

Mr. SEWARD: I know that our delegates stressed the need for elasticity in any agreement arrived at. In introducing his Budget the Premier said that with the particular scale of payments adopted under the uniform tax we were already falling behind what we would expect to receive by way of taxation. The hon. gentlemen was pointing out that a principle laid down might not prove applicable in view of the changed earning capacities of the people. What we adopted in 1940-41 is getting out of date in 1943. In opposing a unified system of financial arrangements and in paragraph 88 the Commonwealth Grants Commission's report for 1936 states—

Thus the States have played a valuable role in representing the administrative principle of decentralisation. It is sometimes said that in a unified State a central authority will be more generous in delegating powers because if the occasion demands it such powers can be taken back. But this is not really true. In a system of parliamentary government, where Ministers are subject to interpellation, there will always be centralisation of administration, because the Minister is likely to be challenged on any point at any time. To get effective decentralisation the devolved powers must be constitutionally protected, and the local authorities must have adequate financial resources and responsibility for their use. In South Africa, which is a unified State, some critics suggest that provincial government has failed because the provinces have so little independence. A federation, where the States have adequate resources and are given sufficient powers to deal with them, is likely to be a more stable political organisation than a unified State which has to provide services for people scattered over a large area with differing requirements and interests.

The next paragraph refers to the economic differences in our Australian States, some of them being centralised and industrialised while others are large States having scattered populations engaged in rural industries. Paragraph 90 of the report states—

The difficulties and problems which this system creates should be dealt with by conferences and discussions, and a system of voluntary co-operation on matters not determined by the Constitution itself will produce what is required. This is just what has taken place in Australia, and outside observers have commented favourably on the considerable amount of very successful co-operation which exists between State and Federal Governments.

That was written in 1936 pointing out the necessity for elasticity. If things are to go on as at present, under unified taxation—as to which some of the principal Commonwealth Ministers have stated that it is to be

permanent—it is radically important that there should be a conference between the States and the Commonwealth which might result in some arrangement that would give this State some hope of progressing.

The Premier: The present arrangement has not been officially repudiated.

Mr. SEWARD: That arrangement has definitely been repudiated by Dr. Evatt and another senior Minister. The words proposed to be struck out should be retained because they give us something definite and refer to "the termination of the present war" as the time at which to take action.

On motion by Hon. W. D. Johnson, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.50 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 23rd September, 1943.

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

QUESTIONS (4).

LIQUID FUEL.

As to Distillation from Wheat.

Hon. A. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary: 1, What progress, if any, has been made in Western Australia in the construction of buildings and machinery necessary for the distillation of fuel oil from wheat? 2, When does the company operating this distillery anticipate supplying the public with oil and its by-products?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, The construction of plant and buildings to produce power alcohol from wheat is well

advanced. 2, The company proposes to supply power alcohol for blending in motor fuel within the next twelve months.

ALUNITE WORKS.

As to Administrative Costs and Staff.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER asked the Chief Secretary: 1, What are the administrative costs of the Lake Campion alunite works? 2, How many are employed on the staff? 3, What are the amounts of individual salaries?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, The total salaries of the technical staff is £3,800 per annum. 2, Four, exclusive of clerical staff. 3, Director of Works and Development, £1,500 per annum; Works Manager, £1,000 per annum; Accountant, £750 per annum; Chemist, £550 per annum.

FARMERS' DEBTS ADJUSTMENT ACT.

As to Stay Orders.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL asked the Chief Secretary: 1, How many stay orders have been granted under the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act since its proclamation? 2, How many of the above were in operation as at the 30th June last?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Section 5—1009; Section 11—4264. 2, Section 5—11; Section 11—15.

DAYLIGHT SAVING.

As to Protest to Commonwealth.

Hon. G. B. WOOD (without notice) asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Does the Government intend to make a protest to the Commonwealth Government in respect to the latter's attitude to daylight saving? 2, Will the Government take the lead in seeing that no alteration of the clock is made in Western Australia? 3, If not, why not?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, This has already been done. 2 and 3, If the suggestion is that the Government should take the lead in defying the law, then the answer is no.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. E. M. Heenan, leave of absence for six consecutive sittings granted to Hon. H. Seddon (North-East) on the ground of ill-health.

MOTION—MEAT.

As to Supplies and Rationing of Mutton.

HON. G. B. WOOD: (East): [5.37]: I move—

That, in the opinion of this House, the rationing of mutton in Western Australia is unnecessary for the following reasons:—

- (a) There is a surplus of mutton in this State.
- (b) Owing to the deplorable mismanagement of manpower the treatment of mutton for export to the United Kingdom is impossible.
- (c) Rationing has lowered the price obtained by the producer.

This Parliament urges the Commonwealth Government to exempt Western Australia from the provisions of the regulations until satisfactory arrangements have been made to handle the surplus supply. This resolution to be forwarded to the Legislative Assembly for its concurrence.

I bring forward this motion with the honest conviction that this is one of the worst hardships that have befallen the mutton producers for a long time. These producers in the past have on many occasions been forced to face serious trouble which they could not avoid, such as drought, lack of superphosphate, etc. But this unwarranted interference by the Commonwealth authorities in the raising of mutton in this State is something which could have been avoided. I hope I shall be able to convince members that it is absolutely unnecessary at present. I also hope to be able to convince them that lack of manpower makes it quite impossible to handle the surplus mutton. Those two points must be linked, as they are very much allied to each other. I do not intend to take up much time on this motion, but I propose to place before members a few salient facts and figures so that they will support me in this protest to the Commonwealth Government.

The manpower position is nothing short of deplorable and there is no need for it. Each year at about this time the flow of lambs takes place and all the men available as well as all the freezing space possible, are required to deal with it. The powers-that-be controlling this matter should know that this position arises in September each year. They should also know that the position will be much worse this year because more men than usual will be required to treat meat for the Armed Forces. The position is desperate. I spoke to one buyer of lambs this

morning—I have discussed this matter with several buyers and agents—and he told me that he had purchased 3,000 lambs last week and did not know what to do with them. They had to be kept back on the farm. When a lamb is ready for market it should be immediately disposed of. The farmer, or farmers, may not have been able to hold these lambs, particularly in view of the rough weather we had last week in the country.

I know of another big butchering firm that refused to take 1,000 wethers from an agent because it could not handle them. That is no good. These lambs that I previously referred to were bred for export, but they could not be handled. Facilities exist at Midland Junction for the slaughtering of mutton for civilian consumption. Why must we have rationing when these conditions exist? I hope to show the effect of rationing on prices. I will deal first of all with the manpower position. The works at Fremantle got into such a terrible mess in regard to the slaughtering and handling of the sheep and lambs that an advertisement was put in the newspaper. That advertisement under date the 18th September made an appeal for unskilled workers.

Forty-six men went to the National Service office and were engaged to go to Robb's Jetty to carry out the work required. Of the 46 only two turned up! I believe that those two men received £1 each from the manager and were not seen again. Fancy having to advertise for this type of person! Provision exists for six chains to operate at Robb's Jetty. I expect that most members know that the killing is done on the chain system. I understand that only one chain was working on Tuesday. Last week the military authorities said, "We will release 26 men to work on the chain." They were competent men. They were brought in from the country and sent to Claremont, but the military authorities discovered that they had more important work for them to do. What could be more important for these competent butchers or chainmen to do than to go down and kill sheep?

Hon. F. E. Gibson: They probably had some potatoes to peel.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: Or had to pick stones off the road. It is ridiculous. I do not know how long the position will continue. I want members to protest against it and see if we

can get the Commonwealth Government to arrange that that state of affairs shall no longer exist. Why should General Gordon Bennett, or some other high military officer, have the power to do that? If the enemy was on our coast I would not say any such thing. I would say, "Let us all go short of meat so long as every man goes out to fight." But we know that there is no danger.

Hon. A. Thomson: The Prime Minister said that, anyway.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: We must believe that there is not much immediate danger to Western Australia. These men would be doing a far better job in killing sheep than in being retained in the Army. Of course, that applies to many of our other primary industries too, but I am dealing only with the meat position at the moment. I have been told that Western Australia is not the only State which is suffering. I believe that the same thing is happening in the Eyre Peninsula. That shows the deplorable mismanagement of manpower in Australia. We are crying out for meat, and we want meat for the United Kingdom. I would not say that we should not ration meat if it were going to the United Kingdom. I also believe that we should make some little sacrifice for the Navy.

I understand that at the present moment, or two days ago, the Navy was running about in an endeavour to find a certain amount of mutton, as there were no freezer facilities at Fremantle to store mutton so that the warships could get it when they wanted the meat. I do not think that there are any big ships coming in, but the Navy wants to know where it can get 20 or 30 tons of meat without having to go to Midland Junction or a wholesale butcher and ask for it. Because of the present position it does not know where it can get meat at short notice. Rationing has definitely reduced the price of mutton at Midland Junction. I have figures to show that in 1942—I am using a comparable month, September—wethers brought 20s. whereas today they are selling at 15s. and 17s. 6d. The price per lb. in 1942 was 5d. as against 3½d. to 4d. today. The Commonwealth Government sold our mutton to the United Kingdom and as a result the net price at Midland Junction will work out at 2.9d. per lb. for wethers which, before the war, were bringing up to 5d. How can our industry exist with such interference?

I am prepared to admit it is possible that in the Eastern States some necessity for rationing exists.

But surely it is the duty of this Parliament to point out to people in the Eastern States, who know so little about our industry and about Western Australia, where they fail. It does not occur only in this industry. The same position arises with butter rationing, and more recently with daylight saving. It is time these people were told something! I am asking this House to pass the motion so that this State will be exempt until facilities are provided to treat meat for the Armed Forces and for the United Kingdom. We have had too much interference, not only from the Commonwealth Government but from the State Government too. Right back in 1938 when the Price Fixing Commissioner started to interfere, it was a common thing to get 6d. per lb. for wethers at this time of the year. The price has gone down and down. Many people—and I was one of them—used to make it part of their business to buy wethers in March or February and feed them on oats and barley so as to have them fit to send to the market in May or June when the prices rose a little.

That sort of thing has gone by the board; it is not worth while, and if these pinpricks are to continue I wonder how long it will be worth while continuing with any of the land industries. I believe that other members intend to speak to the motion. The Commonwealth Government on this occasion is the only authority that can help us. To appeal to the Minister for Agriculture is useless because he has nothing to do with the matter. I believe he made some representations to the manpower authorities, but did not get very far. The Commonwealth should protest strongly to the military authorities in order to ensure that this sort of thing does not continue. I repeat that we all want to do what we can to provide meat for Britain and for the Fighting Forces, but this is not the way to do it, and conditions are becoming worse day by day.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West): I second the motion and compliment the mover on having brought it forward. The rationing of commodities suggests that shortages exist, and the idea of rationing is to ensure that what are available will be evenly distributed amongst the community so that each shall receive his share. In such cases rationing is commendable. At present, however, there

is an anticipated slump in the sale of sheep in this State due to the large number being offered for sale. I am told that on Wednesday prime fat ewes were sold for 6s. a head, and I believe the statement is true.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Equal to about 1½d. per lb.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Something like that; they would scale about 45 lbs. If rationing is to be introduced in a State like this where we have a huge number of fat sheep, the inference is that there are facilities for handling the surplus. If the authorities say, "We want all the meat possible and the local people must go short," surely this suggests that there are means of disposing of the surplus! That is a reasonable assumption. The people in England are not rationed on the basis of a certain quantity of meat per week; they are rationed on the basis of a certain sum of money which they may spend for the purchase of meat.

Hon. J. Cornell: A shilling's worth.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Actually 1s. 2d. worth.

Hon. J. Cornell: That is the same thing.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Perhaps it is 1s. sterling and 1s. 2d. Australian. A sum of 1s. will buy less than 2 lbs. of lamb.

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch: It will buy less than 1 lb. of lamb chops. I paid 1s. 3d. this morning.

Hon. L. CRAIG: When people are rationed on the basis of a certain expenditure for meat, the question of quality is not so important. All of us would prefer to have 2 lbs. of wether mutton to 1 lb. of lamb. Even if facilities are available to treat the surplus, I do not know where ships will be obtained. It is quantity more than quality that is needed in England today. If one sells a 36-lb. lamb and a 39-lb. lamb, the heavier of the two is worth less than 4d. more because the price increases only slightly with the added weight. England is crying out for quantity. If shipping is available and it is necessary to ration mutton in this State, I presume that other facilities are forthcoming so that the surplus can be handled. Otherwise, where would be the wisdom of rationing? Mr. Wood has done the right thing in bringing before the notice of the Government that what is necessary in New South Wales is not good for Western Australia. It is another indication of what happens when control is exercised from a centre 2,000 miles away. The same

thing happened with the rationing of butter, but I will not pursue that matter further.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central): If ever complete unanimity should exist between the two Houses, it should on a question such as this. The Government and the department concerned should have a knowledge of the facts, and I am amazed that the Government has not already taken action to protect the interests of sheep growers in this State. A month or six weeks ago I met an officer of the Department of Agriculture at Morawa, and he told me—not in connection with rationing—of the position with regard to sheep in that district. Mr. Wood spoke of a drought in New South Wales. I have no desire to broadcast this fact, but many members may not be aware that one portion of Central Province—one of the best parts of the State—is suffering a drought. Last Friday I was in Geraldton where a prominent stockman pointed to the sale notices for sheep. He said, "People here are panicking. We do not know what to do with the surplus sheep owing to the shortage of freezing space." I feel inclined to employ an expression used on one occasion by Mr. Williams, though I believe it is not a parliamentary expression.

Hon. J. Cornell: Do not use it!

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Then I shall content myself by saying that anyone who possessed knowledge of our conditions would not have attempted to apply daylight saving to Western Australia. We are often told that the people in the Eastern States do not understand our conditions, but I wonder sometimes whether that is not due to their having only one eye. Anyone with knowledge of the conditions in this State would scarcely credit that such things were possible. I suppose reference should not have been made to daylight saving in a debate on this motion. Now we are met with a position like this. Time is the essence of the contract. In the Victoria district, to say nothing of the areas along the Wongan Hills line, the farmers do not know what to do with their sheep. If ships could be loaded with our mutton which could be taken abroad, it would be a good thing for all concerned.

Hon. L. Craig: Wethers here are fetching 10s. per head less than they are in New South Wales.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I cannot vouch for the truth of the statement I am about to make, but a Geraldton stock agent told me last Friday that notwithstanding the contracts that had been made with the Army, without notice the Army officials told the local butchers to hold their sheep and said that no more sheep were required until further notice. Could any better evidence of the way our producers are treated be afforded than that instance? I am informed, though this seems unbelievable, that at the time the soldiers in that district were being fed daily for five weeks with 3,500 lbs. of frozen mutton, all of which had come from Queensland, the Geraldton butchers were told to hold their sheep! It is only right that such things should be ventilated. Great inconvenience was caused to people in the Geraldton district. They were simply told to stand back while mutton from Queensland was fed to the troops. The local position was accentuated by that action. Producers do not know what to do with their sheep. The situation is well known to the Agricultural Department. Five weeks ago an officer from that department told me at Morawa that the position would become very serious indeed in a few weeks.

HON. J. CORNELL (South): Whilst I have no objection to the motion, I think it can be said that so far as our producers are concerned, a measure of poetic justice is wrapped up in it. Unquestionably one of the most difficult things to accomplish during the war is the rationing of clothing, foodstuffs, etc. To apply a measure of rationing within one State and not within another is to invite heaps of trouble. Prior to the 21st August last men in a position to know the facts stated that it was intended by the Commonwealth Government to ration meat. That was denied by that Government. I asked some prominent people this question, "Do you think there is anything in the statement that mutton and beef will be rationed?" The answer they gave me was, "We do not think it; we are quite sure that it will happen within the next two months." When I travelled through the country prior to the 21st August I found producers saying, "On Saturday next our vote will go to the Curtin Government because it has done something for us." The results proved that they were not only satisfied with what the Commonwealth Government had done but

were prepared to take a chance on what it was likely to do in the next few years. That is the position as I see it.

Hon. A. Thomson: That is pretty correct.

Hon. J. CORNELL: It is now proposed to ask the Commonwealth Government to exempt Western Australia from meat rationing. I cannot see much logic in that; it is only beating the air. Mr. Craig has said that wethers bring 10s. per head less in this State than they do in New South Wales. If Western Australia were to be exempt from the rationing of meat, would there be a corresponding reduction in the price of mutton compared with the ruling price in New South Wales and Victoria?

Hon. L. Craig: There would not be a slump here.

Hon. J. CORNELL: There is another side to the story that will have to be considered by the Commonwealth Government. If the producer is to receive less for his sheep in this State than the prevailing price paid elsewhere, will the consumer here receive any benefit from the reduction? I understand that meat is at a uniform price throughout the Commonwealth.

Hon. A. Thomson: There should be uniformity for the producers also.

Hon. J. CORNELL: It is said that because of a local surplus the producers are receiving 10s. per head less for their wethers than is the case in New South Wales. Do they want it both ways? Is it desired that there should be no rationing in this State and that the producers shall be brought up to the price ruling in New South Wales, and will the consumer pay the same price here as he does in that other State?

Hon. L. Craig: The consumer does not pay the same price here as is paid in New South Wales.

Hon. J. CORNELL: But the price is uniform throughout the Commonwealth!

Hon. G. B. Wood: Who is getting the rake-off in this State?

Hon. J. CORNELL: I question whether anyone is getting a rake-off in this State now, because sheep are not being sold.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Many of them are being sold.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Yes, but the rationing of meat will not prevent that. The whole business requires to be tightened up. I will not vote against the motion but I see its futility. In view of recent happenings

I look upon it as more or less an attempt at chasing a rainbow.

HON. T. MOORE (Central): With portion of the motion I am in accord, but with the other portion I disagree, because I have not the information I need to enable me to support it. Mr. Wood states that there is a surplus of mutton in Western Australia.

Hon. G. B. Wood: The Minister admitted that in answer to my question.

Hon. T. MOORE: In paragraph (b) of the motion he refers to the deplorable mismanagement of manpower making impossible the treatment of mutton for export to the United Kingdom. I do not know that that is a fact.

Hon. G. B. Wood: I do.

Hon. T. MOORE: I am not prepared to say that if we knew all that was happening in regard to manpower we would be satisfied that there was deplorable mismanagement. I disagree with that statement unless I have evidence of its correctness.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Did you not hear my remarks?

Hon. T. MOORE: No, but I have closely studied the question. I am brought into contact with it daily as other members are. We know there is a shortage of manpower in every industry, but to go so far as to say that this has rendered the export of mutton to the United Kingdom impossible, is to draw the long bow.

Hon. G. B. Wood: That is the position.

Hon. T. MOORE: Without paragraph (b) the House could well accept the motion.

Hon. G. B. Wood: I will prove what I say.

Hon. T. MOORE: I cannot believe that it is impossible in the present circumstances to export meat to the United Kingdom, and it would take a lot of evidence to convince me that that is the case. We should deal with this question on sounder grounds.

Hon. J. Cornell: Shipping has more to do with the matter than anything else.

Hon. T. MOORE: That has nothing to do with the question of manpower. If paragraph (b) were omitted we would have an excellent motion to send to another place. There is a surplus of mutton in Western Australia today. We also have a surplus of fat mutton, and once the bloom is off it

great difficulty will be experienced in getting rid of the meat. A lot of the mutton on the market today is ewe mutton. Unfortunately there is an idea abroad that that is not good mutton. I venture to say that if ewe and wether mutton were put on the dinner-table together, very few people would know the difference. Many of our ewes have reached an age when they should be disposed of if they are to be sold in their prime. This season there is a drought in part of the country and feed is very scarce. It is deplorable that our surplus mutton should not be made use of because of rationing. There is a shortage of beef throughout the Commonwealth. It is a mistake to ration mutton. The remarks of Mr. Cornell concerning the change of Government and the manner in which the electors voted has nothing to do with the question. Any Government can make a mistake, and all Governments have done so.

Hon. J. Cornell: So do the electors.

Hon. T. MOORE: I am afraid Mr. Cornell is a bad loser, if he is going to take up that attitude because the people voted for the Government with which they are satisfied. The Commonwealth Government has not been in power for a fortnight. I advise the hon. member to drop that line of argument. He did not follow it in the old days. He should leave it alone and forget all about it. Let us face facts. If we point out to the Commonwealth Government that it has made a mistake and it does not rectify that mistake, we can only say that it is not doing the right thing. There is no harm in pointing out to the Government that in the opinion of this House—and we hope of another place—a mistake has been made; that we have in Western Australia mutton that will be lost to the State altogether and to the primary producers, if it is not made use of now. I move an amendment—

That paragraph (b) be struck out and the following inserted in lieu:—“(b) Facilities for the export of the surplus to the United Kingdom are not available.”

We know that shipping is an important factor in getting food to the United Kingdom.

Hon. J. Cornell: Can we eat all the mutton that is here?

Hon. T. MOORE: We want to eat as much of this fat meat as we can, and if we have

to do with 15 per cent. less, that 15 per cent. represents a loss. I am not going so far as to say that the trouble is only on account of shortage of manpower. That is where I disagree with the mover of the motion. With the amendment I have suggested, I am prepared to support the motion. I think that by doing this we will bring the matter under the notice of the people in control, and we have every right to do that. We should not try to introduce political matter into the motion. Let us forget about that altogether. Let us realise that we have a Government in power for the next three years, and that we should make all the use of it we can. We want to give it all the advice we can, and we should advise it to take the action suggested in this motion. By doing so, I believe we shall get somewhere.

HON. SIR HAL COLEBATCH (Metropolitan—on amendment): I second the amendment and think that Mr. Wood would be well advised to accept it. We have not much information as to whether the Government has blundered or not, but in a matter where the interests of the State are involved, it would be better if a motion was submitted to which we could all agree. It seems to me wrong that when there is a surplus there should be rationing. Another point was raised by Mr. Cornell and in that respect, so far as I have been able to observe—and I have occasion to visit butchers' shops every day—there has been no appreciable reduction in the price of mutton. Undoubtedly, with a surplus, there should be a considerable reduction in price in the interests of the consuming public and with a view to making good use of the surplus.

HON. G. B. WOOD (East—on amendment): I intend to oppose the amendment because I believe the whole trouble has been caused by lack of manpower. I want particularly to call the attention of the Government to the management—if that word would suit Mr. Moore better—of the manpower position in Western Australia. If Mr. Moore had said he desired to have the words “deplorable mismanagement” deleted and the words “lack of management” inserted in lieu, I would have been prepared to accept that. If he does not like the words “deplorable management” I would be prepared to take them out.

Hon. T. Moore: Why not say shortage of manpower?

Hon. G. B. WOOD: Yes, I would accept that. I want to be reasonable, but I do not want to take out of the motion reference to the manpower position.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Workers' Homes Act Amendment.
- 2, Fremantle Municipal Tramways and Electric Lighting Act Amendment.
- 3, Wood Distillation and Charcoal Iron and Steel Industry.

Received from the Assembly.

BILL—LOTTERIES (CONTROL) ACT AMENDMENT.

Third Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY [5.28]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

HON. G. B. WOOD (East): I would not have spoken on the third reading but for the remarks of Mr. E. H. H. Hall in regard to certain disbursements of money by the Lotteries Commission arising out of storm damage at York. Mr. Hall inferred that the Commission should not have granted that money to people in the York district who lost the roofs of their homes during the storm. In fairness to the Lotteries Commission I want to make a statement regarding the matter. Damage amounting to thousands of pounds was done in the York district. I was probably one of the greatest sufferers. It cost me hundreds of pounds. Mr. Burges suffered extensively and many others also suffered, but we did not participate in the Lotteries Commission's grant. We carried the losses ourselves.

I am not sure how many houses were damaged in the town itself, but I think there were about a hundred places affected, and the loss was assessed by a Public Works Department assessor at £6,000 or £7,000. We did not ask the Lotteries Commission to give us the amount that we ultimately received. We asked for £750 on behalf of some old people who could not afford to pay for the restoration of the roofs of their houses. Mr. Kenneally, the chairman of the Lotteries Commission, told us very bluntly

that if we were making any such application merely for the sake of bolstering up the funds of the York municipality we would be wasting our time. But he told us that as we had presented a case on behalf of indigent residents he would assist us. Mr. Kenneally regarded our application as modest and instead of £750 gave us £950 because he considered that the indigent pensioners were deserving of assistance and that the money would be well spent.

Having pointed out the position to the House I trust Mr. E. H. H. Hall will not suggest that the Lotteries Commission gave a substantial hand-out to the people of York. The extent of the damage was assessed by an official of the Public Works Department and I have made this statement in fairness to the Lotteries Commission. Thirty houses occupied by poor people were damaged and I think they received about £30 each. So members will see that the help that was rendered was amply justified.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central): Mr. Wood's remarks have not altered by opinion one iota. A vital principle is at stake, and it was the principle that I attacked. The Lotteries Commission should not have been the body to provide the funds for the replacement of the roofs on the homes of the old age pensioners. That is my opinion and I am entitled to state it. To my mind funds should not be devoted by the Lotteries Commission for interest and sinking fund on capital expenditure or for the reconditioning of houses damaged by storm. Whatever Government may be in power there is always a compassionate allowance fund available from which payments of this description could be made for the relief of distress. The Parliamentary representatives of the people concerned should be asked to make representations to the Government for the desired assistance from Government funds.

Hon. J. Cornell: That was what was done after the Bickley Valley storm.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Where are these things to stop? The member for Geraldton is the Premier of the State and recently we have suffered from a visitation in the Geraldton district about which I will make no further comment. What would the member for Geraldton say if I were to get to work quietly and tell the people of the district

what had been done for York, adding the suggestion that the member for Geraldton should be presented with a petition requesting the Lotteries Commission to render assistance? The principle is wrong. No-one with any proper sense of the fitness of things could support it. This is not charity.

Hon. G. B. Wood: What is charity?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: It may be charity in one guise, but neither Mr. Wood nor any other member will shake my opinion on this matter. I do not for one moment suggest that the old people at York were not deserving of assistance, but I claim that the money should have been provided by the Government and that the Lotteries Commission should not have made the contribution to which I take exception.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (in reply): I do not wish to delay the passage of the measure but I wish to emphasise that the members of the Lotteries Commission, in taking the action complained of, did not go beyond the powers they possess under the Act. Although Mr. E. H. H. Hall is entitled to his own opinion as to whether the action taken was in the nature of a charitable work, everyone can reach his own conclusion on that point.

Hon. J. Cornell: It is the first time it has been done.

The **CHIEF SECRETARY**: It may be the last time.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: I hope so.

The **CHIEF SECRETARY**: The Lotteries Commission deals with all these matters on their merits and in this instance it considered that the old people were deserving of assistance.

Hon. J. Cornell: In the case of the Bickley Valley storm the Government provided the assistance.

The **CHIEF SECRETARY**: Had those associated with the appeal on behalf of the Bickley Valley settlers approached the Lotteries Commission and the Commission had viewed the position in a favourable light, in all probability assistance would have been rendered from the Commission's funds. But that was not done. I trust members will agree that the Lotteries Commission is doing very useful work in Western Australia.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Assembly.

BILL—ELECTORAL (WAR TIME).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East) [5.37]: An interesting discussion has taken place on the Bill and the suggestion advanced by Mr. Baxter that it be referred to a Select Committee for consideration is worthy of acceptance. I was pleased to note that our returned soldier members have taken a leading part in the debate. They spoke with personal knowledge of what actually took place on the battle front in the course of the 1914-18 war. While the Bill provides the vote for all who are 18 years of age or more and are in uniform, the Minister for the Army, Mr. Forde, has said that no youth of 18 years will be sent to the fighting line.

It seems to me that the claim made by previous speakers that those who are actually in the fighting front should be allowed to exercise the franchise—I certainly have no objection to that—should receive general approval, but when it comes to giving the vote to everyone who happens to be in uniform, then I agree that Mr. Cornell put up a very strong case in support of the proposal for a Select Committee. Mr. Cornell was quite willing that the men in the firing line should have the franchise but that the privilege should not extend to lads who had just joined up or had no prospect whatever of seeing active service. Mr. Gibson advanced a very pertinent point with reference to the position of other sections. I am reminded that the recent parade of A.R.P. workers was really a revelation and an education to many. Those people, young and old, have spent their time voluntarily in preparing themselves for work in the event of an enemy raid being made on the city. Thank God, the necessity for their work has not arisen!

In Victoria an election was held recently, but the Government did not make provision for soldiers outside the State exercising the franchise. I have no desire to deny the vote to anyone resident in Western Australia or engaged in fighting our battles, but the Bill certainly supports the argument submitted by Mr. Cornell with regard to the scrutiny in connection with the poll. That phase of the

Bill requires close examination and if a Select Committee were appointed we could examine the Chief Electoral Officer and, subject to the approval of the Commonwealth Government, the electoral officer who was in control during the recent Federal elections. Without wishing to cause any delay, I think it worthwhile to afford this House an opportunity to get firsthand evidence as to how the proposal will work out. To those members of the Services who are at the fighting front I give all honour. I have no wish to deny them anything whatever. But many hundreds of young men and girls in the Services have never been outside Perth, and many of them are not likely ever to be; and as regards these there is no justification for the proposal of the Bill. I shall support the second reading in the hope that members will agree to a Select Committee, from the inquiries of which much good will result, ensuring the preservation of the interests of all concerned.

HON. T. MOORE (Central): At the outset let me say that in my opinion extraneous matter has been introduced into the debate, matter which could well have been omitted. The question we have to deal with is whether we believe that soldiers should be given the vote. That is the issue we should keep in mind the whole of the time. If we cannot give all our soldiers a vote, for the reason that some of them are not get-at-able, should we refuse to give votes to those who are get-at-able? It is poor reasoning that refuses the vote to 99 per cent. because of the 1 per cent. that cannot be reached.

In this great State of ours there are always men "at the back of beyond" who have not facilities for voting and who do not get the vote. But that is not regarded as a reason for refusing the vote to those who can exercise it. I was surprised, also, at the amount of hilarity exhibited yesterday in connection with the measure. To my mind this is a matter which does not call for any hilarity. Still, much hilarity was in evidence both yesterday and on the day before. Many flippant remarks were made, remarks altogether out of keeping with the subject, which is a highly serious one. I am surprised that men who have been in Parliament for years should attempt to ridicule or burlesque a question of this kind.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Who attempted that?

Hon. T. MOORE: I almost heard giggling here on the day before yesterday, when Mr. Fraser was speaking. There was any amount of laughter in this Chamber while he was speaking.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Because of the inane remarks he made.

Hon. T. MOORE: In this Chamber there are seven supporters of the Labour Party, and when one of the seven gets up he is often treated in a very off-hand manner. I object to that. It irritates me to think that Labour members do not get a hearing.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. T. MOORE: Mr. Baxter treated this matter seriously, but many members did not. The expression "these youngsters" was frequently used. Outside this House, wherever "these youngsters" appear, hats are taken off to them. "Youngsters and young girls"! See what happens in regard to young girls in the Services as compared with those outside! In many instances the same sentiments that governed the young men have animated the girls in entering the Forces.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: I must ask hon. members to allow Mr. Moore to proceed with his remarks without interruption.

Hon. T. MOORE: "These girls" have volunteered. They have volunteered with the desire to do the right thing just the same as young boys have done. Let me repeat, I take my hat off to the young boy and young girl who goes into khaki. They show a fine sense of citizenship. Here is the point: Many members suggest that these young men and young women, because they live in and around Perth, for a little while are having a good time. As one who has been through the Army, I know that when one gets into the Army one hands oneself right over to the military authorities.

One is no longer free as men outside are free. My friend Mr. Craig knows that the man in the Army is not free to do anything whatever. He has handed himself over for the defence of his country. It is a very great thing that he has thought fit to hand himself over in that way for the defence of the country. I know what awaits a man when he goes into the Army. Wherever

these young soldiers are, they should have the right to vote, because, after all, they fight in order to maintain conditions as they were when these youths left Australia, or even better conditions. One hon. member said that soldiers did not care a rap about votes. Mr. Wood said soldiers were trained to fight, and not to vote.

Hon. G. B. Wood: I was referring to the young soldiers; not to the men over 21.

Hon. T. MOORE: Of course they are trained to fight. Would Mr. Wood have us believe that the young man who enters the Army forgets all about civil life? I have heard splendid political arguments amongst soldiers—and not back in camp but close to the front line. Are men in the Army trained to think all day of nothing but fighting? If they were, they would not be able to fight when the battle came. It is a ridiculous idea that men are anxious to fight, anxious to kill. No man wants to kill. For my part I am prepared to give the vote to men who are prepared to yield up everything. Do not let us run away with the idea that just because some soldiers cannot vote, and because there is no provision for the men of the merchant service to vote, we ought not to give these soldiers the right to vote.

I can remember the days when the men of the merchant service had to fight for decent conditions. They were then living under rotten conditions, and they were spoken of by members of this Chamber with scorn. If the men of the merchant service cannot get a vote, that is no reason for refusing the vote to men who can vote. Are we prepared and are we anxious to give these young soldiers a vote? That is the question. Mr. Cornell was not taking a broad view when he suggested holding up this Bill till we see the other Bill—the measure dealing with this Chamber. What has the other Bill to do with this measure? This Bill has to do with Assembly voting. Mr. Cornell had no right to suggest that we should hold up the measure. Let us treat the Bill on its merits and stand up to our obligations. We are now dealing with Army electors for the Assembly, and anything contained in the other Bill can be dealt with when that measure comes along.

The suggestion to hold up this Bill is not democratic at all. I do not want any Select Committee to be appointed. It has been said that we should have a Select Committee on

this Bill in order to get evidence, and particularly that we should get evidence from those who took votes at the recent elections. Where are they to be got or brought from? Are they to be brought here from North Queensland? They are not here and available; their evidence cannot be obtained. The men in the Military Forces here have had the voting papers forwarded back to them, but they know nothing of what happened in connection with the casting of the votes. From that aspect Mr. Baxter's argument falls down.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: We should get the electoral officers.

Hon. T. MOORE: They have only counted the votes. How would they know what happened at the elections? I know where I stand on this matter. I stand here to give these soldiers the vote. Let hon. members be honest and not hold up the Bill, but go on with it in a desire to have it passed. Do not let us humbug ourselves.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Speak for yourself.

Hon. T. MOORE: I am speaking for myself.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. T. MOORE: I certainly am not going to say that because a man gets into uniform he is a numbskull. Men do not forget all their teaching when they join the Army.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Do not put words into my mouth. I did not say that.

Hon. T. MOORE: The hon. member should look up "Hansard." If the words are not there, they ought to be; there is no doubt about that. We all know what the hon. member said.

Hon. G. B. Wood: I did not say they were numbskulls.

Hon. T. MOORE: No. I did not say that, either. I said the inference is that they would be numbskulls if they only thought in one way.

Hon. G. B. Wood: There is no inference on my part.

Hon. T. MOORE: They would be men with a one-track mind if they did. As a matter of fact, a soldier who has been on a parade ground for a few hours is very pleased to think of something else afterwards. Is that not so, Mr. Craig?

Hon. L. Craig: He thinks all sorts of things.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: What hilarity!

Hon. T. MOORE: The ridiculous proposal that the measure should be referred to a Select Committee ought to be treated with hilarity. Plain statements made by myself and those supporting me are treated with flippancy. I ask the House to be honest to itself. Let every member be honest and ask himself, "Do I want to give the soldiers a vote? Am I anxious to do the right thing?" That is all we have to ask ourselves and, if we do, we must support the measure. If any amendments are necessary, they can be made in this Chamber. I support the second reading in the hope that no Select Committee will be appointed and that every member will stand up here and say what he thinks of the Bill. If he is honest with himself, he will give the soldiers the right to vote.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Apparently there is only one honest man.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West): I personally do not think a Select Committee is necessary, but my reasons are quite different from those of Mr. Moore, who is not himself today. He is usually moderate and sensible; but this afternoon he is neither. As a rule, his arguments are sound and moderate. Today he has drawn herrings of all colours across the trail. I think he is a little excited; the speech he made was not his usual type of speech.

Hon. T. Moore: Describe the herrings.

Hon. L. CRAIG: The question we have to ask ourselves today is whether or not we desire to give the right to vote to soldiers who are minors. As Mr. Moore suggested, I will be honest with myself. I would not give minors in uniform the right to vote. I have no doubt in my mind that minors in uniform do not desire to vote. I have consulted many of them. I stopped one in the street yesterday and said, "I notice you have had a 21st birthday party." She replied, "Yes." I then said, "You now have the right to vote and we propose to give girls of your age and three years younger the right to vote also. Do you think they would know how to vote? Do you think you knew how to vote when you were 18 years of age?" She replied, "I do not know now."

She was honest. That is the usual reply one gets from young girls. We should not

resort to heroics. It is not like Mr. Moore to do so. He talked heroics about young people in uniform. I think nothing of young people being in uniform; if they will not go into uniform, who will? It is natural for young persons, in times of war, to offer their services to their country. It would indeed be an extraordinary young person who did not do so. These young people do not desire any special privileges for doing what is their ordinary normal duty. Were we to take a ballot of these young people on this question, I think it would be found that the very great majority would say, "Do not bother us with these things; we are not interested." I certainly consider it unnecessary to appoint a Select Committee to inquire into the Bill. The question is a straight one: Do we or do we not think minors in uniform should be given a vote to which, before the war, they were not entitled?

Hon. C. F. Baxter: That is not the reason for the Select Committee.

Hon. L. CRAIG: It is the main reason.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: The reason is the faulty nature of the Bill. In my opinion, it is unworkable.

Hon. L. CRAIG: The main question, as far as I am concerned, is whether minors should have a vote. I definitely think they should not.

HON. SIR HAL COLEBATCH (Metropolitan): I had no intention of speaking on this Bill. I rise to my feet now only to correct what I think is quite a wrong impression in the mind of Mr. Craig. I take it that if a Select Committee is appointed it would not for a moment consider the question of whether minors should vote or not.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: No.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: That is a matter for each member to determine for himself. I am not speaking for or against the Select Committee, but all it would be required to do would be to inquire into the machinery for taking the vote, in order to ascertain whether it is adequate and whether it will give all those entitled to exercise the franchise a vote, and whether it will prevent abuses. To my mind, for the Select Committee to determine whether minors should vote would be a manifest absurdity.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: That was never intended.

On motion by the Honorary Minister, debate adjourned.

BILL—TOWN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. H. S. W. PARKER (Metropolitan-Suburban) [6.9]: I have made some inquiries about the Bill and find its essential purpose is to prevent abuses in the future. One or two cases have occurred where the principal Act has been circumvented. I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

House adjourned at 6.11 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 23rd September, 1943.

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

QUESTIONS (3).

METROPOLITAN MILK ACT.

As to Compensation Funds.

Mr. McLARTY asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, What is the amount of money now credited to the Producers' Compensation Fund under the Metropolitan Milk

Act? 2, What interest has accrued? 3, What is the total amount standing to the credit of the Retailers' Compensation Fund? 4, Have any payments been made from either funds for compensation purposes? 5, How is the money invested, and what amount from each fund?

The **MINISTER** replied: 1, To the 31st August, 1943—£11,819 15s. 10d. 2, £1,723 15s. 3, The amount standing to the credit of the Milk Vendors' Compensation Fund at the 31st August was £16,354 18s. 1d. 4, No. 5, In Australian Commonwealth Stock, from the Dairymen's Compensation Fund, £11,100 18s. 0d.; the Milk Vendors' Compensation Fund, £15,151 10s.

PETROL SUPPLIES, GREAT SOUTHERN.

As to Charges.

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Railways: With reference to the transport of petrol from a southern port to the lower Great Southern, does the Railway Department receive freight charges for the transport from that port to places on the lower Great Southern equivalent to the freight which would be received for the longer transport from Fremantle, or is the petrol carried by the railways at the normal freight for the actual distance covered?

The **MINISTER** replied: The petrol is carried by the railways at the normal freight for the actual distance covered.

DAYLIGHT SAVING.

As to Correspondence with Commonwealth.

Mr. WATTS (without notice) asked the Premier: 1, Was the decision of both Houses of the State Parliament re daylight saving conveyed to the Commonwealth Government? If so, was a reply received? 3, If so, will he lay the correspondence on the Table of the House? 4, Does the Government intend to make any protest to the Commonwealth in respect of the decision to recommence daylight saving in this State as reported in the Press?

The **PREMIER** replied: The hon. member gave me a copy of the questions he has asked and my replies are as follows: 1, 2, and 3, Yes. 4, This has already been done. With regard to the correspondence I have had a copy made and will lay it on the Table.