years. If the school-leaving age is to be raised two years, then the Government should compensate such parents, provided they prove that they will suffer by such action. I have spoken on this matter with several teachers and have been informed that many children attending school would not improve if they remained at lessons until they were 16, so far as the ordinary subjects included in the curriculum were concerned. Some boys may show no aptitude for ordinary lessons, but could readily seize some tools and improve themselves in that way. Something should be done in the way of vocational training. An effort should be made to ascertain what a boy or a girl has some inclination for. In that way we might do something that would lead us somewhere. I would ask you, Mr. President, and members to bear with me for a minute or two while I read a letter written to me on the 19th of last month from a farmer residing about 25 miles from Geraldton. The letter reads:—

> Dear Sir,—I have a young lad working for me by the name of Duncan Hayley. He will be 17 years in October. He is very reliable and trustworthy. There is something different about him from other lads of his age. He is very interested in inventions. His ambition is to be an electrical engineer. He has made a wireless set, also a model engine. It seems to me a lad like this should not have to waste his time on a farm. Although I do not want to lose him, at the same time I would like to see him get into a trade, as I think he would probably be an asset to his country in later years. The boy's parents are our nearest neighbours. His stepfather, a farmer like myself, cannot afford to put him to a trade. I wonder if you can do anything for him. I am sure he would be most grateful, and the same goes for me and his parents. Trusting to hear from you soon, yours faithfully, George Cox.

Mr. George Cox is a returned soldier who has seen something of the world. He says the lad is a good boy whom he does not want to lose, but he does not want to stand in the boy's way, so he has written to me inquiring if I can do anything for him. I am making this statement to-night in the hope that some Metropolitan member might know of an organisation with which I could get in touch.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: I have a list of about 60 like that.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I am glad and sorry to hear that interjection from Mr. Bolton. Does it not prove we are not doing our duty to these young people? How long will the people of this State tolerate such masterly

inactivity? These boys have no votes; if they had, I venture to say it would not be long before something was done for them. We are spending on ordinary education a large sum of money for a population such as ours. I do not think Mr. Justice Wolff had any particular qualifications to inquire into the subject of youth employment. I do not know whether he was connected with technical education or youth employment, but he made a report on the subject that I have read again and again. It is an excellent report. He stresses what Mr. Stephen Leacock, a master of schools for many years in the Old Country, pointed out. He said that it seemed to him systems of education were overloaded and top-heavy. I wonder if hon. members have children still attending school, especially a high school. Have they looked at the subjects that the children are supposed to assimilate? There are enough of them to sink a ship. In "John o' London," dated 15th March this year, Mr. Leacock writes of education from an experience of nearly 20 years of school and college training, 10 years of actual school teaching, 36 years of college lecturing and three years of retirement to think it over. "John o' London" comments that these remarks are an epitome of the contents of Mr. Leacock's book. There is a very fine article dealing with the book in which it is pointed out that the system is top-heavy and some ridicule is cast upon psychology as well.

I am quite willing as a result of the war to admit that other districts are suffering as are the districts in the province I represent, but we have to take it all with a bright face and make the best of it. But when a district has something that might be of use to the State, it is only natural to fear that efforts might be made to destroy it. In the Northampton district we have an abundance of lead, and high-class lead it is, too. There is a publication printed in Sydney called "Rydge's" and in the issue of the 1st January last I came across this:—

At the end of October, the Board of the Broken Hill Associated Smelters Proprietary, Ltd., announced that, acting for itself and shareholding companies which supply the lead concentrates for smelting, viz., North Broken Hill, Limited, Broken Hill South Limited and the Zinc Corporation, Limited, it had contracted to sell to the British Government for the period of the war and three months thereafter, 13,870 tons of lead per calendar month f.o.b. Port Pirie, at £18 16s. 7d. (Australian) per ton. Assuming the Australian and New Zealand demand is maintained and Norths are able to sell any small balance available in permissible overseas markets, the directors say that there is every indication that they will be able to sell the full current production of lead.

Why cannot we produce it also? The reason is because we have no Broken Hill Company.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Has not the Broken Hill Company some interests in your district?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I do not think so. Mr. Fernie, a gentleman who I believe is very well fitted for the important position to which he has been appointed in Western Australia, wrote on the 23rd July on the possibility of a new industry being established. This is what he had to say—

The department has received inquiries for large quantities of mica in sizes ranging from 1½in. square to 6in. square at from 2s. to 16s. per lb.

The size of it has prevented its being exploited on a commercial basis, but Mr. Fernie says that 1½ inches is sufficient. I wrote to the department on the subject and received this reply—

We have your letter of the 4th inst. I would advise you that it would appear that there is somewhat of a shortage of mica in Australia at the moment, owing to a hold-up by Italians in Central Australia. Production in this State appears to be at a standstill, the reasons being, I think—(a) unattractive prices offered to Australian agents, and (b) ignorance of producers as regards preparing the product for the market. I understand that some parcels forwarded to London have proved worthless on account of careless preparation.

A recent letter from Mr. B. Brazzale, of 11 Liverpool street, Adelaide, requested to be put in touch with mica producers in this State, and one of his representatives recently called at this office and stated his intention of visiting various mica deposits. Other agents are Mineral Traders, Ltd., of 140 Rundle street, Adelaide, and M. Nathan, of Queen street, Melbourne, C.1. It is of little use to contact consumers unless the mine is sufficiently developed to ensure continuity of supply of special sizes.

Is what Mr. Fernie stated correct? I take it that gentleman is not speaking without knowledge of the subject. Would it be too much to ask the Government and the Mines Department to get in touch with some of these people who have mica on their property? One old man wrote to me—and it was his letter that induced me to communicate with the department—that he knew

where there was mica and he wanted to know from me whether I was aware of the existence of any demand for it. I have read the reply that I received from the department. But when Mr. Fernie makes a statement of that kind it seems to me that the department would be doing a service not only to the district but to the State as well if it gave us the opportunity to engage in a little trading in a commodity the need of which has been brought about by the war. The larger cities in the Eastern States are doing well out of the war; our State is not doing quite so well, although there is some money being spent here. You, Mr. President, represent a mining province, and everything is prosperous there because of the high price of gold, and so you do not know what hard times really are. A lot of people in my province, however, and particularly around Geraldton. do know, because they are having what I might term a hell of a time. Geraldton itself is a port and no one can rob us of that. The Government, as everyone is aware, has spent a lot of money there in providing an up-to-date harbour. Oil tankers call in there and transfer their oil direct to storage tanks. Yet we have to pay 2s. 9d. a gallon for petrol!

We hear a lot also about military camps being established in various parts of the State, but a thought is never given to Geraldton or its surroundings. I admit that the Premier, who represents that constituency has made representations, but I admit also that he has many important things to attend to and he might be excused for not having been able to secure an encampment for us. I am voicing my own opinion when I say that Geraldton is eminently suitable for a camp of some description. Why have all the men at Northam, for instance? I do not say that because something was done in the last war it should be repeated at the present time when we are once more at war. I happened to be in a Defence Department job during the last war, and at that time an old retired general was placed in charge of administration. A Royal Commission was appointed to investigate matters and I appeared before it in Melbourne. The result of that Commission's investigations was the removal of the old general, and the placing in his stead of Major-General Ramaciotti, a brother of our Chief "Hansard" reporter. I was the first officer on his staff, and I can speak with some knowledge of what followed. I consider that the district I represent is entitled to an encampment or a training school for flying officers, because, as I said, it is eminently suitable for either and particularly for the latter. If not either of those, why on earth can we not have in that part of the State an internment camp? I wonder that the Chief Secretary is able to sit so quietly when he sees his beautiful garden islands being converted into internment areas. Imagine Class A reserves being converted into such camps. Many aliens have been brought to the southern part of the State at considerable expense. Actually some minors not miners. If we had our rights we would have had an internment camp at Geraldton, and if not that, a militia camp. Why should everything be done in or around the metropolitan area?

Reverting to the Mines Department, I should like to say a few words about the mining industry. The Government has not done badly by that industry but there are many old shows that could be exploited and turned to profitable account if only the Government displayed a little more generosity towards those who would be prepared to open them up. I have a number of letters on the subject, but I have no intention of reading them. They stress the fact that the charges at State batteries are too high. I hope something will be done to encourage to the utmost possible extent the production of gold whilst it remains at its present high price. On the 10th June, 1939, the following appeared in the "West Australian":—

> Early this year a deputation of representatives of various religious denominations conducting institutions which care for and maintain State wards, waited on the Minister for Child Welfare (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke) and asked him for an increase in the Government allowance. The present allowance is 7s. per child per week, which the members of the deputation stated was "entirely inadequate." The Minister replied that the deputation had an unanswerable case, the only question being whether the Government had any money available. "This request must rank high in merit," he added, "and I feel sure it will be viewed by the Government from that point of view."

I will now go back to the 25th January, 1939, and read the following from the "West Australian":—

> An increase in the Government allowance for wards of the State was asked for by a deputation of representatives of religious denomina-

tions conducting institutions registered with the Child Welfare Department for the care and maintenance of State wards which waited on the Minister for Child Welfare (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke) yesterday.

On the 12th June, the "West Australian" in a current comment made the following observations:—

> The plea of the orphanages and homes which care for and maintain State wards that the capitation grant of 7s. a week they receive for this work is inadequate is apparently not challenged by the Government and will certainly not be challenged by anyone else. The only defence advanced by the Government is inability to find more money, but that is not in itself, any defence at all unless it can be shown that a similar degree of starvation exists throughout the social services. Caring for the helpless is a service which should rank very high amongst the obligations of any civilised community.

We all know that the payment of such paltry amounts for the maintenance of children by the good people who look after the orphans is a blot upon those who have occupied the Treasury bench for so long a term. Does the Government really believe in State trading concerns? Does it believe in conducting State hotels? I do not think I would be far out if I said that of all State trading concerns the hotel business has proved the most successful. Why does not the Government carry on the good work? When one has found a good thing it is advisable to go on with it. Why plaster up a policy and refrain from carrying it out? There is only one word to cover that. I ask the Government, "Does it stand for conducting State hotels, and is it opposed to the granting of monopolies?" There are three centres on the Murchison goldfields, namely, at Big Bell, Reedy and Youanmi. In each of these towns the Government, which is opposed to the granting of monopolies, has given a monopoly to certain wealthy individuals and companies, in that it has allowed them to erect and conduct hotels. One at each of these centres has been granted to these people. Nothing else mattered except the man who could put up the most expensive hotel. It is about time that sort of policy was scrapped.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Have you seen the hotel at Wongan Hills?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Let me quote what has been done, not in South America, but in South Australia. At Renmark there is what is known as a community hotel. If our State Government does not wish to carry on with these successful State trading concerns, why does it not give the local people an opportunity to conduct a community hotel? The committee of the Renmark Hotel, South Australia, has announced the distribution of profits for the year just ended. The institution is community-owned, and is controlled by a committee chosen annually by the electors residing in the town of Renmark and irrigation trust districts. Each year the profits are allocated amongst the local bodies. After making provision for improvements to the hotel property the committee showed a net profit for the year just closed of £5,858, a slight increase over that of the previous year. The district hospital will receive £800, the district council of Renmark town £750, the irrigation trust £700 for improvements to the recreation ground and oval; the Renmark institution £500, the Barber Memorial Swimming Pool £300, the Relief Committee £200, the racing club £200, the Agricultural High School Council £150, the Mothers and Babies' Health Association £100, the Soldiers' Memorial Loan Reduction £100, and the School Committee £150. Altogether during the year £1,850 was spent on enlarging and improving the hotel property. Ministers frequently go to the Eastern States. I do not know whether members are aware that whilst Ministers travel in the Eastern States they receive £2 2s. a day in addition to their Parliamentary allowance. Why could they not have brought back something like this?

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Or, why could they not have brought back the Renmark Hotel?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The Government has allowed private enterprise, which it professes to detest, to come in at the three centres I have mentioned and conduct monopolies. I cannot understand that and I think other members will have difficulty in understanding it.

Hon. J. Nicholson: You think the position is such that an amendment to the Licensing Act is required?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: That should not be difficult to bring about, if it can be shown that good work can be done by conducting such an hotel. No amendment to the Act is required to establish a new State hotel. Already the Government owns a num-

ber of hotels. If it is satisfied that the business is a good one to conduct, why does it not continue it? The Chief Secretary may sigh; the situation is enough to make him sigh.

I now wish to deal with relief workers. "Hansard" for 1938 shows that the member for Fremantle, without notice, asked the Minister for Labour the following question:—

Is he aware that relief workers are being denied the right to stay on road jobs because they have taken their families with them; if so, will he have this practice discontinued and the men returned to their work?

The Minister replied:—

I understand that within the last day or two certain road jobs have been completed, and some of the men concerned have not been transferred to other jobs in the district because facilities for families have not been available. I will undertake to have an investigation made with a view to obtaining full details, and, unless some very substantial reason exists why the men should not be accompanied by their wives and families, they will be sent back to their jobs.

I have here a letter dated the 30th July in which men complain about this very matter. One man was sent to a job and was provided with fares for himself, his wife and family. After a few weeks the job was completed, and then the man was transferred elsewhere. Because his wife was not living in a camp with him, but in a house, the authorities refused to give him a pass. Notwithstanding the reply given in the Legislative Assembly to Mr. Sleeman, this privilege may not, perhaps, have been absolutely disallowed, but certainly men are not encouraged to take their wives with them to camps in the bush so that their womenfolk may look after them while they are on the job.

There is another matter that I find difficulty in understanding. I refer to the practice indulged in by the present Government of employing trucks on main road work. I wonder if members understand the system that obtains. Those employed on main road work, whether shovelling or driving trucks, are all wages men, but the trucks used on the job are under contract. That means that the man driving a truck receives a weekly wage, but the material that is carted is paid for at contract rates. What is the result? The man is anxious to work hard and make a little above the basic wage. In the circumstances, he is often tempted to secure a truck for himself. He goes to a motor firm and if he has £50 or £60 for the deposit, well and good. He gives the firm an order on the money that he expects to earn by contract on main road work. Then he goes to the gravel pit and, although he is the driver of the truck, he participates in the shovelling. To visualise what takes place is not at all difficult. The harder and the longer hours he works, the more money he receives. The others are just wages men, and naturally do an ordinary day's work. Is that a fair proposition? Is that the attitude we should expect from Ministers who do not believe in the contract system but uphold the principle of day labour? Why have a shandy-gaff arrangement like that? If the Government had any administrative ability and recognised the necessity to do something for our young men, a large number of motor trucks would have been purchased. Who could do that better than the Government?

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Quite a lot of people could do it better than the Government.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The Government could have bought large quantities of motor spirit. Then at Albany, Kalgoorlie, Bunbury, Northam, Geraldton, Meekatharra and elsewhere, assembly shops could have been erected where young men could have obtained training as motor mechanics. That could have been done quite apart from war considerations altogether. That is one direction in which the Government could have somewhat eased the position. On the other hand, the Government has chosen to carry on what I consider an entirely unsatisfactory arrangement. I have a letter signed by 14 or 15 truck drivers who asked me to bring this matter under the notice of the Commissioner of Main Roads. They stressed the unsatisfactory situation. The work provided is supposed to be for sustenance men, but there are business men who have trucks on the road. They supply the trucks and pay the drivers on some basis. Yet if a man goes on the road as a shoveller, he is supposed to be "down and out." He is not allowed to have any money in the bank nor are his children allowed to have any money in the savings bank. Nevertheless, men who are running their own businesses are allowed to have trucks on the road engaged in these operations. Let me quote from the letter I have referred to: —

We are all married men with family responsibilities and depend on our truck earnings for

our living, but we have to compete against men who have other businesses and who can afford to purchase trucks and compete in Main Roads Board work employing hire drivers. This we consider is not fair as we are told the work is sustenance work; but what we consider to be most unfair is that these men who employ hired drivers receive preference over the owner-drivers. We can give instances of this if it is disputed. One of the most glaring cases is that of Mr. ——, of Geraldton. If inquiries are made it will be found that this man has both trucks and tractors on main road work.

I do not think that is fair. Recently there was a variation in the basic wage and I read somewhere that it represented to the Government an added burden of £120,000. Whatever the amount may be, it is an added burden on the State and also on the primary producers. That is where the responsibility will rest. For how much longer are we to wait for Ministers, who occupy positions of responsibility, to introduce a more satisfactory system than the present silly method of dealing with the basic wage? Those are my words, but let me read to the House what one of the Government's supporters said in the Legislative Assembly. On the 12th October last, Mr. Triat, the member for Mt. Magnet, speaking on the Estimates, said:—

> Amounts received in salary and wages may appear to be high. A man in receipt of £1 a day, or £6 or £7 a week, seems to be receiving reasonable remuneration, but I have had experience of securing both a high wage and a low wage during the time I have been responsible for maintaining a home. I can definitely assert that I was better off when I received £3 10s. to £4 a week than I am now . . . . I had just as much, if not more, for my own use out of the money I received after I met my commitments as I have now . . . . One pound sterling a few years ago enabled one to purchase quite a lot of goods, but the sum of 20s. today has nothing like the same value . . . . It is customary for people to say that the worker is receiving too much money by way of the basic wage, which has gone up 5s. or 6s. a week. It is said that the workers are getting that much more than they received last time the basic wage was fixed. As one who participated in the increase in the basic wage, I say that in most cases the workers derive no benefit from the increase. The rise in the basic wage comes after the cost of goods has risen. It is always chasing the cost of living because the basic wage increase has always been preceded by an increase in the cost of living . . . . The subject is a dangerous one to tackle when one is representing a mining constituency. The people of the State should be educated to the belief that the basic wage is not of advantage to the individual.

Here we have a leading Labour supporter in Mr. Triat confessing that the increase in the basic wage did not compensate him for the increase in the cost of living. When a man of the experience of Mr. Triat, who was a union organiser, as most Labour members were before they obtained a seat in Parliament, realises the futility of carrying on with this business, is it not time that those in power met together and devised some more reasonable method of conducting the affairs of the State, especially when the present system bears so heavily and unjustly on the primary producer? The primary producer must produce under a crushing tariff burden, imposed, it is true, by the National Government; he has also to bear the increases in cost of living through the continual rising of the basic wage and yet sell his products in the open markets of the world. What is the cause? You, Mr. President, know much better than I that those whom the gods would destroy they first make mad. That expresses the way in which we are carrying on the Government of this State. A stabilisation scheme was introduced in New South Wales under which, according to the Premier of that State, a payment of 3s. 6d. for the first thousand bags of wheat was proposed. In all schemes that have been evolved for the purpose of enabling the wheatgrower to get a decent living from his work, I have never heard it suggested or proposed that the subsidy, which must be paid by all the people, should go to the man who is on his farm growing wheat for a living. Is it right that Ministers of the Crown, members of Parliament —I dare not look around the Chamber, so will look straight at you, Mr. President— men engaged in other businesses and indulging in wheat-growing as a sideline—I am one of them—should go to the general taxpayer and hold out their hands for the subsidy?

Hon. L. B. Bolton: They are the men carrying the industry.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: When you have done I will continue.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I say it was never intended that such men should hold out their hands for a subsidy. That subsidy should be reserved exclusively for the men actually growing wheat for a living, and residing on their farms with their families. Those are the people whom we should endeavour to assist in every way possible

to remain on their holdings, so that our country districts will not become depopulated.

We have reserved occupations. We have men in uniforms travelling about the country who are styled "Man-power officers." God help us! I cannot imagine that we shall get much from certain of those officials. Before a farmer can obtain the honour of enlisting to fight, and may be to die, for his country, he must be approved. The unfortunate farmer who happens to be a client of the Agricultural Bank is in a worse position still. It is impossible to get a ruling from the officials, except in a general way, as appears by the document from which I shall quote—

> The Commissioners require the client to appoint an attorney in order that the farming operations may be continued during his absence, as it is the wish of the Commissioners, as far as possible, that production be maintained. In ordinary circumstances, interest should be paid: but where arrears of interest occur by reason of exceptional circumstances, such as bad seasons, each case on application will be considered when the client returns to the property.

He would then be a returned soldier. What if he does not return? Is it not the height of hypocrisy? Production is to be maintained. At whose expense?

Hon. H. L. Roche: When he returns.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: If I were to stand here all night, it is what the position deserves. Tears of blood have been shed by men and women in the back country in their endeavour to keep up production. The Federal Government during the past eight or ten years contributed some millions of pounds towards the relief of wheatgrowers. After that, the State Government said, "This is a job for the Federal Government." I say our wheatgrowers are sick and tired of all members of Parliament. Is it a job only for the Federal Government? Is there nothing that the State Government can do? If so, then, as Shakespeare said, "A plague on both your houses." Wipe them out. It is said that youth employment also is a job for the Federal Government. What happens when the States Grants Commission visits Western Australia? The Under Secretary of Health, the Director of Education and other officials appear before the Commission and say, "We cannot render essential services to this great, sparsely populated State." I voted against Federation. I also voted against the Financial Agreement. I am one of those awful State-righters! I was born here. I voted for secession; but if we cannot get efficiency and economical administration from those who are charged with the responsibility of conducting the affairs of the State, then I say, "Let us be governed from Canberra or Binduli, or somewhere else." Returning to the subject of agriculture and farmers who desire to enlist for active service. If we condemn them to continue producing, is it not only fair that the State Government or the Commonwealth Government, or both, should at least ensure that they get a little more than a living wage? That they have not done for some time. I have a letter from the Honorary Minister to a man who has been turned down by the Agricultural Bank. He is not getting any assistance whatever from the Bank. He has no plant and has not cropped for a period of years. He is residing on his property and getting a living by working for neighbours in the district. He is a returned soldier, but that does not matter, although I must say that the people of Australia have, as far as it is humanly possible, kept the promises made to our soldiers. This man is enjoying a small pension, a very small pension. He came to me and said, "You know the conditions of the farmers in this district; they cannot afford to employ me any longer and I have only this 5s. 3d.—or whatever it is—per week. What am I to do? I cannot get any work at all."

The Honorary Minister: He has some sheep.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I will tell the whole story. The man said, "I must get some help." I replied, "There is only one thing for you to do and that is to fill in an application for relief." He did so. I received a reply from the Minister stating that the man could not get relief. This letter is dated the 30th July last. It reads—

> As previously stated to you this man is a client of the Agricultural Bank. Under no circumstances as far as employment is concerned do we have anything to do with farmers or anyone on the Agricultural Bank. It is a matter of policy with this department which is rigidly carried out.

I replied to the Minister—

> Re Mr.——, He may be indebted to the Agricultural Bank, but he is not now a client in the ordinary acceptation of the term, in that he is not receiving any assistance whatsoever from that institution. The department's rigid en-

forcement of the policy to have nothing to do with farmers or anyone on the Agricultural Bank will in future, as it has in the past, force men and their families off their holdings in the country into the town, and that cannot result in benefiting this State as a whole.

The Minister interjected, "He had some sheep." True, there are some sheep on the property which this man looks after in between times; but I think the Minister knows —and if he does not I will tell him—that the man does not get one penny from the wool proceeds. I think there are some 100 to 150 sheep on the property; but the money goes to the Agricultural Bank, and the man does not get a penny from the institution. This man has been out on the farm for years, but the Agricultural Bank thinks so little of the property that it refuses to give him or anybody else anything to enable an attempt to be made to carry on. They tell him frankly that the property is no good. Would it be too much to expect that a Government charged with providing relief work should try to keep that man there so that he might have a few fowls and perhaps a cow and pig by means of which he might help to replenish the family larder? We all know that when a man of that kind goes into town, everything he wants for himself, his wife and his family has to be purchased. I am not suggesting that he should be placed on the same basis as the man living in town. Why should the Government not say, "You are living on your farm, and this is what we will do. We will grant you so much relief work per week." Would that not be preferable to sending him into town, taking him away from the home he has lived in for years? Would it not be well to keep him on the farm if he could do with £2 or £3 a week rather than send him into the town and pay him the full basic wage of £4 5s. 4d. per week? I think it would, and I am putting that suggestion forward for the Minister's consideration. I hope the proposal will be favourably entertained.

When the depression first struck this State, the Mayor of Geraldton called a public meeting, and those who attended decided to contribute so much a week in order to raise money to provide work for the unemployed. The secretary of the local A.W.U.—now the general secretary in Perth —was present, and he said he would have nothing to do with the scheme unless Arbitration Court awards were adhered to and the basic wage paid. We overcame the difficulty by telling the men that we could not give them a full week's work at the basic wage but would employ them for two days a week at the basic wage, and for the rest of the week they would be idle and could do what they liked. That scheme was carried out for some weeks. All I ask is that there should be a little give and take, a little consideration shown to a man; but because he is a client of the Agricultural Bank the department says, "We will have nothing to do with you at all." I have here a letter from the "West Australian" of the 10th May. It is from the Mukinbudin Road Board. The matter must be serious when a road board takes it up and allows its secretary to communicate with the newspaper and give detailed instances of the harsh manner in which the Agricultural Bank Act operates. We, the direct representatives of the primary producers, were urged to pass that measure, and were assured that it would be administered in a sympathetic manner; but we have it on the statement of a local governing authority that the Act is being administered very harshly.

This afternoon, in reply to a question, I received information that separate accounts are not kept of the visits of inspection by the Commissioner of Railways through the railway system of this State. I was requested to put that question by a railway man of over 30 years' experience. I suppose members know what happens. Before I go any further I wish to point out that I think the present Commissioner is a very fine officer and one of the best Commissioners, if not the best Commissioner, we have had. Nevertheless, things are done in this present enlightened age for no other reason in many cases—and this may be one of them —than that they have always been done. We must see if we cannot make some improvement. This is no time for people who continue in the same old way because it has been the accepted custom to do so. These visits of inspection by the Commissioner cost a lot of money. A special train is requisitioned, carrying an enginedriver, a fireman, a guard, a dining car and a sleeping car with attendants and some six or seven departmental heads. Nearly every Monday morning during the session I leave home at 20 minutes past eight in order to attend the sitting of Parliament on Tuesday. The train by which I travel from Geraldton to Mullewa takes four and a half hours to

travel 65 miles, but those taking part in visits of inspection do not spend four and a half hours travelling 65 miles; they often travel in a special car. The district traffic superintendent, the district engineer, and the district locomotive superintendent travel constantly over the northern railway system, as they do over the other systems, and in addition there is the annual visit of inspection by the Commissioner and other heads of departments to which I have referred. Yet, when I ask about the cost, I am told it is not worth while to keep a separate account of it.

Another justifiable complaint I have concerns the answer I received to a question asked either directly or during my remarks on the Address-in-reply last session. I asked why, in the voluminous annual report of the Commissioner of Railways, no mention was made of the equalisation that takes place between the Midland Railway Co. and the Government railways. The Commissioner calmly replied that he did not think it necessary. If that satisfies members of the House, of course the majority must rule, but I ask any member to peruse the report and note the number of comparatively insignificant items that are included. Yet here are transactions between a private company and the Government railways, and the Commissioner considers them of insufficient importance to tell the representatives of the people how the equalisation is worked. This is a serious matter. Look at any Midland train and we find that three-fourths of the rolling stock belongs to the Government. If the Midland Railway Co. pays for the use of that rolling stock, why is not there some account of it? Yet I am told it is not considered necessary.

I must refer once again to the failure of the State Government to make any move regarding the Commonwealth's offer of some years ago to take over our North-West. If the Commonwealth authorities take it over, I hope they will take the territory from Carnarvon northwards. I should be sorry to see three members of this House lose their seats, but the transfer would lessen the cost of administering this State. The Premier made a statement in another place on the 30th August, 1938, as follows—

> The State lacks the necessary financial resources with which to develop the North-West.

If we have not the necessary financial resources to develop that huge territory, why not hand it over to the authority that has?

Again I feel impelled to refer to the blot on the fair name of this State caused through the ineptitude and failure of the Government to live up to its responsibility in dealing with the half-caste population. In 1936 a series of articles appeared in the "West Australian." A Royal Commissioner was appointed to make inquiries and he dealt with the issue of rations in no uncertain manner. One of the "West Australian" articles contained the following statement:—

> Giving rations is a thoughtless and stupid charity. By itself the ration is not enough for a proper diet. The manner of its distribution is turning able-bodied people into supplicant beggars . . . .
>
> Whatever action is taken, it will need to be taken at once, for every year the growth in numbers makes a solution more difficult . . . .
>
> There is a body of waste labour waiting to be reclaimed, as well as a social problem waiting to be settled.

All I can say is that the present state of affairs is a disgrace. We talk about the repression of minorities in other parts of the world, but here we have human beings brought into existence through the weaknesses of brother whites and we continue to sidestep our obligations and responsibilities. In the "West Australian" of the 3rd August appeared a long letter from the secretary of the Kondinin hospital in which he pointed out the difficulty of obtaining doctors for country districts. In the course of his remarks he said—

> The only way this can be done is by nationalising the medical service of the State so that doctors would rank as civil servants under the authority of the Government to be sent wherever their services might be needed. We understand that this has been tried out in some of the States of America with success.

We have no need to go outside the boundaries of the Commonwealth for an example. Tasmania had a Labour Premier named Mr. Ogilvie, and if he could do this for Tasmania, Mr. Willcock has been long enough Premier of Western Australia to do something similar for us. Here is a statement of what Mr. Ogilvie did—

> Tasmania laments, by the sudden death of its Premier, Mr. Ogilvie, not only its Premier, but the driving force behind one of the most necessary and enlightened social service schemes in Australia—a Government socialised medical service that has been an inestimable boon to mothers and others in the outlying parts of the island.

Maternity service is provided and there is free hospital accommodation. Who feels the pinch most when hospital fees have to be paid? Is it the man in receipt of £12 or £15 a week or is it the basic wage earner? We all know who it is, and it is time provision was made for free hospital accommodation for those people.

A few days ago the Chief Secretary tabled the annual report of the Registrar of Friendly Societies, whose duty it is to supervise those societies and see that they account for their funds. I have wondered whether the Registrar could be empowered to exercise supervision over the funds of trade unions. I know why this is not done; the unions would not approve of it and the men who occupy seats on the Treasury bench are loth to do anything of which the unions would disapprove. Still, sometimes when things are done for us, they prove to be for our benefit, although we may dislike them. According to a report in the "West Australian" the trade union membership in this State totals only 53,602, and here is a statement of union income and expenditure for three years—

| Year. | Income. | Expenditure. |
|---|---|---|
| | £ | £ |
| 1938 .. .. | 87,000 | 86,000 |
| 1937 .. .. | 87,000 | 81,000 |
| 1936 .. .. | 86,000 | 92,000 |

Thus in 1936 expenditure exceeded income by £6,000, but members will recall what happened in 1936. There was a general election. I am not squealing on this score, but in the face of repeated advice by judges of the Arbitration Court that unions should keep their funds clear of politics and devote them to proper use such as the provision of a benefit scheme for members who fall sick or lose their employment, I think the Registrar should exercise some control over the expenditure of union funds. Time and again Mr. Thomson has urged the Government to consider the advisability of appointing a committee comprising all sections of Parliament, to inquire into and report upon the proposed expenditure of public funds. I do not suppose the hon. member would mind if the Government appointed a committee comprised of business people and union leaders, so long as there was got together a body of men possessing knowledge of the subject and ability to advise the Government before Ministers rushed into the expenditure of public funds. No notice has so far been taken of Mr. Thomson's suggestion.

When we indulge in destructive criticism, we are asked why we do not suggest something of a constructive nature. Let me tell members something of what has been going on in Geraldton. The present Government must take the major portion of the blame, because it has been in office for so long and for so continuous a term; but blame is also attachable to other Governments. One could hardly credit that qualified engineers would put forward a water supply scheme such as was proposed at Geraldton, when it was doomed to failure from the start. These gentlemen began by scooping out the top of a hill about seven miles from Geraldton. They said sufficient water would pour into the resultant hole to provide for the necessities of Geraldton. The whole scheme was ridiculous. The expenditure ran into some thousands of pounds, and the people of Geraldton were charged with the cost. Everybody knows it is possible to get fresh water close to the sea. When I was a boy, Chinamen used to dip in their buckets and obtain sufficient fresh water for their vegetables. Some bright Government engineer said he would get water from Grimshaw Valley. The town was assured that it would have sufficient water for its requirements; but when pressure was put upon the supply, the water went salt. That had to be paid for by the people of Geraldton. The present water supply scheme is a fairly good one, but the people have had to pay for the mistakes of the past. These mistakes were due to the failure of the Government to institute proper inquiries, such as would be made by a committee like that recommended by Mr. Thomson. Because no inquiries have been made public moneys have been spent needlessly.

The other day Perth had a visit from the Air Minister, Mr. Fairbairn. We are all enjoined to practise economy. I read in the paper that a number of aeroplanes flew over the city in honour of the Minister's visit, and I am told that in the course of the display approximately 1,000 gallons of petrol were consumed.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: That was part of the men's training.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: If so, I presume we have to accept the position. Unless a better example is set to us by the powers that be, by those very men who are urging economy in all directions, how can the people be expected to carry out their wishes?

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Why not consider the cost of "Hansard," to start with?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Those people who are advising us in this direction ought to be the very ones to give us a lead. On the notice paper is a question concerning the cost of Government motor cars. Outside this building, when the House is sitting, I have seen an expensive Government car that is used by the Chief Secretary.

Hon. L. Craig: It is a nice one, but not necessarily an expensive one.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: His predecessor, the Leader of the House for many years, never within my knowledge used a motor car. I wonder whether each Minister is given a car for his own personal use. If we must have economies, let those in high places set the example. Then there is the question of travelling expenses for Ministers. Of necessity the Premier has frequently to visit the Eastern States. I understand that for every day he is away from his office he draws travelling expenses to the tune of £2 2s., in addition to his Ministerial allowance. Will the Government tell me that at a time like this, when we are enjoined to practise economy, some sacrifice should not be made in that direction? When Ministers travel within the State, I understand they are entitled to 30s. a day for expenses. I wonder whether when the Minister for Labour visited Geraldton to speak for my opponent, he drew 30s. a day to cover his expenses during the campaign. I suppose he did.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Was it not worth while?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Public business, forsooth! When the Government was returned to power, it came back as a result of mis-statements. I have a pamphlet in my hand to prove that. It was used against me. It was said of me, "Hall is not a bad chap; but if you return him and his party, wages will go down and the hours of employment will go up." If people cannot fight fairly, they should not fight at all. The Labour Party issued a pamphlet. It set out what Labour had done for the people and contained the following sentences:—

> Labour has raised the workers' wages, Labour has shortened hours.

Every school child knows that all that is fixed by Arbitration Court Awards. If it were not so we would have political parties saying, "We will give you £5 a week and 40 hours work," and in the following election saying, "We will give you £10 a week, and no hours at all." So it would go on. I have here a pamphlet indicating what I said, and I spoke the truth. It sets out the following:—

> Central Province election. Questions for the electors—Are you in favour of destitute and physically incapacitated men and women being allowed by the State Government the paltry sum of 7s. per week for their sole maintenance?

Was that true or not?

> Are you in favour of paying those religious and other bodies, who care for the destitute orphans of the State, the paltry sum of 7s. per week for their maintenance?

> Are you in favour of the meagre allowance made by the Government to widows for the maintenance of their children being cut off when the age of 14 years is attained, irrespective of whether the child can secure employment?

This is the action of a body of men who have been in possession of the Treasury bench for many years, and who profess to be humanitarian. They say no money is available for these purposes. There is something I very nearly forgot. I have been told that the Chief Secretary visits his farm in a Government motor car. I made the same statement about Mr. Troy. I know it was true in his case, because I saw him with my own eyes. If the statement I have made about the Chief Secretary is not true—it is something I have been told—I now give him the opportunity to deny it. Mr. Gray visited Geraldton at the request of unions, and I believe he was told that it was owing to the considerate manner in which he had treated me that I was re-elected. What do hon. members think of that? I am pleased if what I heard was true, that Mr. Gray stood up to the union secretary who made that statement. I assure Mr. Gray that I have spoken of him as a humanitarian, apart from his position as a Minister of the Crown. But never let him have any illusions whatever that my return to this House was due to anything he had done for any case that I have put forward.

If I cannot put up a case which will stand on its own merits, I will not put up any case at all.

What the present Government has done for the people can be gauged from the Savings Bank deposits. They are the great criterion of the prosperity of the people. I will quote them: In 1937, Victoria, with a Country Party Government, depositors averaged £40 16s. 1d.; in New South Wales, with a Nationalist-Country Party Government, £30 8s. 9d.; in South Australia, £45 0s. 6d.; Tasmania, Queensland, and Western Australia, all with Labour Governments, £31 1s. 2d., £27 10s. 5d., and £26 1s. 1d., respectively. Three years later, in 1940, the South Australian average was £45 19s. 9d., Victoria £42 15s. 4d., New South Wales, £31 16s. 11d., Tasmania, £35 9s. 7d., Queensland £28 16s. 11d. and Western Australia £26 12s. 8d. Both in 1937 and 1940 Western Australia proved to be the lowest of the lot.

Hon. G. Fraser: Do you blame the Government for that?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I am dealing with false statements which have been made. We have heard from no less an authority than Sir Hal Colebatch that this is a non-party Chamber. We have often said that, and have been sneered and jeered at for saying it. Now I come to a circular sent into the Central Province by Mr. Trainer. This copy was handed to me by a newspaper man, who said, "Here, I can find no use for trash like this; perhaps it is of some use to you." Mr. Trainer's circular reads:—

It is strange that inertia on the part of electorates should be so strongly in evidence at elections to the Legislative Council; and it has to be admitted that that apathetic attitude is most marked amongst those electors who pin their political faith to Labour. To a great extent, of course, this can be traced to the restricted franchise upon which the Legislative Council is elected, and in some measure it is also due to the fact that the political battle-ground is, theoretically at least, in the Legislative Assembly, where the fate of Governments is decided.

Because of the latter fact, the Legislative Council is regarded by far too large a percentage of the electors as of no importance in the political structure of the State. They know, of course, that elections to the Chamber are held every two years, but the event is looked on with a casualness which suggests the view that the election is merely an opportunity for some lucky individual to attain to a plush seat and £600 a year. That attitude of mind, probably, is because of the myth that the Legislative Council, is a non-party House, that its members, like the gods on Olympus, are above the petty concerns of mere humans.

Actually, nothing could be farther from the truth. The Upper House in this State is far more partisan in its attitude towards legislation desired, and required for improvement of the social and economic conditions of the people, than is the case in the Assembly.

So now, hon. members of the Legislative Council, you know where you stand in Mr. Trainer's opinion! The circular continues—

In that connection the primary producer has equal cause with the wage-earner to awaken to the opportunity which an election of the Upper House offers him. The records of the Legislative Council, and also the present personnel of the Chamber, emphasise that it is the citadel of those vested city interests which are exploiters of both producer and consumer.

At the election to be held on the 11th May, primary producers in the Central Province have the choice between the retiring member of the party, who is the mainstay of vested interests, and a candidate of the more liberal section of political thought. Mr. Steele is a farmer, is an executive officer of the farmers' organisation, to which he has rendered good service. He is, too, a dependable champion of the rights of the masses as against the classes. His return for the Central Province would be a pleasing assurance that the farmers have awakened to their own interests, and welcome evidence of the strength of the advance of Labour thought all over the rural areas in the past year or so.

Thank God the farmers are not to be caught with stuff like that! This is a free country yet. The Labour party, like any other party, can contest any seat it likes. I ask that party to be fair and impartial, and to state by whom the legislation brought down by that party has been supported more than it has been supported by me.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: And that is what you got for it.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: We know that there were two seats contested in the metropolitan area. There is one gentleman in this Chamber—and I think I am pointing towards him—who has given the Labour party a little assistance at times. He was given a fair run at the elections. The Metropolitan Province seat was not contested, but the Government spent the funds of the relief workers chasing me. They found the money for that candidate's election expenses.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: I do not hear any cries of "Shame."

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I do not want to hear any cries of "Shame" from anyone, not even from the hon. member interjecting, who is pleasant to me at the tea table. If the Labour Party wanted representation in this Chamber, I wonder why they did not try to get it from the wage-earning section that lives in the Metropolitan and Metropolitan-Suburban Provinces. Is the reason that the leaders of Labour thought those electors knew too much about them? Was it that they thought the poor old Cocky away out in the Central Province would be caught with this chaff that Trainer was giving him? Why, it is contemptible! If the Labour Party was really dinkum, why did it not contest these seats and try to put out other members, try to obtain representation here for the Metropolitan and Metropolitan-Suburban Provinces? I ask the question, and I will provide the answer. They were not game!

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Hear, hear!

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: In conclusion, I shall merely add that I was indeed pleased to read in this morning's "West Australian" an extract taken from the London "Times." I do not propose to read it; if members have not perused it, I hope they will do so. When we can read sentiments such as those expressed by the "Times," there is some hope for a better world. I regretted reading the report of an interview said to have taken place with Sir Joseph Cook, one of the grand old men of Australia. He was reported as saying that he had no time for the man who thought and spoke of a new order emerging from the present terrible conflict. Sir Joseph is a very old man, though, of course, of great experience. I hope the old gentleman will prove to be wrong in his outlook. In the language of the classics, our present system is "up to mud." It is a continuous fight. We all want to buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest. Geraldton is a long way from the metropolis, and I have reminded the residents of the northern port of that fact. They have returned the Premier to the Legislative Assembly for many years and I always secure a good majority when I seek a return to my seat in this Chamber. Geraldton, the good old Labour town! The most prosperous and wealthy storekeeper in Geraldton is a Chinaman. Yes, we all want to buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest. Until we can do away with the unconscionable capitalist and the equally conscienceless labourer, each of whom endeavours always to get the better of his fellow man, we will not make much worth-while progress, and the present war will have been in vain.

On motion by Hon. J. A. Dimmitt, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 9.28 p.m.*

# Legislative Assembly,

*Tuesday, 6th August, 1940*


| | PAGE |
|---|---|
| Chairmen (Temporary) of Committees ... ... | 125 |
| Question: Fremantle gaol, able-bodied prisoners ... | 125 |
| Address-in-reply, fifth day ... ... ... ... | 126 |


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

## CHAIRMEN (TEMPORARY) OF COMMITTEES.

Mr. SPEAKER: I desire to announce that I have appointed Mr. Withers, Mr. J. Hegney and Mr. Seward to be temporary chairmen of Committees for the session.

## QUESTION—FREMANTLE GAOL.

*Employment of Able-bodied Prisoners.*

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for the North-West: 1, How many able-bodied prisoners are in the Fremantle gaol? 2, Apart from duties concerned in dealing with their own personal needs, is work to the extent of at least forty-four hours per week per prisoner always available. 3, From the reformative view is it considered desirable that able-bodied prisoners should be provided with regular full-time employment and habits of industry thus inculcated?