

emphasises the seriousness of the labour position. There are many firmly convinced that the amount required to restore the North is more than we, as a Parliament, can finance. In addition to the losses we have sustained in the State Shipping Service and the amount spent in port and harbour construction and maintenance; the loss on the Marble Bar-Hedland railway and the million that has been spent in rebates of rent and debt adjustments, the losses continue, because there has been no long-term policy. With our limited finance it has been impossible for us to frame such a policy.

I am convinced that a Government situated here cannot govern the North, and my whole idea in bringing forward this suggestion is to try to impress upon this House that we must get down to the principle that the closer to the people, the better the Government. From my observations on more than one visit, I am impressed with the lack of a central point in the North-West. The opinion is held that were we to develop one sound harbour where ships could enter and be less dependent upon tides, we would solve a number of problems. Almost everything that is required in the North has to be brought from Fremantle or Perth. There is no central store for the Public Works Department and no base for any of the other services necessary for a community of people. It has been stated that there are Constitutional difficulties in the suggestions I am making. Some declare that under the Commonwealth Constitution, the Commonwealth Government cannot discriminate in taxation and that in order to give relief from taxation it will be necessary to restore the right of taxation to the State Parliament. I cannot, however, subscribe to this view, since the Commonwealth Government has found it possible to zone Australia and to give reductions in income tax assessments to those living in certain zones. If it be possible to make reductions of a small nature, it must be possible to make reductions of a large nature. Another way out is to declare the area a territory. Whether it be that the State or the Commonwealth holds the purse, I still consider that the government of the North would be more easily conducted—and I might be pardoned if I say more wisely conducted—were it by a commission of members resident in and knowing that district and able to conduct

its affairs with a knowledge of the present and future needs of the North. Finally, I repeat, even were our power of taxation restored, the project of restoring the North would be beyond our finances. The task is one for Australia!

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

BILLS (4)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Mine Workers' Relief (War Service) Act Amendment.
- 2, Rights in Water and Irrigation Act Amendment.
Received from the Assembly.
- 3, Police Act Amendment.
- 4, Police Act Amendment Act, 1902, Amendment.
Introduced by the Chief Secretary.

House adjourned at 6.9 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 12th September, 1945.

	PAGE
Questions: Pardelup prisoners, as to experience of honour system	623
Railways, as to warning signals at Welshpool crossing	624
Broadcasting, as to A.B.C. news session	624
State Hotels, as to Bruce Rock, Kwoylin, etc.	624
Fremantle Harbour Trust, as to waiving of regulation charges	624
Leave of absence	625
Bills: Medical Act Amendment, 1R.	625
Mine Workers' Relief (War Service) Act Amendment, 3R.	625
Rights in Water and Irrigation Act Amendment, 3R.	625
Builders' Registration Act Amendment, 2R.	633
Motions: Colliery coal, as to full use, etc., by Government utilities	625
Public Works Standing Committee, as to legislation for appointing	630
Soldier Settlement, as to proposed legislation	635
Industrial development, use of munition factories, to inquire by Select Committee	650
Papers: Claim by Mrs. J. P. Jorgensen, as to loss of cats	628

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

QUESTIONS.

PARDELUP PRISONERS.

As to Experience of Honour System.

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister representing the Chief Secretary: In view of the fact that the prisoner, Whelan, who re-

cently escaped from Pardelup Prison was in December, 1943, concerned in an escape from Fremantle Prison when a senior officer was very badly injured as a consequence, what limits have been placed on the belief that the honour system is likely to be satisfactory with prisoners of this type, and what guarantee of protection from the same sort of treatment as was given to the senior officer referred to at Fremantle is available to the officers at Pardelup and to the settlers in the surrounding country?

The PREMIER replied:

Recommendations for the transfer of any prison inmate to Pardelup Prison Farm are only made in the firm belief that they will be able to live up to the conditions there obtaining, and are unlikely to prove a menace to the community. Protection of officers against assault by prisoners is just as effective at Pardelup as at Fremantle, except that the ratio of staff to prisoners is less because of the selective type of inmate.

RAILWAYS.

As to Warning Signals at Welshpool Crossing.

Mr. CROSS asked the Minister for Railways:—

1, Is he aware that the Welshpool railway crossing is very dangerous?

2, If so, will he arrange to install automatic warning signals forthwith?

The MINISTER replied:

1, Yes.

2, Automatic warning equipment is not available at present. The installation of such signals at this crossing will be considered in conjunction with other dangerous crossings when material is again available.

BROADCASTING.

As to A.B.C. News Session.

Mr. NORTH asked the Premier:—

1, Can anything be done through his Government regarding the frequent failure of the A.B.C. news session to reach Western Australian listeners?

2, Will he consider making representations to the Postmaster General, and if possible, obtain the reasons for the repeated

interruptions and breaks, and also ascertain what plans there may be to effect improvements?

The PREMIER replied:

1 and 2, Enquiries made from the Australian Broadcasting Commission do not bear out the statement that there is frequent failure of the A.B.C. news session to reach Western Australian listeners. As the principal difficulties when such faults do occur are technical and are caused through heavily loaded land lines, I will take the matter up with the Postmaster General to see if there is a prospect of avoiding the faults referred to.

STATE HOTELS.

As to Bruce Rock, Kwoiyin, Etc.

Mr. PERKINS asked the Minister for the North-West:—

1, (a) What is the original capital value plus later additions of Bruce Rock State Hotel; (b) What is the present capital value of above less depreciation written off? (c) What is present value of furniture and fittings?

2, What is value as (a), (b) and (c) in question (1) of Kwoiyin State Hotel?

3, What was net profit for last year of each of above State hotels?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (for the Minister for the North-West) replied:—

1 and 2, Bruce Rock—Original capital value, £12,108; present value, £8,730; present value of furniture, £2,649. Kwoiyin—Original capital value, £5,758; present value, £3,925; present value of furniture, £1,405.

3, For trade reasons it is not deemed advisable to provide these figures.

FREMANTLE HARBOUR TRUST.

As to Waiving of Regulation Charges.

Mr. LESLIE asked the Minister representing the Chief Secretary:—

1, Is he aware that although there is no statutory authority for the Commissioners of the Fremantle Harbour Trust to waive or vary the regulation charges, instances have come under the notice of the Auditor General where such charges, mainly storage, have been waived or varied?

2, That the Auditor General has drawn attention to this irregularity in his report on the Public Accounts for the period ended the 30th June, 1944?

3, Will he state (a) What were the instances where the regulation charges have been waived or varied? (b) The names of those in whose favour the charges were waived or varied? and (c) The amounts for which the charges were waived or varied, as reported by the Auditor General?

4, What action has been taken to ensure that the Commissioners do not exceed their authority in future?

The PREMIER replied:—

1, Yes.

2, Yes.

3, (a) There were many, due to the unusual congestion of cargo in the sheds and on the wharves owing to war conditions, and the Trust for various reasons not being in a position to fulfil its obligations of making the goods available to the consignees when applied for. Chief among these reasons were insufficiency of labour, inexperience of much of the labour when available, and the shortage of railway trucks. In the circumstances it was considered that the Trust could not legally or morally impose a penalty which is the storage charge on the consignees as provided by regulation for the non-removal of goods; (b) Importers and shipping agents generally; (c) £942 0s. 4d.

4, The Trust's regulation has been so altered as to enable the necessary elasticity in the application of this penalty rate as will bring similar remissions and reductions within the powers of the Commissioners and thus obviate the necessity of the Auditor General having to refer to such matters as may be legally incorrect but morally justified.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Watts, leave of absence for two weeks granted to Mr. Stubbs, (Wagin) on the ground of ill-health.

BILL—MEDICAL ACT AMENDMENT.

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

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1, Mine Workers' Relief (War Service) Act Amendment.

2, Rights in Water and Irrigation Act Amendment.

Transmitted to the Council.

MOTION—COLLIE COAL.

As to Full Use, Etc., by Government Utilities.

MR. WILSON (Collie) [4.37]: I move—

1, That this House recommends that 100 per cent. of native coal be used on all lines of the railway system, except the Marble Bar-Port Hedland line, and that 100 per cent. of native coal be used in other Government utilities requiring coal in this State.

2, That a board of experts be appointed from all interests identified with the production, sale and use of Collie coal to determine the basic standing and equitable value from every standpoint of the native coal versus the coal imported from Commonwealth States, and that such standard have currency for ten years.

3, That in order to avoid importing coal and to safeguard the Railway Department from under-supplies, roof-covered store dumps for Collie coal be constructed at convenient depots throughout the State, and, also, that the use by the Fox carbonation methods of using Collie coal be proceeded with.

4, That the Railway Department adopt a scheme of mixing hard and soft Collie coal, thus showing a financial improvement on the cost of native coal as at present supplied to that department.

5, That the covering with tarpaulins of wagons of coal at the pit's mouth, and during transit, be initiated.

6, That the cost of the tarpaulins, etc., be paid from royalty on local coal.

I endorse all the good things we have said to one another for the past two months. On the subject of coal, I say that Collie coal is the best that we have. As it is the best and only coal that we have in Western Australia, I think it should receive the support of everyone in this State. For 41 years I have been trying to help, and I do not think I have done with fighting yet. This motion is on all fours with a motion that was before this House in 1933, and is practically of the same wording. That motion was thrown out and we were left as we were before. I will read that motion because I think members can follow this one best by checking what I moved in 1933 against what I am moving today. In 1933 I moved—

That this House recommends that 100 per cent. of native coal be used on all lines of the railway system except the Marble Bar-Hedland line, and that 100 per cent. of native coal be used in other Government utilities requiring coal.

That is identical with No. 1 of my motion today. No. 2 and No. 3 were—

That a board of experts be appointed from all interests identified with the production, selling and using of Collie coal to determine the basic standing and equitable value from every standpoint of the native coal versus the coal imported from Commonwealth States, and that such standard have currency for 10 years.

3. That in order to avoid importing coal and to safeguard the Railway Department from under-supplies, roof-covered store dumps for Collie coal be constructed at convenient depots throughout the State.

For 15 years I have been advocating the provision of store dumps and, had they been installed, the recent stoppage of transport need not have occurred and the people need not have been deprived of current for lighting.

4. That the Railway Department adopt a scheme whereby the mixing of the hard and soft coals shall show a financial improvement on the cost of native coal as at present supplied to the department.

The advisability of mixing the coal was dealt with by a Royal Commission, of which I was a member, in 1916, but no progress has been made, though nearly 30 years have elapsed.

5. That the covering with tarpaulins of wagons of coal at the pit's mouth be initiated.

6. That the cost of the tarpaulins, etc., be refunded from the royalty paid on local coal.

Those points really represent the sum total of the motion I am now moving. When I ask for the appointment of a board of experts, I do not want second-class office boys to be selected. I want men appointed who are associated with the industry and who understand its needs in order that we might obtain useful information and help.

I can prove to the House or to any board that the coalminers in some of the mines in Collie worked fewer than four days per week at a time when the Railway Department was importing foreign coal. I will deal with that point later. I would like to digress a little at this stage to deal with the sins that are charged against the Collie miners. These men dared to take two days holiday granted to them by the Prime Minister of Australia and the Premier of the State—the days set apart for thanksgiving and prayer on the conclusion of hostilities, days which the public used mostly for pleasure. The people of Collie are second to none in their loyalty to the State, and the coal-

miners are as loyal men as can be found anywhere. Some of them have served in various theatres of war, and the general public must realise that the people of Collie could not give their sons for war service and at the same time have them at home winning coal for the State.

I have been asked many times, "What is the matter with the Collie coalminers that they do not supply more coal to the Railway Department?" I answer that there is nothing wrong with the miners, but I propose to tell members what has been done to them. Very little general improvement has been made in workings or development of the mines over the past 20 years. There is a place at Collie where coal could be obtained now, but we cannot get it owing to the lack of manpower. We have applied for men to be made available, and every request of the sort has been turned down.

I intend to prove that Collie has produced more coal for the Railway Department during the war than it produced before the war. I would like members to take particular notice of the fact that at present there are 83 men between the ages of 60 and 70 years working in the Collie mines. They are due to be discharged, but they are continuing to work in order to keep the home fires burning, if I may use that term. Would anybody in this House grudge those men the two holidays granted for the peace celebrations? I do not think so. Surely a man who works in a coalmine and in a virulent and partially-laden stythe atmosphere is entitled to a holiday occasionally. Some time ago, the Minister for Works stated that the miners at Collie had a very good record of coal production during the war, but that it had been spoilt to some extent by the non-production of coal on the two holidays. "In point of merit," he said, "the Collie miners probably not only deserved but also needed the rest more than did any other section of the community." I agree with that statement.

There has been a good deal of talk about the stoppages, and I repeat that no provision has been made by the Railway Department to instal bins for the storing of Collie coal. I have been striving for years to get the department to provide bins. Let me quote the following statement from "The West Australian" relating to the acute coal shortage in South Australia—

Yesterday the railways had only ten days' supply and the Gas Coy. only nine days' supply.

The Government of Western Australia had no supply at all because it had no storage bins. This is a state of affairs that ought to be remedied immediately. I have referred to the fact that old men are still continuing to work in the Collie mines. They could leave the mines tomorrow if they so desired, but if they elected to do so, the available supply of coal would be decreased. These old men promised to work during the war and they have done it. I have a table containing figures of coal production that should interest members. I regret to have to bore members with figures, especially as my speech is often not easily understood—though I make no apology for my mother-tongue—but I think the following table will prove illuminating:—

Collie Mines.		Railway Dept. Used.		Collie Coal for General Public.
Year.	Production.	Collie Coal.	Imported Coal.	
	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.
1935	537,188	201,372	17,974	245,816
1936	565,075	307,702	11,920	257,373
1937	553,509	300,192	18,453	253,317
1938	604,792	315,485	18,792	289,307
1939	557,535	327,957	11,438	229,578
1940	530,420	298,946	11,312	240,480
1941	556,573	302,131	11,620	254,442
1942	581,175	321,749	15,103	250,426
1943	531,546	330,293	17,103	201,293
1944	558,322	308,365	20,832	249,957

For the five years ended 1939, we produced 1,542,708 tons for the Railway Department. During the last five years we have produced 19,000 tons more than before the war. There has been talk about the railways not getting a fair go, but I think they have had a very fair deal. In addition, for the past two years we have given the Midland Railway Company 1,500 tons of coal. They would not take it before.

The Minister for Lands: And they probably will not take it later on.

Mr. WILSON: They will probably do what they did before.

The Minister for Mines: Was the figure 1,500 tons or 15,000 tons?

Mr. WILSON: Here are the figures: In 1943, 50 tons were supplied each month from July to December; in 1944 the company was given one lot of 40 tons, eight lots of 50

tons and three lots of 150, 230, and 100 tons, respectively. All told, 1,500 tons were supplied to the Midland Railway Company. The second paragraph of my motion asks for the appointment of a board of experts to determine the basic standing and equitable value from every standpoint of the native coal versus the coal imported from the other States. That speaks for itself. We want men who know something about coal and who will give us a fair go. Another request is for the construction of bins. What is to prevent this Government or any Government from building storage bins with a capacity of 10,000 tons? There is plenty of land in Collie for the purpose, plenty of piles, timber galore, and water galore, to make this a payable proposition.

Experiments have shown that coal stored loses very little by deterioration. In some cases, storage has resulted in better coal. I happened to be on the engines in the early days when the coal was tested, and good results were obtained. I have here one of the books used in those days. We had the best experts that the railway could give us. There was Mr. Appleby, who was killed in France; and all the drivers were first-class men. I have the figures relating to the experiments, but I will not weary the House with them, because it would do no good. I come now to the question of the mixing of hard and soft Collie coal. Tests were made which showed that such a mixture would give beneficial and economic results. The drivers were pleased to have coal that was mixed, but little has been done for a matter of 15 years.

I see from reports of the Railway Department that it is going into the matter of mixing coal. What I want to say to the department is: "For God's sake get on with the job at once and do not keep us for another 20 years." The coal gives better financial results when it is mixed. I happened to be on the engines in the days when the mixed coal was tried out. Non-mixed coal clinkered very badly, but the mixed Collie coal did not. I would say in passing that there is a place at Collie that could be opened up without any trouble tomorrow and could employ 50 men and could produce 1,600 tons a fortnight. We applied to get men released from the Army for this work, but without result. The position is that the military authorities cannot have our coal-

miner-fighting-men in the war arena and get our coal at the same time. The manpower authorities were applied to, but the proposition was turned down. I have a lot of figures here but I shall not bother to read them, as it would tire me too much.

Mr. SPEAKER: If the hon. member is not feeling well, he may resume his seat.

Mr. WILSON: I can proceed. I would like to refer to the fact that three months ago the present Premier called the men of Collie together to meet representatives of the companies and departmental heads with a view to devising some means of obtaining better results with regard to the output of coal. He did a good job. He brought the parties together and finally persuaded them to agree to try to improve the position. The men went back to work, but subsequently the Premier received a wire saying that they were out again. He was not pleased; neither was I. But what was the reason? The men turned up to work at four o'clock in the afternoon and went down the mine, but by eight o'clock there were no more wagons for them and they had to go back home.

That is the truth of the matter; there were no wagons for them to fill. Then there was the time the lights failed on account of a breakdown of coal-crushing machinery; Collie coal was unjustly blamed for that. The table I have here shows that for the past five years Collie has produced 18,746 more tons for the railways than before the war. For many years, however, the railways used Collie coal, forgetting that the miners were only working 3½ days a week. They did not forget to procure Newcastle coal, but they did forget the position of the Collie miners who were kept out of work by the importation of foreign coal. I thank members for their kindness in listening to me because, when all is said and done, it is a very annoying subject to talk about.

On motion by Mr. Shearn, debate adjourned.

PAPERS—CLAIM BY MRS. J. P. JORGENSEN.

As to Loss of Oats.

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [5.1:] I move—

That there be laid on the Table of the House all papers in the possession of the Police Department regarding the claim by

Mrs. J. P. Jorgensen of Kendenup relative to the loss of 35 (or 37) bags of oats and the inquiries made regarding the same.

I do so because I am of the opinion that it is desirable that there should be offered some explanation to the people concerned as to what resulted from the taking possession, by the police authorities, of a motor vehicle that was involved in an accident at Kendenup on the 13th December, 1944. On that date, one J. P. Jorgensen, a licensed carrier of Kendenup, was, in the course of his business, travelling from Mt. Barker to Kendenup with a load of goods. The load consisted principally of 70 bags of oats although a quantity of timber, a pig and some other sundries were included. When about five miles from Mt. Barker and proceeding along the main Perth-Albany road, the driver of the vehicle, J. P. Jorgensen himself, collapsed at the wheel and was apparently dead before the vehicle struck a tree at the side of the road. That, I understand, was the decision at the subsequent inquiry. A passenger riding on top of the load was thrown off and killed also.

All this took place just before dusk on the evening of the 13th December last. Within a very short time, I am informed, the matter was reported to the Mt. Barker police. The regular officer, who is customarily stationed there, and who is well acquainted with the district and almost everyone in it was away at the time, I understand, on leave. The relieving officer inspected the site of the accident, and, I am informed, stated that the vehicle and its load were to be taken to the police station. I am told that the vehicle, notwithstanding the circumstances, had not overturned and so it was possible to remove it, and so much of the load as was on it at the time, to the police station. Accordingly, on the morning of the next day the truck was removed, together with all the oats except a small quantity which had been spilled and which has been estimated at between eight and ten bags.

When the widow of the deceased had got over the shock attendant on the accident she visited the police station with the idea of recovering the oats because she wished to deliver them to the owner, on whose behalf her husband had been carrying them, and to whom she was responsible. They were, I understand, graded seed oats of an estimated value of approximately 5s. a bushel, and each bag held approximately three

bushels. When she went there the police officer in charge informed her that the vehicle and the attendant goods must be left at the police station until after the inquest. They were, accordingly, left.

On the evening of the day on which the accident took place—I said it was dusk when it happened—the next of kin were not aware of the accident or of the load that was on the truck and were not so aware until some considerable time after the accident took place, and, indeed, did not know anything of the load—they reside at Kendenup and the load had been picked up at Mt. Barker—until the following morning. But I am informed that the widow's father had a discussion with the police officer on the evening of that date. I may say that the widow's father is a well-known man at Kendenup. He is a responsible and public-spirited citizen who is well-known to me. He was told that the police would look after the vehicle and the load until it could be removed the following morning.

After the inquest, when the widow's representative went to take possession of the oats so as to deliver them to the rightful owner, only 25 bags could be discovered and those 25 bags of oats were handed over to the owner who has since claimed on the widow, or the representatives of the deceased for the amount involved in regard to the difference between 25 and 70 bags, which is 45 bags. Because there were eight or ten bags spilled at the side of the road, and which it is known were left there—some of those oats were probably eaten by passing stock—I have deducted eight or ten bags, in addition to the 25 bags, from the 70 and have, therefore, referred in the motion to 35 or 37 bags as being the difference, depending on whether there were eight or ten bags spilled. Subsequent to all this happening the parties concerned, when they found there was apparently no means of discovering what had become of these 35 or 37 bags of oats, discussed the matter with me. Later the widow of the deceased gentleman wrote to me, having in the interim written to the Commissioner of Police and having received no, or not sufficient, reply. On the 1st May, therefore, I addressed this communication to the Acting Commissioner of Police—

Re J. Jorgensen, Kendenup. On April 7 the abovenamed, the widow of the late J. P. Jorgensen, wrote the C.I.B. Inspector relative

to the loss of 35 bags of oats which were missing from approximately 60 bags of oats taken into custody by the Mt. Barker police on December 18th last, consequent upon the wreckage of a motor truck carrying about 70 bags of oats in the accident which caused the death of her husband and another man.

Mrs. Jorgensen advises me she has received no reply. Will you be good enough to advise what action has been taken or is proposed. On the 2nd May I received a reply as follows:—

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 1st inst. relative to loss of 35 bags of oats—property of late Mr. J. Jorgensen which is receiving attention.

On the 5th June—some five weeks later—I wrote to the Commissioner of Police in these terms—

Re J. Jorgensen, Kendenup. On the 2nd May last I received an acknowledgment from you (4589/44) to my letter of the 1st of that month concerning the loss of oats, the property of the abovenamed. I have since heard nothing from you in regard to the matter, and I shall be glad to know what action has been taken.

On the 6th June I received from Mrs. Jorgensen this letter—

I am taking the liberty of intruding on your time and good nature once again re my oats. Mr. Wrigley—

Mr. Wrigley, who is the regular police officer at Mt. Barker, was away, as I said, on leave at the time of the accident, but when he came back he was the person who dealt with the matter, and he is the man who wrote the report, referred to by Mrs. Jorgensen, some six weeks later. Mrs. Jorgensen's communication continues—

Mr. Wrigley made inquiries the first week in May and found sufficient evidence to make the gentleman we suspected admit that he had taken them. I rang Mr. Wrigley and asked him what was happening about it, and he said he had forwarded his report to Perth and that I would hear directly from Perth. As time is slipping by and I have not heard anything I wondered if you could advise me as to whom to approach to have the matter cleared up as I am anxious to have the whole affair settled.

On the 25th July, nearly three months after my first letter to the Commissioner of Police, and nearly two months after my second letter to him, I addressed this communication to the Acting Commissioner—

As it is now over 2½ months since the matter of the loss of 35 bags of oats—the property of the late J. Jorgensen—was referred to your department I should be glad if you could let me have a decision as early as possible.

Under date, the 1st August, I received a reply in these terms—

In reply to your letters of the 1st May, 5th June and 25th July re complaint of Mrs. Jorgensen concerning the loss of 35 bags of oats, I am now in a position to inform you that the inquiries re this matter are complete. Although the Police have not been successful in tracing the total amount of oats alleged to have been lost they have succeeded in getting a certain local resident to admit some responsibility in regard to a certain quantity of it, which was eaten by his stock, and the complainant has now submitted a claim against the Police Department for the recovery of 37 bags of oats. This is how the matter stands at present, but the department does not admit any responsibility. (Sgd.) J. Doyle, Acting Commissioner of Police.

I forwarded that letter to the lady in question. It was regarded, I might say, as a most unsatisfactory answer. Mrs. Jorgensen, in her letter to me, said she understood that Mr. Wrigley had found sufficient evidence to make the gentleman suspected admit that he had taken the oats. The Commissioner of Police makes some observation to the effect that the inquiries were complete and that they succeeded in getting a certain local resident to admit some responsibility, and that that was how the matter stood. And that is just how the matter stands now! It is neither fair nor right for it to stand in that way any longer. However, I then asked a question of the Minister representing the Minister for Police, and was informed that, in view of the possibility of action being taken against the Police Department, the information would not be given to me.

So this woman—this widow of a citizen of Kendenup, who, after his return from war service extending over a period of more than 2½ years was killed in a most unfortunate accident—who is left with the responsibility of looking after a family of young children and meeting her obligations, including that to the person whose oats she was unable to deliver, is, because of the circumstances I have mentioned, now put in the position that she can take no action against anybody because she cannot get the information obtained as the result of the inquiries made by the Police Department, to which I have referred. I am authorised by the parties to this matter to say—because I discussed it with them at Katanning a few days ago—this: They do not propose to take action

against the Police Department, even supposing that that department was responsible. But they do want to know what became of the oats, so that if they fell into the hands of some third party, as appears to be the case from this correspondence, they will be in a position to take action against that third party and to take some steps to free themselves from an obligation imposed upon them through absolutely no fault of their own.

It is because I want to find out who is the person who is mentioned in the two letters I have read, as being reasonably suspected, that I ask this House to order that the papers in this matter be laid on the Table so that I may see what was the result of those inquiries, and inform these people. I think I am justified in asking for that. I believe that members of the House will agree with me that it would be a travesty of justice if this woman were not allowed to find out what happened to the oats that her husband was carting at the time of his death and for which she is now responsible. With the utmost confidence, I move the motion standing in my name.

On motion by the Minister for Lands, debate adjourned.

MOTION—PUBLIC WORKS STANDING COMMITTEE.

As to Legislation for Appointing.

MR. MANN (Beverley) [5.16]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House the Government should introduce legislation for the appointment of a Public Works Standing Committee representative of both Houses of Parliament but on which the number of members of the Legislative Assembly shall be greater than the number of members of the Legislative Council, so that no public work to cost more than £50,000 shall be authorised unless it has first been investigated by such standing committee.

In placing the motion before the House I do so in full confidence that members will accept it. The reason I am prompted to indulge in that confidence is that during Address-in-reply debates over a long period various members have advocated the appointment of such a committee. This system operates in most of the States of Australia and also in the Commonwealth sphere. I feel that if such a committee functions here, much good will result in connection with the expenditure of public

money. Certainly much benefit would have accrued in the past had such investigations been carried out.

Briefly, I am adopting the principles followed in the South Australian legislation. In that State a Public Works Standing Committee has operated since 1927 and has proved very satisfactory indeed. The committee consists of seven persons who are all private members, no Minister of the Crown being allowed to be associated with it. Of those seven members, two are drawn from the Legislative Council and five from the House of Assembly. In that State no Government undertaking, the cost of which is estimated to exceed £50,000, can be approved until the committee has investigated the proposition. Such a system does not take away from the Government's power to control or to legislate. The committee makes investigations purely on the question of suitability and the justification for the expenditure proposed, which leaves the Government still in full control.

Mr. McLarty: If the committee you suggest were appointed, the members would have a full-time job.

Mr. MANN: Yes, particularly if we take into consideration the post-war position. We have lagged behind for many years in various directions, and if we are to advance we must anticipate the putting in hand of major operations, quite apart from undertakings such as the comprehensive water scheme and other projects that have already been mentioned. Under existing circumstances the first intimation members sitting on the Opposition side of the House—possibly it applies also to many who sit on the Government benches—receive about any project is when the Press publishes a statement from one or other of the Ministers concerned to the effect that a certain amount of money is to be spent on some scheme that is outlined. Apart from that we know nothing until the Loan Estimates are presented to us and they are found to include provision for certain expenditure on works that are mentioned. The whole thing is wrong.

For a long time the point has been stressed that Parliament does not control the finances of Western Australia and that that control is in the hands of Cabinet alone. Not even members sitting on the Government side of the House know the

facts. We are drifting very definitely into a system of bureaucratic government by under-secretaries of departments who take charge of operations. That principle is quite wrong. One particular Minister of the Crown has featured the democratic nature of this House and has condemned another place because he does not regard it as being democratic by any means. On the contrary, I suggest to that Minister that the Legislative Assembly is a long way from being a democratic House. If it were such, the Government would from time to time accept a fair percentage of the amendments that Opposition members move, which would thereby make for better and more effective legislation. Yet what do we find? There is solid opposition to any amendments that we move, particularly to financial measures.

The Minister for Justice: That is very nicely put!

Mr. MANN: I thank the Minister for his comment. If the suggestions advanced by the Opposition were accepted more often, it would be a sound policy. Take the position that exists today! What about the undertaking at Wundowie? No-one has the faintest idea! Then there is the decision of the Government to provide a power station at South Fremantle. An officer has gone to England to make the whole of the requisite purchases. He may be a very clever, scientific man in his line.

Mr. Thorn: Or he may not be.

Mr. MANN: Some question as to that officer's ability has been raised by members sitting on the Opposition side of the House, and possibly that is in the mind of some Government members as well. Nevertheless that officer has been given a free hand to go on with the business.

The Minister for Lands: Would you suggest that the committee you propose should be sent to England to have a look?

Mr. MANN: I do not propose to take any notice of the Minister's interjections at this stage. To give another instance, as far as we can understand this State has been committed to the expenditure of £6,500,000 for the construction of a broad gauge railway. I am only going on the Press comments I have read; we know nothing more about it. The Government is always most secretive about any big works proposed to be put in

hand. If the expenditure of £6,500,000 is contemplated, how can we be sure that Sir Harold Clapp is right in his ideas? How do we know whether the work is warranted and whether the route chosen is the best available? The public works committee that I suggest would investigate the proposal. If such a committee can function with success in other States and in Canberra as well, why should it not prove successful in Western Australia? Fifteen years ago, when I had my first experience of sitting behind a Government, it was not a very happy one.

The Premier: Why?

Mr. MANN: I am sorry the Premier was not a member of this House at that time or he would appreciate the difference now.

Mr. Watts: He would know what criticism really was.

The Premier: How do you know? You were not a member then!

Mr. Watts: No, but I can read.

Mr. MANN: In those days members sitting in Opposition were able to advance suggestions regarding various schemes. I have placed the motion before the House as a test of the Government's sincerity on the point of whether the principle involved is right or wrong. I hope the motion will be agreed to and sent to the Legislative Council for its concurrence, because that branch of the Legislature is to be represented on the committee. I anticipate that it will be accepted by the Council.

The Minister for Lands: You bet it will be!

Mr. MANN: No matter what the Minister for Lands may think about it—

The Minister for Lands: We are ruled by the Council quite enough already.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MANN: The Minister should not overlook the fact that this House will have a majority on the committee. The suggestion is that the Legislative Assembly will be represented by four members and the Legislative Council by two. Furthermore, those members will be representative of all political parties, not of one only. If the motion is accepted it will constitute one of the most democratic moves by Parliament for a long time.

Mr. McLarty: Do you propose that the committee will investigate and inspect?

Mr. MANN: Yes, and the members of the committee will be paid for their services; it will not be an honorary committee. The idea seems to have gained currency that a Select Committee, if converted into a Royal Commission, must, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, be an honorary body. Under present-day conditions we may travel throughout the State if attached to a Select Committee and, beyond the cost of our meals and our beds, we have to pay all our expenses. The Government defrays the charges for board and lodging. That system is definitely wrong.

Mr. Thorn: Only Ministers are worthy of payment!

Mr. MANN: Apparently that is so.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Those committeemen would be accepting an office of profit under the Crown.

Mr. MANN: We can amend the Constitution in that respect—

The Minister for Works: Whenever we like.

The Minister for Lands: Whenever the Legislative Council likes.

Mr. MANN: Whenever occasion justifies the course, we can amend it. There are several directions in which the Constitution could be amended. We should not have to stick to the hard and fast rules that have obtained ever since responsible Government was granted to the State. The public works committee I suggest would not concern itself with small matters but only with major projects involving the expenditure of over £50,000. It will not be interested in repairs but in construction. Let members consider the position regarding the Perth Hospital! When the erection of the new building was decided upon, if the committee I suggest had been functioning it would have investigated the question of the site, and I am sure a much better one would have been chosen. Here we have what is probably the most modern hospital building in the Southern Hemisphere in an environment that is most unsuitable. The Under Secretary for Health may have had a vision about it—

The Minister for Lands: He had nothing to do with it.

Mr. MANN: Was it a matter that Cabinet decided?

The Minister for Lands: You give notice of that question!

Mr. MANN: Then take the new gaol site! The Government decided where it should be, and there arose considerable public agitation. Deputations were taken to the member for Geraldton when he was Premier.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: That is not so.

Mr. MANN: Then they were taken to the Minister for Police. The knowledge I have of the subject was gleaned from the Press, which has been a marvellous help to Opposition members in giving us information about this and many other matters of which we would otherwise be unaware. Had a public works committee been in existence here, it would have given consideration to the site for the building and advised the Government accordingly. The responsibility would, in those circumstances, be accepted by Parliament through the public works committee and not by the Government alone. It should be remembered that the gaol will remain on the site selected for 100 years or more, and because of that the matter should be thoroughly inquired into before anything definite is done. The proposed committee will be non-party, representative of both Houses and therefore truly democratic.

Mr. Watts: And has the Public Works Committee proved successful in South Australia?

Mr. MANN: Yes. I shall not quote from the speech of the Minister who introduced the Bill in the House of Assembly there, but I shall read an extract from the speech delivered by Sir Henry Parkes when he moved many years ago for the establishment of the Public Works Committee in New South Wales. It is as follows:—

It would be an evil day for this country if the time should ever come when any act of men would relegate to a non-political, irresponsible board the power of saying where our railways are to go. . . . Having collected this information in this most solemn and most perfect manner possible, they report to the House, and then the House returns to the point where its action was broken off, and instead of being asked to work blindfold it votes upon this information obtained in this patient and authorised manner; it votes with its eyes open to the real issues of the case.

Mr. Watts: That is the point, not blindfold!

Mr. MANN: Yes. I venture to say that if we had made a thorough investigation into many of our works we would have

avoided in many ways a deplorable mess. I have brought forward this motion with the conviction that it will, if passed, prove to be of great help to the Government. I mentioned some time ago that I considered there was not a sufficient number of Ministers of the Crown to enable the Government to function, as a Government, in the way in which it should. If the motion is passed, the Minister for Works will undoubtedly be relieved of portion of his arduous duties. He is overworked at present. Further, private members would have an opportunity, indeed a right, to say how public moneys should be spent. In turn, the public would have more confidence in Parliament.

The day is fast approaching in Australia, and particularly in Western Australia, when we should put an end to a decided slur on the political life of Australia. If we can improve our Parliamentary system—and this is one way in which we can improve it—the public will have greater confidence in us and in our legislation. This is a matter in which the State, not the Commonwealth, will function; and if the Commonwealth Government should decide to try to bludgeon the State into accepting some scheme of its own, it would be the function of this proposed committee to investigate the scheme and report to the House. The personnel of the committee would be non-party. I do not think the time will ever come when we shall get away from party politics in Australia; but this motion, if carried, will give the State a chance to effect improvement in our public works generally, not that I am raising any question of dishonesty in the method in which the money is spent; but the deliberations of the committee will be free from the taint of party politics.

On motion by the Minister for Works, debate adjourned.

BILL—BUILDERS' REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [5.33] in moving the second reading said: I remember hearing someone say in this House once, "This little Bill is a very little Bill." I have another like it this afternoon; it is the Bill which I am about to move shall be read a second time. It seeks to amend Sec-

tion 10 of the Builders' Registration Act, which was assented to on the 16th December, 1939, and came into operation in the middle of the following year, namely, on the 1st May, 1940. At that time the war now about to conclude had been in progress for some nine months. On the 9th April, 1940, Norway was invaded by the Germans and strenuous efforts were being made by both Commonwealth and State authorities—vigorously responded to by citizens—to enlist members of the various Forces of the Crown. Many did enlist, and so concerned were they to take their part that they paid little attention to their private business.

This state of affairs was accentuated in May, 1940, by the collapse of resistance in Belgium and Holland, and subsequently—a few weeks later—by the surrender of the French Republic. From the point of view of the men who had engaged in the building trade and had either enlisted before the coming into operation of the Act or at or about the time to which I have referred, the passage of the measure at that time, in view of the way in which it has been since amended, was rather unfortunate. As originally passed, Section 10 of the Act provided no limitation to the time within which a person, who had been engaged as a builder or supervisor of building for not less than two years, could make application for registration. Under the parent Act, as passed, anyone at any time who could prove that he had had two years' experience as a master builder or supervisor of building could apply for registration without the necessity for taking the examinations since prescribed. In consequence, even if the people whom I have mentioned were away at the war, there was no need for them greatly to concern themselves as to their ability to obtain registration, because provided they could prove, on the conclusion of what service they gave, that they had been engaged for two years in the industry as builders or supervisors of buildings they could ask at any time for registration.

I regret that I must admit having contributed to that misfortune by raising no protest at the time, because it certainly escaped my notice, as I believe it must have escaped the notice of many other members of the House. By an amendment passed in 1940 and assented to on the 30th December, 1940, it was provided that the right of the

person who had been carrying on for two years prior to the passing of the parent Act to obtain registration, was limited to a period of six months after the amendment, so that prevented applications except by way of examination after the 30th June, 1941, and altered—as will be seen—the whole position which existed under the parent Act. In consequence, some persons, members of the Forces since the beginning of the war or for some less period, have suffered injustice, in my opinion, because of the fact that they were engaged on war service, and they have had the difficulty put in their way of having to pass an examination in order that they might, on their return, carry on the occupation in which they were engaged for the first prescribed period before they undertook war service.

As I say, I frankly admit that I lost sight of this possibility while the amending Bill was being discussed by the House in 1940. I do not suggest in any way that the sponsors of the measure at that time were in any other state than mine; that is to say, the position had not been brought to their notice by any other member and it is quite possible—indeed, quite likely—that they were overlooking it, as I did. I only ask that the position should be rectified by the passage of the measure which I now bring before the House. I am not seeking to throw the gate wide open to all sorts and conditions of people to be registered as builders. I only seek to place those persons who have been prevented from complying with the amending law, or at least have had it made difficult for them to do so because of their war service, back in the position they were in under the original Act, so that they must prove—as they would have had to prove under the parent Act—that they had carried on as a builder or a supervisor for not less than two years, before they could claim registration.

I am simply seeking to remove, as we have done in some other measures before the House, the difficulties arising because of the hiatus in life which must occur while these people are on active service and very often out of the State or out of the Commonwealth. The Bill provides that, in order to attain the end I have in view, anyone who has been a member of the Defence Forces of the Commonwealth during the war shall be able to apply for and receive registration, provided he otherwise complies with paragraph (b) of Subsection

(1) of Section 10, and makes that application within nine months of the end of the war, or of the date of his discharge. I would have been satisfied in the ordinary way to say "within nine months of the end of the war," but we are aware that certain members of the Forces will be retained as occupational troops; we do not know for how long, and the date of their discharge will necessarily have to be postponed. Therefore, as soon as the man is discharged from the Forces, within nine months of that date, if this Bill becomes an Act, after he has satisfied the Builders' Registration Board that he was engaged as a builder or supervisor of building for two years before the passing of the parent Act, he will be entitled, as he would have been if the parent Act had never been amended, to ask for registration as a builder. I wish to make that perfectly clear.

No person can obtain registration under this Bill, if it becomes an Act, unless he can establish that period of two years' service as a builder or supervisor of building. The measure merely seeks, then, to place members of the Forces who, through no fault of their own, and, indeed, because of their service to the community—which we at all times have praised and glorified so highly—may have been prevented from accepting the benefits of the parent Act by being deprived of their opportunity, in the position they would have been under the parent Act. I would say in conclusion that I am aware of two instances where the circumstances are exactly as I have stated. These men are both now approximately 40 years of age, but they have had many years of experience in the building trade, having been in charge of building work, and they will be prevented from obtaining registration without passing an examination at that age unless this Bill is passed.

I have no doubt that there are many others in a similar position. It is hardly to be expected, in view of the vast number who have been called into the Forces for service of one kind or another, that that state of affairs will not exist. I therefore submit the measure to the House. It is by no means controversial in character; and, as I have said, I have no desire—in fact, quite the contrary—to criticise the sponsors of the Act or of the original amendment of the Act. It would ill become me to do so, be-

cause I agreed with the first and made no objection to the second. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Minister for Works, debate adjourned.

MOTION—SOLDIER SETTLEMENT.

As to Proposed Legislation.

Debate resumed from the 5th September on the following motion by Mr. Thorn:—

That in view of the facts—

- (a) That a large number of members of the Forces have been discharged and are continually making enquiries as to land settlement conditions;
- (b) That particulars of such conditions cannot yet be given to them notwithstanding that some of the enquirers have been discharged for nearly three years—

this House views with alarm the failure of the responsible authorities to put into effect schemes applicable to such settlement, and calls for an immediate announcement that necessary legislation will be placed before the House this session so that there will be no prospect of such delay and risk of failure as will be likely if the announcement is deferred until the approach of the time when the bulk of the members of the Fighting Forces will be seeking repatriation.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. A. H. Panton—Leederville) [5.45]: If members will read the motion carefully I think they will find that the crux of it lies in these words—

This House views with alarm the failure of the responsible authorities to put into effect schemes applicable to such settlement and.

I trust that by the time I have finished my remarks the mover of the motion will see good reason for striking out those words. Before proceeding I should like to thank the hon. member for the very kind way in which he referred to my colleague, the Premier, when in his capacity of Minister for Lands, and to his departmental heads. He paid a warm and well-deserved tribute to them. There is no doubt that both the Premier and Mr. Fyfe, and those associated with them, have gone a long way towards preparing for soldier settlement irrespective of whether there was legislation available at the moment. I interjected when the hon. member was speaking that I had been set a very high standard to follow, and I am finding that out more and more every day. I also agree that the hon. member may have

doubted and been somewhat worried concerning the want of action on the part of the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. Thorn: That is what I was referring to.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am not called upon to make any apology for the Commonwealth Government. My experience of it is that it is well able to handle these things for itself.

Mr. Watts: Then why does it not handle them?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am not here to answer that question. I would say in justice to the Commonwealth Government that we have to admit there has been a war. Up till quite recently that Government concentrated on winning the war, and practically everything has been subordinated to that objective. I cannot be expected to have to apologise for the Commonwealth Government. The member for Toodyay may have been worried as to whether the Commonwealth Government was moving in this particular matter or not, and he may have been somewhat disheartened by the results. I point out, however, that the department headed by the Premier at that time did not even wait for the Commonwealth Government to move. It was obvious that both the Commonwealth Government and the State Government were prepared only to move slowly in view of the disastrous effect of two of our land settlement schemes in the past. We cannot blame them too much for that.

The State Government, through the appropriate Minister and his officers did, however, take the initiative without waiting for the Commonwealth Government. They anticipated what they believed would be the final decision of that Government. I venture to say that had they not done this the member for Toodyay would have had more reason for complaint than he has had up to date. I have no intention of going into the details of all that has been done. That would take a long time to do and is not necessary at this juncture. It may interest members to know that classifications and other data are being obtained in the case of 1,200 private rural holdings comprising an area of nearly 3,000,000 acres. That is a fair amount of holding to get busy on for a start. It is the first and most important step towards

the re-purchase or resumption of areas for soldier settlement. Steady progress is being made in the reconditioning of 600 reverted Rural Bank holdings.

It is very difficult to obtain manpower and machinery, even now, and was particularly difficult during the war. Nevertheless, steady progress has been made in the reconditioning of those bank holdings. In addition, the State Government, without waiting for any finalisation of the Federal scheme, approved of the spending of £100,000 for the purchase of land and another £20,000 for reconditioning purposes. Admittedly the work has been slow owing to the lack of manpower and machinery.

Mr. Doney: Are any of those reconditioned farms so far ahead that they could be entered upon now?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I will come to that in a moment. The hon. member should not try to anticipate things. It should be admitted by all, especially by members opposite, because they have had long experience of land settlement generally, that the old method of pulling down trees or chopping them down, dragging them together and burning them is out-of-date.

Mr. Thorn: It is a bit behind the times.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is a long way behind the times. If it becomes necessary to clear land or re-clear it because it is overgrown, we must do that with up-to-date machinery, with tractors, bull-dozers and the like if they are available. All the machinery required has, unfortunately, not been available because it has been used elsewhere in the construction of aerodromes, air strips, and other undertakings engaged in by the Allied Works Council or the Commonwealth Civil Construction Corps during the war period. Such machinery is now being made available slowly.

After many months of effort through the appropriate Commonwealth and State authorities, by means of advertisements in the Press and every other means available to the State Government and the department concerned, we now have three tractors on the spot. They have been obtained on hire, and parties are now at work reconditioning farming areas. Hardly a day or a week goes by but we are in communication with someone somewhere with the object of securing the requisite machinery to accelerate the job. We have even sent a man to

Darwin to find out what he could there with regard to bull-dozers. We know that it is sometimes possible to find a bull-dozer laid up somewhere that no one seems to know anything about and is not being put to any use.

Mr. Owen: What about Alice Springs?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have not heard of any bull-dozers being lost there. As I have stated, the Government sent a man to Darwin to comb the district and ascertain what machinery was available there. The Land Purchase Board is actively engaged on the investigations and recommendations for the purchase of private properties for ex-servicemen. I point out that professional men and expert officers are very difficult to obtain, almost as difficult to obtain as axe-men. Under arrangements made, pending the appointment of a staff of valuers, a staff has to be got out of the Army. It is really wonderful to find the various types of men who have got into the Army. Meanwhile officers of the Rural Bank, the Valuation Branch of the Taxation Department, and the Inspection Branch of the Department of Lands and Surveys, are carrying out instructions for the inspection and valuation of a wide range of properties. Classifications have been made for practically all Crown land in areas considered suitable for farming.

We do not want to make the same mistakes that were made on two other occasions so far as land settlement is concerned. We have 500 farming units already defined on plans. We are now making every effort to obtain the release of experts who are required for the work of the department of Lands and Surveys in connection with the settlement of ex-servicemen on the land. In this Chamber the member for Pingelly gave us some examples of the difficulty he experienced in getting men out of the Army. Just as individuals have found that difficult so have Governments. We are doing all we can to get these men released. Meanwhile it is interesting to note that the Wyndham Meat Works staff has moved from the building that was occupied by that department, so that it will be available to provide the additional floor space that will be needed for the increased staff of the Lands Department. We are now cleaning out and getting ready that suite of offices in order to start off with the staff that will be required to deal with Mr. Fyfe's work.

Mr. Thorn: That is a good move.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Public Works Department is pushing on with the work so that it may be completed as quickly as possible.

Mr. Thorn: You will have all the officers together then.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Mr. Fyfe told me this morning that as soon as the men and machinery were available he anticipates utilising at least 1,000 men on the work of getting these farms ready. Some evidence of the action that has been taken by the State without waiting for the Commonwealth Government is found in the fact that printed questionnaires have been obtained from 600 members of the Forces and ex-servicemen. Mr. Fyfe sent out a large number of questionnaires. The member for Toodyay questioned between 1,500 and 2,000 as representing the number of applicants.

Mr. Thorn: That included inquiries at the R.S.L. office.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is not much use for men to make inquiries unless they go to the right place. One can understand men inquiring at the R.S.L. office or even at the Lands Department and walking away without doing anything. We have had altogether 842 inquiries from members of the Forces and ex-servicemen. Questionnaires were sent out to the men to fill in ready for examination. Members will admit that those who are chosen for the work must be suitable and must know what they are going into. These questionnaires are being returned and classified. Already we have had 600 of them back. It is interesting to note what different classifications these replies fall into. The following table will give the full particulars:—

Types of Farming Desired.

	No. of Applications.
Sheep and wheat	252
Dairying	100
Poultry	22
Fruit growing { Temperate	12
{ Tropical	5
Tobacco growing	1
Market gardening	8
Piggeries	3
Pastoral { Cattle	6
{ Sheep	10
Other types of farming (including "mixed" 149)	188

The table I have just quoted shows the diversity of land settlement that the men

who are coming back are anxious to engage in. Those 600 applications are now being classified. The board has been appointed and is simply waiting for the O.K. from the Public Service Commissioner. It will then immediately be calling these men up and will interview them and interrogate them to find out whether or not they are suitable.

I have vivid recollections of vocational training after the last war. In 1919 motor-cars were not as common as they are now and, for some unknown reason, nearly all the soldiers going in for vocational training wanted to become motor mechanics. Finally a vocational training committee was set up and Mr. Kenneally, the present Chairman of the Lotteries Commission, was detailed to find out what work the men were suitable for. It did not take Mr. Kenneally very long to prove to them that they were better fitted to become bricklayers, plasterers, stonemasons and so on than to become motor mechanics. With regard to the 600 from whom we have received back the questionnaires, no doubt many will have high opinions of themselves.

The Premier: Do you know the actual number already discharged?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, but out of that 600, no doubt a lot will be found to be unsuitable, either physically or mentally—

Mr. Seward: Is it just one authority that will examine them all, or are there to be local committees?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: These are the applications which have come in to the central office—

Mr. Thorn: When the board is set up I take it it will move from town to town to examine the men?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is so. When the member for Toodyay quoted 1,500 or 2,000 he rather startled me, because I have been in continual consultation with Mr. Fyfe on this question, and I am pleased to say there are only 842. These men will be started off on this board and the question of suitability will be dealt with.

Mr. Abbott: Is it the intention that the board shall deal with men from other States?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I think we will deal with our own first. If there are 842 men who want to go on the land, let

them get settled first, and when there are no Western Australians wanting to go on the land we can deal with others. I am being bombarded at the present time with inquiries from Imperial soldiers. I do not think anybody would want us to overlook Western Australians and deal with men from outside the State. My colleague has used every effort—by whipping up and cajoling—to get some movement from the Commonwealth Government, but, as I have already said, there is probably a logical argument why the Commonwealth authorities have not moved faster than they have. They have moved now, and we will have the legislation before us this session.

I will deal next with the question raised by the hon. member regarding freehold versus leasehold. In the case of those who have the money, £500, £750 or £1,000, and who want a freehold block, under the repatriation and rehabilitation scheme there is nothing to prevent those men, in their own districts or whatever district they desire, being backed by the Commonwealth Government to the extent of £1,000. The other scheme is certainly leasehold, for the moment.

Mr. McLarty: A block could not be bought for £1,000.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No-one said that it could, but the hon. member suggested that men with £500, £750 or £1,000 might want to get blocks in their own districts, and he seemed to imply that this scheme would prevent them from doing so. Under the rehabilitation and repatriation scheme they can do that.

The Premier: If they want to select the farm for themselves they cannot do it within the scheme. They are financed under the Repatriation and Rehabilitation Act.

Mr. Thorn: It would give the Rural Bank an opportunity to come in behind them.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is so. Considerable debate could take place regarding leasehold and freehold. I remember when the Scaddan Government introduced its leasehold scheme in 1911, and the scheme for workers' homes. I thought that everybody would like a block of his own. I took up a leasehold block because I did not have sufficient money to buy a block of land, and in the area where I reside there were 42 houses built on leasehold blocks.

The Premier: They are still leasehold.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, I paid for mine because, when I accepted an office of profit under the Crown, I had to buy the house. The other 41 are still leasehold.

Mr. Thorn: I bet you are glad that you own your home.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have lived in it for many years now, and I hope to die in it. I do not wish to enter into a discussion on leasehold versus freehold, but there is a lot to be said in favour of perpetual leasehold.

Mr. Doney: And plenty to be said against it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is so, but, as I have said, it is open to debate. If a large number of our people who have gone on the land in the last few years had perpetual leases, there would not have been half as much trouble as there has been by reason of their getting into debt.

Mr. Doney: I believe you are right.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is not the argument at the moment. Those people who have the money and who desire to pay for a block can do so and can get up to £1,000 from the Commonwealth Government, and, as the hon. member said, they will no doubt be assisted later by the Rural Bank, if necessary. The scheme under the Commonwealth Government at the moment is for perpetual leases. If a man is going on the land to make a home for himself it does not matter whether the land is freehold or leasehold. That question only comes into it when he wishes to speculate.

Mr. Thorn: Are the values of the properties to be re-appraised?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No. We can discuss that when legislation comes down. I think the member for Nedlands moved an amendment to make conversion to freehold possible.

Mr. Seward: If ill-health overtakes a farmer and he wants to realise, it is a different matter then whether it is leasehold or freehold.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: He can realise on what he owns on the farm. That question can be dealt with at another time. I do not think this scheme will stop one soldier who wants to do so from going on

the land. It will give returned soldiers, who have not £750 or £1,000, an opportunity to go on the land, just as we, who had not £150 to buy a block of land, got workers' homes for £1 deposit. There were hundreds of men who would never have had homes, except under the workers' homes scheme, because they had not the money to buy a block of land and then pay a deposit of from 10 per cent. to 25 per cent. to have a home built. This will give men under the perpetual lease scheme the opportunity to get farms. They will not all have the money—

Mr. Perkins: How much unimproved value—

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member is trying to get me on to the single tax argument.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minister must address the Chair.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The inquiry put by the hon. member was very mild, and I have already thanked him for the tribute he has paid, but I again suggest that if the words "This House views with alarm the failure of the responsible authorities to put into effect schemes applicable to such settlement and" were deleted, there is nothing wrong with the motion. Otherwise I think that, with those words there, it suggests that there is no scheme put up. Though we have possibly not gone as far as we could, we will go further as soon as we have the men and the material to do the job. As soon as the legislation is ready—it will be in this session—the scheme will be implemented, and in the meantime the men are not being kept back, because they have yet to return and to be selected. I am not optimistic that the 600 who have already received the questionnaire will all be suitable, and those who are still to come back must be given the opportunity to come under this scheme, so I suggest that if the hon. member deletes those words, or if, after the debate is ended, he withdraws the motion—

Mr. SPEAKER: Is the Minister moving for the deletion of the words?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, but I think before the debate is finished the hon. member himself will either withdraw the motion, having had the debate, or having found out what has been done delete those words.

MR. LESLIE (Mt. Marshall) [6.13]: I cannot agree with the Minister about withdrawing the words that he suggests be withdrawn: "This House views with alarm the failure of the responsible authorities to put into effect schemes applicable to such settlement and." I think the words are clear and mean exactly what they say. The mover of the motion paid tribute, in his remarks, to the State Government, for the action it had taken in endeavouring to implement or put into operation the first part of the machinery that will be necessary for soldier settlement. As one who has had rather close contact with the officers concerned in this connection, I endorse what was said. I think those remarks—at least from that aspect—exonerate the State Government and the officers who have been appointed to get a scheme going. There are other aspects of course, in which the State Government may be culpable and responsible for some delay, or for the delay that occurred in bringing into effect a substantial agreement which would enable a scheme to be implemented—

The Premier: We are certainly not blameworthy for that.

MR. LESLIE: I think the Premier and his colleagues have been endeavouring to safeguard the State, to the best of their ability, and, because of that, delay may have arisen in reaching agreement.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

MR. LESLIE: I was saying that if a charge of culpability could lie against the State Government, it is on account of the delay in reaching an agreement with the Commonwealth Government for a soldier settlement scheme. There might be a reasonable excuse for that, and I believe that the Premier, who at the time was Minister for Lands, was concerned to safeguard the interests of the State as well as the interests of the soldiers. It has been offered as an excuse that such a big scheme could not be hurried, and that it would be unfair to allow men already discharged from the Services to benefit from the implementation of a scheme of which men returning later could not take immediate advantage owing to their absence. That excuse was put forward by two Commonwealth officers who, I believe, are making the preparations for the soldier settlement scheme. While there might be merit in the excuse, there is no justification

for its being advanced as a reason for not reaching finality and not informing the soldiers what it is proposed the scheme shall include.

I commend the Government for having appointed Mr. Fyfe as Director of Land Settlement. Incidentally, I note that he is Director of Land Settlement and not merely of soldier land settlement. As a result of conferences held with him, I have found that Mr. Fyfe, on being appointed, lost no time in preparing to shape the machinery that he believed would be necessary for any scheme that might be brought into operation, and I know that he has been literally champing on the bit to get started, but unfortunately his endeavours have been largely circumscribed by the lack of definite information on which to work. The Minister for Lands, in addressing himself to the motion, referred to the number of applications received by Mr. Fyfe from ex-servicemen. The number is large, but I do not think it truly reflects the full number of those interested in the scheme.

The Premier: That figure was not of ex-servicemen but of servicemen.

MR. LESLIE: That would include ex-servicemen.

The Premier: There is quite a big difference.

MR. LESLIE: Yes, but I am putting the two together because presently they will be all ex-servicemen.

The Premier: A majority of them are in the Forces.

MR. LESLIE: Then I am afraid that the Premier's remark rather confirms what I am about to say. We at Anzac House have not been able to get a record of the number of inquiries received from men who have already been discharged, but the number is enormous. Many of those men made inquiries and then did nothing more about it. Quite a lot of them must have been sincerely interested and, in my opinion, they lost interest because, when they made inquiries, we were not in a position to give them any information whatsoever. I am now referring to the time previous to the recent Premiers' Conference. We had nothing whatsoever to go on; we had not the slightest idea what any soldier settlement scheme would include. I believe that a lot of potential settlers have been lost to us simply because the desired information was not available. When Mr. Fyfe was ap-

pointed, we were able to refer quite a number of men to him, but when we informed them that he could tell them no more than we could, and that all they could do would be to fill in a form and have their applications recorded, they lost heart. The Premier, since his return from the Eastern States, has made a statement through the Press about the proposed scheme, but that statement, I point out, is general. It is merely an outline of a scheme and is not specific. Where specific points have been indicated, some of them have given cause for considerable concern and dissatisfaction and even some discouragement.

I wish to deal with a comment I have heard made, and somehow I feel that the Premier is inclined to the opinion incorporated in that comment. The comment was that there is a limitation to the settlement and development of land. While I admit that the Premier, by virtue of the position he held in the Lands Office and his relationship with the Commonwealth Department concerned, might have a wider knowledge of international ramifications than I have, I think he must agree with me that we do not produce and never have produced sufficient food in the world to feed the people of the world. I have said this before, and I will keep on saying it until we are able to educate more of the people of the world to the truth of that statement. We in Western Australia have had people unable to buy a loaf of bread and even starving at a time when the bins were full of wheat.

Mr. Watts: And all the pigs in Australia would be sufficient to feed the people of Britain for only three days.

Mr. LESLIE: Exactly. There has been no over-production of food. There is nothing wrong with the production side. Really, we have not produced enough. While people here and in other countries were starving, we had sufficient foodstuffs to provide for them, but because Governments could not agree amongst themselves that state of affairs was allowed to continue. It is the system of distribution of foodstuffs that is wrong. Australia in the past has faced a difficulty in obtaining markets for its products and this for one reason only; we have not been able to guarantee the maintenance of a supply of our products on the markets. That has been the weakness, not over-production. It has been under-production. Nobody will commit himself to pur-

chasing our goods unless we can guarantee that a full supply will be forthcoming as required. I hope there will be no limitation of land settlement as a result of the erroneous idea that there is a limitation in the absorptive capacity for foodstuffs of the people of the world.

As early as 1941, when the urgency of the land settlement question was realised by members of the R.S.L. Land Committee and executive, they set about bringing pressure to bear on the Governments and authorities concerned to make known their intentions regarding land settlement for ex-servicemen in the post-war period. In 1942 the members of the Western Australian Land Committee of the State Executive prepared the outline of a soldier land settlement scheme which was submitted to the Federal Executive and Federal Congress of the R.S.L. and adopted by them as the basis of the scheme. It was accepted as being ideal. The scheme was submitted to the Rural Reconstruction Commission and, if I read that Commission's report correctly, very largely endorsed by it. Certainly, the scheme was criticised but more because of what it omitted than for what it contained. As early as that, efforts were made by the R.S.L. not only in Western Australia but throughout the Commonwealth to induce the Governments of the various States to do something definite with regard to soldier land settlement. The Minister for Lands, during his remarks on this motion, said that the Commonwealth Government was busy concentrating upon winning the war.

The New Zealand Government has also been busy concentrating upon winning the war, but that did not stop that Government from bringing down legislation and putting into effect a soldier land settlement scheme; and, notwithstanding that the Act was only passed in 1943, up till June, 1944, 955 ex-servicemen had been placed on farms of their own, with rehabilitation finance to the extent of £3,195,847. That effort was made by New Zealand while it also was concentrating upon winning the war. I do not think we can say that New Zealand is any less patriotic than we are because of the fact that it put into effect a soldier land settlement scheme during that time. Up to the same date, namely, the 30th June, 1944, 3,418 servicemen had been graded with a view to settlement. Up to the same date,

133,089 acres had been acquired by the Crown under the Small Farms Act, 1932, for the future settlement of ex-servicemen. In addition, and also up to the same date, 124 properties had been acquired by the Crown under the Service Men's Settlement and Land Sales Act, 1943, these properties being capable of subdivision into 179 units of settlement.

That is an effort of which the New Zealand Government may justly be proud. It is a definite achievement. Not only has the New Zealand Government done something, but it has done it along good sound lines. The New Zealand scheme contains most of the provisions which we consider should be included in a soldier land settlement scheme for Western Australia. In a communication which I have—it is from the New Zealand Returned Services Association—it is stated that, in its approach to the task of settling the servicemen on the land, the Rehabilitation Board had the benefit of the experience gained from the operations of the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Act, 1915; and in framing its policy it has endeavoured, as far as possible, to avoid the pitfalls of the past. The report states—

With a return to peace conditions, it seems reasonable to assume that New Zealand will have to face keen competition in the world's primary produce markets and that, in time, prices will recede to lower levels.

No mention is made in New Zealand of restricting its production; rather is New Zealand endeavouring to base its production on a system which will enable it to compete in the world's markets.

Mr. Seward: There is a dissimilarity between New Zealand's scheme and ours.

Mr. LESLIE: Yes, and there is no reason why the general principles of the scheme should not be applied here in Australia. The report continues—

The board has, in consequence of the above observations, decided that the qualifications of every applicant should be subjected to the closest scrutiny, and that applicants should be classified according to their ability. They provide for four grades:—

Grade A.—Fully experienced.

Grade B.—Partially experienced.

Grade C.—Totally inexperienced.

Grade D.—Unsuitable.

The grading of applicants is the responsibility of special committees, 55 of which are now operating through New Zealand and each of which comprises three members, a private farmer as chairman (wherever possible a re-

turned serviceman of this or the last war) together with representatives of the Lands and Survey Department and the State Advances Corporation.

I ask members to note that 55 of these committees are already in operation, or were so at the date of this report, 1944. They were grading and classifying the men. We have a classification committee in Western Australia which is anxious to function; they have the men to work on, but unfortunately have nothing to guide them. The report continues—

In Australia, after the last war, an attempt was made to ensure that each returned man applying for land was a fully qualified farmer, and to that end qualification committees were set up to decide the merits of each individual for farm ownership. However, the general pressure exercised by public opinion and organisations for rapid settlement of the men was such that those attempts were largely invalidated. The committees, faced with thousands of applications which were backed by popular opinion that there was no reason for keeping men off the land and that farming was an occupation requiring little training and only a modicum of intelligence, were forced to accept the poorest of documentary evidence of qualifications. The above observations are not made lightly, but are the conclusions reached by the Australian Rural Reconstruction Committee in its report dated 18th January, 1944.

Members will note that while our neighbour New Zealand has profited—and profited immediately—from the very valuable report, which was prepared after taking exhaustive evidence, of the Rural Reconstruction Commission in Australia, we in Australia are still waiting for some of the provisions of that report to be put into effect. The New Zealand communication goes on to deal with what is being done in the matter of training ex-servicemen, the rates of wages to be paid to servicemen while they are undergoing training—something that we know nothing of yet in Australia—and the encouragement which is offered to farmers to employ ex-servicemen as trainees, in order to fit them to become qualified farmers—still another phase of soldier land settlement that we know nothing of in Australia. It also goes on to discuss the method by which land settlement is effected. I propose to make some remarks on some of the provisions that have been broadly outlined and that might be included in a scheme or agreement which the Premier has stated has been reached between the Commonwealth and the States.

I feel the House will be interested in these items and I quote them from this report. What I am about to discuss concerns the provision of finance to purchase a single unit farm. I am particularly interested in the single unit farms because unfortunately we already face tragedy in connection with men who, impatient at the delay, have already undertaken, in the purchase of farms, commitments which are going to end in nothing less than tragedy. I know of men who have already assumed farms in the belief that they would become assisted soldier settlers; but according to the information now available to us as a result of the Premier's statement, it would appear that they are to be excluded from the soldiers' settlement scheme. Certainly a measure of financial assistance would be available to them, as mentioned by the Minister for Lands, under the Rehabilitation and Re-establishment Act, but a measure of finance so utterly inadequate as to be almost an insult to offer. This is what is reported with regard to the single unit farm in New Zealand:—

For the purpose of the rehabilitation land settlement scheme a single unit farm has been defined as any farm which when fully developed will not be capable of further subdivision into economic units. Single unit farms in private ownership are being offered for sale from time to time and the holder of an "A" grade certificate may obtain an option over any one of these and apply to the Rehabilitation Loans Committee (through the branch manager of the State Advances Corporation) for finance to purchase the land and to stock and equip it. The general farm loan limit is £5,000, including stock and chattels, but in the case of an economic sheep farm this is increased to £6,250; also inclusive of stock and chattels. If the applicant has private finance and is a grade "A" sheep farmer, the board will find 50 per cent. of any finance required for establishment in excess of £6,250 but the concession rates of interest referred to later do not apply to any advances in excess of the normal limit.

So, whereas New Zealand has seen fit to provide £6,250 for a sheep farm, and to go beyond that where the soldier has some private finance, similar conditions are not available in any shape or form to an intending settler under similar circumstances in Western Australia. The only assistance he can get is a loan of £1,000 under the Rehabilitation and Re-establishment Act. When the Commonwealth officers were here a little while ago, we had a discussion with them and I found that while the Rehabilitation and Re-establishment Act had been proclaimed,

the section applying to loans of £1,000 to farmers was not in operation. I do not know whether it is in operation now; but very definitely it was picked out of the Act and its operation was delayed for some reason or other. Here is some further information about the position in New Zealand, under the heading of "Establishment on single unit properties acquired under Section 51 of the Servicemen's Settlement and Land Sales Act, 1943"—

The main purpose of the Servicemen's Settlement and Land Sales Act is to provide for the control of sales and leases of land in order to facilitate the settlement of ex-service men and to prevent undue increases in the price of land, the undue aggregation of land and its use for speculative or uneconomic purposes. However, an incidental provision is that if any property the subject of an application to a land sales committee, for consent to transfer is considered to be suitable or adaptable for the settlement of an ex-Serviceman or two or more ex-servicemen and the vendor is not serving outside New Zealand in any of His Majesty's Forces or in any British ship, the Crown may take steps to exclude the proposed purchaser from the transaction and to itself acquire the property for rehabilitation purposes.

This is something for which we have been fighting for the last four years—the protection of properties in the interests of ex-Servicemen from the speculative purchaser. New Zealand has seen fit to take action along the right lines, and that was done while the Dominion was concentrating on winning the war. Unfortunately, we have done nothing.

The Minister for Lands: Where did you get that idea from?

Mr. LESLIE: It is not possible to stop a man selling land today to any speculative buyer.

The Minister for Lands: Is that so?

Mr. LESLIE: We have asked for it to be done.

The Minister for Lands: You should have another think.

Mr. Doney: Is not that so?

Mr. SPEAKER: I think the hon. member is getting away from the motion now.

Mr. LESLIE: The implementation of this land settlement plan is wrapped up in this question because until we are able to acquire land we cannot have land settlement. It seems to me that the scheme has not been commenced on the right lines. We still have not the power, and I do not know of any Act—

The Minister for Lands: There are a lot of things you do not know!

Mr. LESLIE:—which enables us to acquire land, unless the National Security Regulations have recently permitted the Crown to do something in that connection. I know, however, that for the last two years we have had brought to our notice the fact that suitable land for soldier settlement has been on the market, but we had been unable to do anything up to a couple of months ago—since then we have given up hope—to stop a sale. There has been no provision to do it. In the New Zealand Act there is a provision similar to that which is evidently to be contained in a soldier settlement scheme for Australia, or at least for Western Australia. Here are the particulars about that provision—

Establishment on blocks acquired by the Crown for subdivision.

The Lands and Survey Department acting on behalf of the Rehabilitation Board is purchasing a number of large blocks suitable for subdivision and is proceeding with their development in readiness for the settlement of ex-Service men.

In this connection our State Government, I must concede, has acted, and I commend it for the part it has played. This information continues—

When ready for settlement the sub-divisions of the blocks are offered for selection by eligible and qualified ex-Service men on the leasehold tenure. Particulars of any offerings are advertised and also brought to the notice of eligible grade "A" ex-Service men by district rehabilitation officers.

Mention has been made of the finance available through the State Advances Corporation for the purchase of single unit properties and the method of securing the value of the improvements on the Crown lease-holds selected by ex-Service men. The rates of interest charged are—

(a) Mortgages securing the amount advanced for the purchase of a single unit or the value of improvements on a Crown lease—two per cent. for the first year; three per cent. thereafter.

(b) Stock and chattels—two per cent. for the first year; thereafter four per cent.

I do not want to enter into any argument about the interest charges. I mention them at this stage in order to stress the point I am trying to make which is that New Zealand has done something. We have not the faintest idea what the interest charges are likely to be in connection with our land settlement scheme. As I have previously stated, and now emphasise, we are entirely in the

dark and any ex-serviceman desirous of going on the land finds that he can get no definite information at all. I have already pointed out that there will be tragedies because of men purchasing properties and assuming obligations they are likely to be unable to meet. There is another case with which New Zealand has dealt and one for which no similar provision has yet been made in Western Australia. This report states—

There are many instances where men, not coming within the categories previously mentioned as eligible for immediate settlement,—

That is, literally, new settlement

—have a just claim for assistance and their cases are dealt with on their merits. As an example, some farmers were forced to dispose of their properties when called to the Forces and it is only fair and reasonable that they should be re-established with the help of the Rehabilitation Board on properties of their own.

Then it gives the procedure necessary in all cases. It is as follows:—

Many ex-Servicemen appear to be in some doubt as to the correct procedure to be followed in pursuing their claims for settlement. For their guidance and help, rehabilitation officers and local rehabilitation committees have been appointed throughout New Zealand and the first approach should be to the nearest rehabilitation officer or the secretary of the local committee. Either of these officers will take all the necessary steps to have the applicant's eligibility and qualifications for farm settlement determined. Until these two salient points have been decided in favour of the applicant, he will not be considered for inclusion in any ballot for land offered for selection by ex-Servicemen, nor will a loan application to purchase a single-unit area be accepted.

None of these things applies in Western Australia where we, no more than New Zealand, have concentrated on winning the war. Some men desire to return to their farms, having given them up in order to enter the Forces. I do not think I am revealing any confidence when I say that I have discussed this question with Mr. Bosisto, of the Rural and Industries Bank. Mr. Bosisto is anxious to render all the assistance possible, and to do what he can for his bank, and I am anxious to help him and to be of assistance to the ex-Serviceman—the returning farmer. But Mr. Bosisto is hamstrung because he cannot definitely say to the returning farmer what measure of assistance he is likely to receive from the Commonwealth Government or under any soldier settlement scheme. We do know that that man is excluded from the application of benefits under the land settle-

ment scheme and that he will, or may, be able to participate only to the tune of an advance of £1,000 under the Rehabilitation and Re-Establishment Act.

But unfortunately that Act is not in operation, so that, while men are waiting to go back and develop their farms to their previous state of productivity—literally to win them back from the bush—Rome is burning, if I may use that expression. Their substance—the money with which they hope to re-establish themselves, together with a measure of assistance from a presumed to be beneficent Government—is being applied in other directions. Some of these men have already relinquished all idea of returning to their properties and have engaged in other pursuits. Others have come back and assumed obligations which they should not assume, in all justice. There is also the case of the young man who is returning and desires to take over his father's farm—a farm worked during his absence by his aged parents. That boy naturally wishes to make his parents some compensation for their years of work on the farm, but finds there is no provision made for him to relieve his parents of their obligation, with justice to them. These are the types of inquiries we are receiving, namely, inquiries from the young lad who is already home, or is still away in the Forces, and who desires to take over a farm from his aged parents; inquiries from the man who is desirous of going on a farm of his own and who has a small amount of capital and has either purchased a property already, or desires to do so; and inquiries from the farmer who wishes to return to his property that he left when he enlisted.

These three types of servicemen are excluded from the provisions of the proposed land settlement scheme, and there is no machinery in force at present by which any of these people can be assisted. It cannot be said that there is merit in the argument that we must hasten slowly because we must not allow returned men to have the plums of land settlement while their mates are still serving overseas. These men are entitled to what they have and what they can get because it is partly their right already. There are points in the broad outline of a soldier settlement scheme that has been published in the Press, such as the leasehold basis men-

tioned by the Minister for Lands, that are debatable but I do not propose to deal with them here because they are not definite. We have only the Premier's Press statement that they are provisions of a probable scheme.

The Minister for Lands: Do you think his Press statements are unreliable?

Mr. LESLIE: No. I am accepting that statement as reliable because it comes from a reliable source.

The Minister for Lands: Why say that is all we have got?

Mr. LESLIE: I say that because it is only in broad outline. The statement contains no fine details. When we are asked what the scheme includes and what its provisions are, we cannot say. We can only tell these people that they are not included. When a man comes along and says, "I am eligible and prepared to take whatever the Government gives me," we say, "We do not know what you are entitled to; go and ask Mr. Fyfe," and Mr. Fyfe says, "I cannot tell you. Until legislation is brought down, I am as much in the dark as you." No doubt he knows some of the provisions, but cannot make definite statements. Actually, nothing has been done. Even at this late stage, although there have been arguments in connection with soldier settlement, we are still just as far off being able to give the intending soldier settler any assistance and information about going on the land as we were in 1941 when the R.S.L. first asked that something should be done to provide for the settlement of returned men, and that that should be done early so that there would be no rush at a later stage.

I see no harm in the motion to those of the responsible authorities who have done or attempted to do something to bring about the implementation of a soldier settlement scheme. Among those who have attempted it I include the Premier, while he was Minister for Lands, his colleagues and the officers appointed by this Government. They have at least attempted something. Absolute failure has not been on their side. If the Premier, at any rate, is sincere in his desire to see something definite done, and if he believes that this Parliament can add any weight to representations which he might desire to make to the responsible authorities, then he can do no better than support the motion.

MR. McLARTY (Murray-Wellington) [8.10]: There is no doubt that the Minister in charge of soldier settlement carries a great responsibility, and that in the future he will have to stand up to a great deal of criticism, some of which will probably be justified, while some of it will not. If the Minister follows the advice given by the Rural Reconstruction Commission he will not go far wrong. He is fortunate in having that report because, as I said previously in this House, there is no doubt that it will prove to be a most valuable document when we are dealing with land settlement.

The Minister for Lands: I am more fortunate in having the chairman of that body beside me.

Mr. McLARTY: That is so. If that report is followed I think a great deal of financial loss will be prevented. I do not think it possible to put in hand any great land settlement scheme—no matter how carefully it is handled—and prevent all losses, but, as this report of the Rural Reconstruction Commission points out, we will have to face losses, and the report recommends that we should face them at the outset. I think that advice is sound indeed. It will encourage soldiers, going on the land, to make greater efforts. Mention has been made of the merits of leasehold and freehold, and I wish to say very little on that question, but I agree with the member for Toodyay that the man who has a freehold farm has a greater feeling of satisfaction. I heard the Minister for Mines, when this matter was raised tonight, refer to the fact that freehold—

The Minister for Mines: The hon. member did not hear the Minister for Mines say anything about freehold.

Mr. McLARTY: I am sorry, it was the Minister for Lands, and he said that it was a matter of sentiment. I think it is more than that. Unfortunately, with this scheme, we will have parts of the Commonwealth adopting the freehold system while other parts will adopt the leasehold system. The wealthy States, such as Victoria, will be able to settle their soldiers on the land under the freehold system, and I think that will create some dissatisfaction. Nevertheless, I do not think our soldier settlers will be discouraged because they are going under the leasehold system. There is no reason why they should not make every effort under

leasehold, because I believe they will eventually be given a chance—in years to come—to make their properties freehold, as are nearly all the properties in Western Australia.

I rose principally to talk on two matters related to soldier settlement, one of which is housing. I would like to know how far we have gone with the housing problem. When our men returned from the last war some of them went into houses which, if they had been in or anywhere near the city area, would have been condemned. The house is a most important part of the farm, particularly from the point of view of the soldier settler's wife. We want these men to be satisfied from the outset with their farms and, if the soldiers are to be given just any type of house at all, there are bound to be many dissatisfied wives.

The Minister for Lands: Our architects are already getting out the plans for the houses and other buildings.

Mr. McLARTY: I am glad to hear the Minister say that. In his speech this evening the Minister gave us some very interesting information, which I think this House was glad to receive, and which the country would be pleased to receive, but at the time it struck me that the Minister did not mention housing. A number of the holdings that will be available for soldier settlers will not have houses on them, and we will be up against that difficulty and, with the others, I feel sure that they will have on them a class of house that a soldier settler should not be asked to go into. I have one or two properties in mind, and I think the housing conditions on them are not up to standard. I am pleased to hear the Minister say that that aspect is receiving his full consideration. The other matter to which I wished to refer is the position of the soldier who wishes to go in for dairying. The Minister said he had received 849 applications, and that 100 of those men wished to go in for dairying.

I asked the Minister for Lands a question, some time ago, as to what he was doing to purchase dairy stock for the soldier settlement scheme, and he replied that his department had purchased 834 heifers, and that 10,000 were required. I do not know where those heifers are to be obtained, and I am afraid there will be a serious hold-up in the case of those who wish to go in for dairy-

ing. At present we have 834 heifers—they are yearling heifers in the main—and, as with all herds of cattle, some culling will have to be done. Where are we to get 10,000 heifers? We have blundered in this matter in the past. In this House I have heard protests raised and questions asked about the slaughter of dairy stock.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Female dairy stock.

Mr. McLARTY: Yes. We know that great numbers of them have been sent to the market as vealers. We know it was a great economic waste, yet we allowed it to continue, and today we are faced with a most difficult position. The Government would have been well advised, years ago, to have purchased all the dairy heifers available. It could have had holding farms for them. It is true that the Government has a holding farm for these 800 odd, but they are only yearling heifers and, if we had adopted some scheme—as advised in the past—to purchase these dairy heifers and hold them, soldier settlement, as far as dairying is concerned, would have been very much advanced, and one of our worst difficulties would have been overcome. It would be interesting to know just what is proposed to be done. The fact that we require 10,000 heifers is going to send the prices sky high, if that is permitted. The prices will be out of all reason. I hope that prices will not be allowed to soar to whatever heights might be offered in the market.

Mr. Seward: Do you think that the average returned soldier is going to rush into dairying?

Mr. McLARTY: We have been told that 100 have already applied. I do not know where they are going to get the stock, but I believe that a considerable number of returned soldiers will wish to enter the industry. I hope that the returned soldiers generally will not embark upon that class of farming where they will be carrying all their eggs in the one basket. We should encourage mixed farming. The member for Mt. Marshall said we ought not to be worried about production in the future because the world had never had sufficient food to meet all its requirements. That, of course, is true, but we know that our producers—

The Premier: Require sufficient money.

Mr. McLARTY: Yes, and practically every section of our producers has been up against the difficulty of securing markets

offering a payable price. While we appear to be certain of payable markets for most of our primary products for some years, nobody can say with any degree of certainty what the export markets of the world will offer later on. The Government would be well advised to encourage the soldier settler to engage in some form of mixed farming. As the Premier knows, a mistake was made in settlement in this country by putting men on holdings that were too small. There are people who advocate putting men on to holdings that are far too small to give them a living. Such people boom the land—some of them want to sell it—and so long as they can get the land settled, that is all they care about.

The Premier: And they settle the man for ever.

Mr. McLARTY: Yes. We should guard against that sort of thing. I believe that in the South-West portion of the State—and I direct the attention of the Premier and the Minister for Lands to this statement—even with the best of land, we should give a man an area of not less than 200 acres. All members know that our land is patchy. I could take them to parts of the South-West where they could stand on first-class land and have no difficulty in throwing a cricket ball on to country that was very much inferior. So it will be necessary to take into consideration the class of land that is being settled, and to bear in mind that a larger area of land will be needed.

We in this State are fortunate in the man who has been appointed to control this settlement scheme. In Mr. Fyfe, the former Surveyor General, we have a man with a good knowledge of the land, and his profession will also help him. I feel that the Minister will be well served and that the soldier will also be well served by Mr. Fyfe. We have been told by the member for Mt. Marshall that a number of men returning from the war would be prepared to take over farms from their fathers. There should be no difficulty on this score. Surely such men could be permitted to go on to those farms immediately, even though financial arrangements for them could not be made at once. The hon. member also said that if a serviceman had an opportunity of taking a farm as a going-concern, early arrangements should be made to

settle him. I agree with the hon. member. The greater the number of those men we can settle quickly, the better it will be for the scheme as a whole.

I was interested to hear the statement by the Minister for Lands of what has been done. No doubt we were caught unprepared when the war ceased. We did not expect the war to finish so soon, but we have no regrets on that score, though it has caught us in a state of partial unpreparedness. Now that we have reached this stage, it behoves us to do our utmost to press on with the job.

MR. MANN (Beverley) [8.26]: I support the motion. I regret that, during a temporary absence from the Chamber, I missed the Minister's reply to the member for Toodyay. There is nothing whatever wrong with the motion. I believe the whole trouble may fairly be attributed to the Commonwealth Government for its lackadaisical attitude to the rehabilitation of men on the land. I even doubt the sincerity of the Commonwealth Government; I doubt whether its members are really keen on settling men on the land. We have been kept entirely in the dark regarding the details of the scheme.

I should like to ask the Minister why the disparity between the States of New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland as against South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania. Why are we designated agent States, while the three larger States are principal States with the right to carry on themselves? Are we the mendicant States of Australia?

The Minister for Lands: We are one of them.

Mr. MANN: Yes; this arrangement is very unjust. In major matters of post-war reconstruction such as a land settlement policy, we should have equal rights with the other States. I can speak feelingly on the question of soldier settlement. I have had the experience and I know all about it. I hope the Government realises that it has a very big job ahead to deal with the servicemen. Undoubtedly some heavy losses will be entailed, but it will be impossible to avoid losses.

The Premier: You are answering your first question there.

Mr. MANN: That is so. I can see that there will be a repetition of what happened after the first world war. Our men have been away for some years, and they will not be prepared to return to the country to a life of serfdom on the land after having been in the Forces so long. Consider the experience of many of our men after the other war! They were settled in dry areas and on heavily capitalised properties, and I do not want to see any man who has served in this war treated in that way. Unless we can settle them under better conditions than those, it would be better not to settle them on the land at all. Many of those men stayed on their holdings for five to 10 years, grew disheartened and became bitter. That is how extremists are bred. In the outback part of my electorate I have seen excellent returned soldiers and their wives living in tin hovels and lacking water supplies and everything else requisite for a home. Those men subsequently became broken and left the land. Consequently, we must expect to incur heavy losses under the scheme.

Another point to be considered is the personality of the soldier to be settled on the land. Anything which we on this side of the House can do to help, we will do. We are not swayed by any political motive: our desire is to give these men some chance for the future.

The Premier: That will be the fundamental.

Mr. MANN: Yes. It is not going to be a question of securing votes by our efforts to help these men. We will give the Government our whole-hearted support. Anyone who has gone through the experience knows what is required; our desire is to put forward something constructive in order that these men may be rehabilitated on the right lines. If their conditions are to be the same as were the conditions of the soldiers who were settled on the land after the 1914-18 war, then I say do not let us have any land settlement at all. It is better for a man to know where he stands.

The Premier: I wish you would take the member for Mt. Marshall in hand.

Mr. MANN: I am talking as one who has had a bitter experience. The Minister for Lands knows that himself.

The Minister for Lands: Hear, hear!

Mr. MANN: Today there is some recovery. Let me put to the Minister this position: Not long after the last war the financial depression hit us for three or four years.

The Premier: Your colleague said we should throw caution to the winds.

Mr. MANN: I shall talk cautiously about this matter, because I have experienced hardships, and there is no lesson learned so well as the one taught by adversity. Rather than see the returned men from this war suffer as did some of the returned men after the last war, I advise that the whole land settlement scheme be scrapped. I shall make the same statement to the public when I return to the country, because I know what might happen in five, ten or fifteen years. Possibly we shall have broken men, men who have burnt their boats, and men who have not learnt a trade. I offer the Government the benefit of my experience, and if I can be of any assistance to it I shall be only too pleased. The job is going to be a bitter and hard one.

MR. PERKINS (York) [8.32]: I wish to touch on one or two points with reference to this motion. The Minister gave us some interesting information which was not available in specific terms until he spoke. It did clear up some doubts which some members had before he spoke. The fact remains, however, that we still have very little that is concrete and upon which a serviceman could form a judgment in deciding what his chances are if he goes on the land when the settlement scheme is available. Certainly, £1,000 is available under the rehabilitation Bill and it will be very useful to a man in getting established on his property if he can in addition also secure private assistance. But that avenue is not open to other men, who must perforce await the general scheme. I think lack of organisation is the cause of many opportunities being missed at present to acquire suitable properties, particularly in the wheatbelt areas. I know those areas very much better than I do the South-West portion of the State and they are eminently suitable for soldier settlement.

Many sales of properties have taken place within the last 12 months in the wheatbelt that would be eminently suitable for soldier settlement. The prices were very reasonable and the properties could have been sold equally well to the Repatriation Department

as to private buyers. Properties are still being offered for sale in those safe districts at very reasonable prices indeed. Only last week I met a man who has a property comprising 3,000 acres in an absolutely safe district; about three-quarters of it is cleared, over 50 per cent. is first-class land, and it is being offered for sale at £2 15s. per acre, which is less than the actual cost per acre to develop the property. When the Minister says that leasehold property will cost a man less to establish himself on than a freehold property, I think he is entirely overlooking the fact that in our wheat areas, at the present time, land has practically no unimproved value. The sale prices of properties in the good wheat-producing districts are practically the cost of the improvements effected on the properties, plus the upset price charged by the Government for the land. This, in the majority of cases, was 15s. per acre.

In our State, the leasehold system will not save anything in the wheat-producing areas so far as the ingoing costs of the settler are concerned. It will, however, be the means of putting the interest cost of the improvements on to the community as a whole, rather than on the individual settler, at least during the early years while he is establishing himself on the farm. At the present price of wheat, I believe any man who has to meet the whole of the interest on capital required to set up in wheat production has not even got a fighting chance of winning through, assuming he is an average farmer, if such a term can be applied to a farmer. I do not wish to go exhaustively into that question, because I hope to discuss it on a Bill in the near future. The prices we are now obtaining for our wheat do not make wheatgrowing an attractive proposition in Western Australia.

The Premier: Seven shillings and sixpence within two years!

Mr. PERKINS: I hope the Premier is a good prophet. The fact that the prices have not been attractive largely accounts for wheat properties being offered at what I would class at the moment as bargain prices, and I think that the Repatriation Department, because of the lack of necessary legislation and organisation, is missing a golden opportunity to acquire good properties in safe districts that could be used for future soldier settlement. Lack of a concrete

scheme is delaying the necessary consideration which must be given to the general organisation that will be employed for actual production, if I may put it that way, on those properties.

At the present time, there is a conflict between the social desirability of many small properties with comparatively high costs of production per unit, and the economic desirability of larger properties with a lower cost of production per unit. That, in my opinion, is largely brought about by reason of the more economical working of a larger property. Such a property would have a larger plant which could be worked at a less cost per unit. That can be demonstrated on many properties in the State at present. I think probably many members of this House know of individual farmers who have those large and effective plants working at a very small cost per unit; whereas the man working a comparatively small property of 1,000 or 1,500 acres—which is probably contemplated as a suitable unit for soldier settlement—will find that the cost per unit is higher. Many practical farmers in the State have been discussing the possibility of evolving some system whereby larger plants could be used for production on the soldier settlement properties, not by loading the whole of the capital cost on to the farmer on one property but by using one plant to work more than one property. I know that such an organisation will be very difficult to bring about, and that is why I say this legislation should have been brought down at a much earlier stage in order to give people who are competent to advise on the question a chance to express their ideas and thrash out the details. In the absence of sufficient notice, it is likely that the organisation will be set up somewhat hastily and there is a likelihood of our getting a less effective set-up than would be the case if we had had more time to consider the matter.

I do not know that I need discuss the actual details of the setting up of an organisation such as I have mentioned, but I do say that it is desirable from the point of view of the ordinary soldier settler put on to a 1,000 or 1,500-acre farm that he should be given the benefit of the cheap cost per unit which is associated with a large high-powered plant as against the cost per unit

which I am afraid is inseparable from the use of a small plant just big enough to cope with a smaller farm. There are many other matters that one could touch on. The debate has been valuable in having given members a chance to discuss the difficulties that are likely to arise in regard to the soldier settlement scheme; but I am afraid that the strictures contained in the motion regarding the delay in bringing down necessary legislation will prove to have been only too well justified, if that delay is going to cause inefficiency in the establishment of a proper scheme.

The best service we can render returned men desiring to go on the land is to give them a reasonable chance of making good. I agree with the member for Beverley that it is doing no service to any individual if, as a reward for services rendered, we put him on a block of land where he is going to spend the best years of his life battling in order to keep some equity in the property but finds after a period of years that he is making no progress and finally has to leave the property, go into some other walk of life, and start from behind scratch. That is what happened to far too many of our settlers who went into the marginal areas in past years, and I for one would not be a party to any of the men who have risked their lives in the Fighting Forces being given similar treatment under any scheme of soldier settlement.

On motion by Mr. Seward, debate adjourned.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

MOTION—INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT, USE OF MUNITION FACTORIES.

To Inquire by Select Committee.

Debate resumed from the 5th September, on the following motion by Mr. Doney:—

That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon—

- (a) To what extent can industrial development in Western Australia benefit (after the war) by the retention and use of the machinery and skilled workers employed at the Welshpool munition factory and other similar establishments in this State.
- (b) What articles could, with advantage, be manufactured.

(c) What would be the probable demand for such articles—(1) in Western Australia; (2) for export from this State.

(d) Should such manufacture (if found practicable) be carried on—(a) by the State Government; (b) by co-operative enterprise assisted by the State; or (c) by other means.

THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [8.45]:

The essence of the motion moved by the member for Williams-Narrogin is that a Select Committee should be set up for the purpose of investigating the best possible use to which munition factories in this State can be put to promote industrial progress. In his speech, the hon. member told us that he had attended a public meeting called by the workers concerned some weeks ago, at which was discussed the future likely use of these industrial establishments. He also told us he was the only member of Parliament present at that meeting.

Mr. Watts: I do not think he said he was.

Mr. McLarty: The member for Mt. Marshall.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: Well, a member of the political party to which he belongs. I desire to inform the House that more than one meeting of this kind was held about that time. I think the meeting to which he referred was the last public meeting held.

Mr. Doney: As a matter of fact, it was the first, as far as I know.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: Yes, as far as the hon. member knows; but I think that, in fact, it was the last of the series.

Mr. Doney: It might have been.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: And I know, of my own knowledge, that at the main meetings there were present members of Parliament other than the one referred to by the member for Williams-Narrogin.

Mr. Doney: In which case it was not the last meeting.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: As a matter of fact, the member for East Perth played a very important part, not only in regard to most of these meetings but also in regard to very important negotiations that were carried on

between representatives of the unions concerned and representatives of the State and Commonwealth Governments.

Mr. Doney: I am inclined to think it was the second, but certainly it was not the initial meeting.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I would also inform the House that out of those negotiations to which I have referred results came that were beneficial to the establishments and to the workers concerned in them. There are at least three major munition factories or establishments within the State under direct Government control. There is an establishment at the Midland Railway Workshops, under the control of the Railway Department and the State Government. There is one at Welshpool under the direct control and management of the Commonwealth Government; and there is an aircraft production factory at Bayswater, also under the direct ownership and management of the Commonwealth Government. Somewhat playfully the member for Williams-Narrogin told us that following the placing on the notice paper of his motion on the 31st July last things appeared to happen in the right direction. Fortunately he then went on to indicate that he did not attach any real significance to the fact that he had on that date given notice of his motion in this House.

Mr. Doney: I told you definitely that I did not regard that as a matter of cause and effect.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: That is just what I said, so on this point we agree. There is, therefore, no need to discuss it further.

Mr. Watts: Nor to mention it, in fact.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: There is every need to mention it because I want to go on to say that prior to this notice of motion being given, representatives of the State Government had been in contact and in negotiation with representatives of the Commonwealth Government with the object of ensuring that all these Government munition establishments would be continued either on the production of munitions or on the production of other articles, and as a result, of course, that as many of the workers as possible in each establishment would be continued in employment.

Mr. Doney: At that time, of course, the public was not permitted to know that.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: Statements were then given to the Press for publication at the appropriate time.

Mr. Doney: I know.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I think every member of the House will realise that we do not rush in to give statements to the public when we are in the middle of delicate and important negotiations.

Mr. Doney: I made that admission.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: Here again the member for Williams-Narrogin and I agree. I am therefore somewhat puzzled why he made the interjection. So I desire to support his contention that representatives of the State Government played a very important part in the negotiations with the Commonwealth Government for the purpose of ensuring that these establishments should be continued in production. The hon. member who moved this motion said that as far as the public knew the Welshpool factory was making only a few bolts and nuts for the Netherlands East Indies governmental authorities. That statement is incorrect and very misleading. As a matter of fact, the Welshpool factory has never made any bolts or nuts for the Netherlands East Indies authorities, although negotiations along those lines proceeded for a fair time.

Mr. Cross: The Welshpool factory did not have the gear to do it either.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: That also is not correct, because the factory had the gear and machinery necessary to manufacture millions of bolts and nuts if the order had been received from the Dutch authorities. I think there was a very good chance of an order being received for hundreds of thousands of these articles if the war with Japan had continued for a longer period. Just when it appeared likely that a contract would develop the Japanese decided to surrender unconditionally. Consequently the policy of the Dutch authorities changed substantially and, as a result, the probable contract did not come to fruition. The Welshpool factory has been continuously producing small arms ammunition, and is doing that today, and will go on doing it for some months to come. It

is hoped, by the State Government, that the Welshpool small arms munitions factory will be one of the permanent factories of this type in Australia, because, as I think members will realise, there must be maintained in Australia, by the Commonwealth Government, permanent factories for the continuous production of small arms ammunition.

The section of the Welshpool factory that began to reduce its operations very considerably is what is known as the fuse section. The production there became so great that the necessity for further production no longer existed to any worthwhile extent. So, as a matter of commonsense policy the Commonwealth Government had instructions issued that production in this section of the factory should be reduced from month to month until a certain period would be reached in which production would cease altogether. As a result of negotiations, which were carried on in Perth with the Minister for Munitions when he was here some few weeks ago, it was agreed that one shift should be continued to be employed in this section of the factory for a period of at least three months so that in the intervening period every effort might be made by State authorities, by Commonwealth authorities and by other people and organisations who might be interested, to develop ways and means by which this part of the factory could be used for the production of other articles.

Considerable investigation has been made in that direction. There are at present at least two proposals developing, either of which, if it is finally decided upon, could be put into operation in this particular section of the Welshpool factory. It will, therefore, be seen that the Welshpool munitions factory is still very active. There are two shifts working in the production of small arms ammunition, and the production of that article keeps in operation the major portion of the establishment.

Mr. Read: Yes, and you did a good job there.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: We did our best, and I think that the results achieved were beneficial to everyone concerned. So, the only part of this factory that gives any concern at present is the small fuse section to which I have already made reference. We shall continue to do everything

humanly possible to ensure that when the production of the present article in that factory ceases, as it may do in two or three months' time, some substitute production will be set moving there. The State Government is in negotiation with the Commonwealth Government in regard to the factory at Bayswater in which there is some of the best precision machinery in Australia. This aircraft production factory is one of the best I have ever seen, which does not mean to say that it is one of the largest, but nevertheless it is a comparatively large establishment and has housed within its walls some of the best and most modern machinery in Australia.

A very good staff has been built up, and there are, operating the high precision machinery, some splendid types of tradesmen and, in addition, very reliable men. The personnel employed in the factory are almost entirely hand picked, by a process of elimination. The State Government is anxious to take over this establishment, either by becoming the owner of it or leasing it for a long term of years, and there is every reason to believe that the Commonwealth Government will be sympathetic towards Western Australia in this direction, and will finally agree to enable the State Government to take over the factory for the purpose of continuing it in operation for the best purposes to which it can be put.

Mr. Watts: Have you any idea what they are?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I have several ideas, but I would rather not make that information available at this stage, more particularly as the negotiations between the State and Commonwealth Governments have not yet been completed.

Mr. Seward: I believe that particular machinery can be adapted for other purposes.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: The machines in that factory can be adapted to produce a wide variety of articles, among which would be many that the Government requires in large quantities from time to time. That would apply to the requirements of the Railway Department and other departments of government, including two or three of the biggest departments of the Commonwealth. Members will quickly realise that large

Commonwealth departments, such as the post offices—especially on the telephone side—continually require huge quantities of articles of different kinds. This factory at Bayswater is well equipped to produce many of those articles, and to produce them in exceptionally large quantities.

That leaves the munitions annexe at Midland Junction. It is the intention of the Railway Department to take over that annexe, which of course is a Commonwealth annexe, and to use it to the fullest possible capacity in connection with the affairs of the Railway Department. That annexe is a producing establishment and it can be used by the Railway Department with great benefit in relation to the big rehabilitation policy, which will have to be carried out by that department with the object of modernising our railway system as quickly as possible. It will be seen, therefore, that the question of putting these Government-owned munition factories to the best possible use in the post-war period has received the very close and—if I may say so—the very successful consideration of the State Government, through its appropriate officers.

I am as sure as I can be that a Select Committee—or any other committee for that matter—could not proceed any further than has already been done under the methods I have described. We have had investigating this question some of the most skilled technical men in the Government service and, as the result of their investigations and recommendations, together with the ideas and views of Ministers in the Government, we have decided to operate along the lines I have indicated, which, I think, should be acceptable to the members of this House. Naturally every Minister of the Government is keen to ensure that these industrial establishments shall be continued in operation. They have, as the member for Williams-Narrogin indicated in his speech, very great advantages, because they are new factories that were established only three or four years ago, and consequently they were built on the most modern lines possible. The buildings are in every way satisfactory and suitable, and in those establishments are wonderful amenities for the men and women employed there. I agree that it would be in the nature of a tragedy for the future industrial development of this

State if those establishments were allowed to go out of use, or even if the use made of them was not as great as the capacity of each establishment would permit.

After the member for Williams-Narrogin had dealt with his motion he went on, in a thoroughly general way, to discuss the question of industrial development in this State. He suggested that factories should be established in every rural centre of Western Australia, and told us that his own town of Narrogin—through its representatives—had placed certain proposals before the State Government for the industrial development of Narrogin. He then went on to say that nothing had happened, apparently, and that he had come to the conclusion that the proposals had been pigeon-holed. He suggested that he had lost faith in the possibility of anything concrete ever being done.

Mr. Doney: I do not think that is quite how I put it, and the Minister knows very well that such blame as I alleged was not against the State Government at all, but against the Commonwealth Government.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: The member concerned then went on to say that he felt he could not hold the State Government responsible—certainly not fully responsible—for the situation as it affects Narrogin today, but that he did place upon the Commonwealth Government most of the blame for nothing substantial having been done—

Mr. Doney: At Narrogin and all other country towns concerned.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: All I desire to say on that point is that the representative from Narrogin merely put forward ideas such as might have been put forward in connection with any other town in the State.

Mr. Doney: I mentioned towns generally, and the Minister might just as well say that.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: It is easy for the people in a particular town to come along and say, "This could be established," or "That could be established," but unless they can develop concrete proposals it is almost impossible for the Government to do what it otherwise might be able to do. For instance, if someone in Narrogin—either an individual or a firm—could develop an actual pro-

posal and say, "We propose to develop this industry. These are the plans, and this is a fairly accurate picture of what might be expected from the development of this industry. Would you, as a Government, come in and assist us financially to the extent of 20 per cent., 30 per cent., or even 50 per cent.?" the Government would have something to put its teeth into.

Mr. Doney: I agree with the Minister there.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: The Government would have something to look at and to deliberate upon. I am sure that if more or less concrete proposals could be developed in Narrogin or any other country town, the member for the district would have no cause for complaint about the attitude of the Government. The hon. member then went far afield—

The Minister for Mines: Momentarily wandering.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: —to discuss the question of decentralising industrial development.

Mr. Cross: That is not unusual.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: But he spent most of his time in the State of Victoria. He quoted freely from cuttings taken from Melbourne newspapers, and most of the cuttings were statements by the Premier of Victoria, Mr. Dunstan, in praise of the Premier of Victoria, the same Mr. Dunstan.

Mr. Watts: We get a lot of that from the Minister for Industrial Development in this State.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: The hon. member told us that 41 new secondary industries had been established in the country districts, including the district of Wodonga.

The Minister for Lands: Why Wodonga?

Mr. Doney: For the benefit of the Premier.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I was interested in the information made available by the hon. member, because it is a good thing to find the Government of any State pursuing a policy that has the effect of developing secondary industries in the country districts.

Mr. Doney: Did you check up on the correctness of my statement?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: In Australia it is advisable and very necessary in the years ahead to decentralise to the fullest extent possible the industries and population of the nation. I, therefore, give the fullest measure of credit to the Victorian Government for whatever it has done in that direction. But while the member for Williams-Narrogin was telling us all about what the Government of Victoria had done in this way, I was wondering why he should have preferred to tell us about Victoria's work as against Western Australia's work in the same field.

Mr. Doney: I had to leave you matter for a sensible reply. You are not taking that opportunity.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I have a suspicion, perhaps only to a very slight degree, that the hon. member, in placing all this information about Victoria before us, and in "Hansard," and if possible in the newspapers, had in mind that the public of Western Australia would immediately conclude that the Victorian Government had done marvellous things in this field of decentralising secondary industries while the Government of Western Australia, completely asleep on the job and dead to its responsibilities, has done nothing at all.

Mr. Doney: Not completely asleep, but I did wish to draw that comparison. You are quite right there, but are going a bit too far.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: When a member draws a comparison, he cannot do so accurately unless he sets out fairly fully the information on each side, so that people may say, "Well, this State has done so much and that State has done so much." Then they have a fair opportunity to make a decision on the relative merits of what one State has done as against another State. The member for Williams-Narrogin, in his speech, said nothing at all about what had been done in Western Australia so it is not very legitimate on his part at this stage to interject that he quoted Victoria only for the purpose of establishing a comparison. He told us that an exhibition had been held at the Myer Mural Hall, at which there were exhibited 25 exhibits of products from decentralised factories in Victoria.

Mr. Doney: Or 25 classes of exhibits, which?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I do not mind which way the hon. member puts it.

Mr. Doney: So long as you have it correctly.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: Well, 25 types of exhibits.

Mr. Doney: That is better.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: If we held a similar exhibition in the hall at Merredin, Narrogin or some other country centre, we could show more than 25 classes of exhibits.

Mr. Doney: That is not to say Victoria had no more.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must not continue to interject.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: As I read through the list of exhibits, I was greatly interested to find that some of the classes had been divided, re-divided, sub-divided, and re-sub-divided for the purpose of making the number as great as possible. As a matter of fact, if we held an exhibition at Bunbury of the classes of products manufactured in the small knitting mills operating in that town, we could prove to the public that several classes of products are manufactured. If we set out a list in the same manner as this list was set out in the Victorian papers on the authority of Mr. Dunstan, we could have an exhibition of 250 classes of products from secondary industries in our country districts.

Mr. Doney: Nobody doubts that.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: Nobody is doubting it now.

Mr. Doney: Nobody doubted it at any time.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: But nobody would have known anything about it if he had had to depend on the speech of the hon. member when praising the efforts of the Victorian Government to the skies a week ago.

The Premier: He did that deliberately.

Mr. Doney interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must refrain from interjecting.

Mr. Doney: The Minister is inviting it.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I wish to record in "Hansard" for the benefit of those who read "Hansard," and tell members for their benefit, and, if the newspapers have sufficient space now that the war is over, to tell the public through them of the secondary industries that have been established in our country districts in recent years. I will refer only to those which the State Government has had a part in assisting to establish or maintain. There may be many others which we have not, in recent years, had to assist. I am concerned mainly with the newer industries that have been established, and it is only right that this information should be given to the House and recorded in "Hansard" so that those who heard or read the speech of the member for Williams-Narrogin about the great achievements in Victoria might also learn something of the achievements in Western Australia.

Mr. Doney: I take it that those factories have been set up during the war, have they?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: Some of them have.

Mr. Doney: Oh! Some of them!

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: Yes.

Mr. Doney: You had better put it on the same basis as mine.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: Not necessarily. I doubt very much whether every enterprise referred to by the hon. member has been established during the war.

Mr. Doney: I did not give all of them.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: At Boyup Brook during the war there has been established the flax processing industry, in connection with which both the Commonwealth Government and the State Government have played an important part.

Mr. McLarty: What are its post-war prospects?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I hope I shall not have to go into that point at this stage, because the list I have here is fairly long and I

would like to get through it. What I can say in reply to the member for Murray-Wellington is that extremely important negotiations are being carried on in this city at the present time in connection with that phase.

The Premier: Even today.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: A meat works was established at Broome with the assistance of the State Government. It is an important activity in that part of the State. Woollen mills were established at Bunbury and are still producing several classes of goods, all of excellent quality. The State Government has assisted in a small way the manufacture at Bunbury of art woodwork from local timbers. Any member who may be interested in this work would be well advised to visit the emporium of Boans Ltd. and inspect some of the remarkably classy work which is being done by the Bunbury people responsible.

Mr. Withers: Returned soldiers.

Mr. Doney: Is it a factory?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: The member for Williams-Narrogin asks whether it is a factory. It is an industry.

Mr. Doney: I know all about that, but is it a factory?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I am not concerned with whether it is called a factory or a workshop. It is an industry.

Mr. Doney: For the purpose of comparison, my concern is to know whether the Minister calls it a factory.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: If we enter on an argument as to whether or not it is a factory, we might be here for the next ten years and, as far as the member for Williams-Narrogin is concerned, he would still be of the same opinion. At Busselton, there has been established a boat-building industry by the aid of the State Government.

Member: It is doing excellent work, too.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: Despite the nasty look on the face of the member for Williams-Narrogin when I mentioned it, there has also been established at Busselton an industry for the production of implement handles. The State Government has rendered some

assistance to that industry. At Bridgetown there is fruit dehydration. At Chandler there is the production of potash. At Carnarvon the fish-processing industry is now being developed. At Donnybrook we have fruit and vegetable dehydration and the production of fruit juices. At Esperance and Widgiemootha, as the result of assistance from the State Government from time to time, salt is being produced in large quantities. We formerly imported salt from South Australia. At Geraldton crayfish canning operations have been revived during the war and carried out to the full capacity of the factory. Tomato-processing is also being carried on at Geraldton. At Hopetoun we have canning and smoking of salmon.

At Kellerberrin, the firm that was concerned in the renovation of steel pipes has not only expanded that work during the war, but is manufacturing many requirements for farmers in the way of water troughs and farming machinery. Fish-processing in a small way is taking place at Mandurah. At Mt. Barker there is fruit dehydration. At Northam implement handles are being manufactured. The firm concerned has received oversea orders for its products and will be exporting very large quantities of handles in the future. The production of slippers has been undertaken at Northam in a factory established by a Perth firm. That activity is being expanded quickly as time goes on. Another industry carried on there is the production of agricultural machinery parts.

Mr. Doney: Where?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: Northam. At Norseman the State Government played an important part in the establishment of an industry for the production of pyrites, which have taken the place of sulphur in the production of sulphuric acid for the superphosphate industry. The farmers of this State doubtless realise how tremendously valuable that industry has been to them. I should say there has been no parallel development in Victoria. During the comparatively short period this industry has been in operation, 60,000 tons of pyrites ore, valued at £150,000, has been treated.

The Premier: And used in this State.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: The superphosphate companies concerned incurred an estimated capital expenditure of about £140,000 in building the necessary plant in this State to treat this ore successfully and process it into sulphuric acid.

Mr. Cross: We used to get sulphur from Japan before the war.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: And there are good prospects of its becoming a permanent industry. At Pemberton there is the processing of hops and the obtaining of logs for plywood manufacture. Although the factory in which the plywood is now being processed in this State is not located in the country, much of the activity connected with the industry is carried on in the Pemberton district. I am sure that both the present Minister for Mines and the ex-Minister for Mines could tell members a great deal of what was achieved, with the assistance of the State Government, particularly during the war years, in the direction of producing strategic minerals in this State. Although the member for Williams-Narrogin might claim that the production of minerals is not of a secondary industry character, nevertheless the development of these industries in the State has a beneficial effect, inasmuch as they provide employment and are responsible for increasing the circulation of money in the country areas.

Mr. Doney: Despite the fact that of course I did not go into mining, because it is valueless as a comparison.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I should say there is an obvious reason why the member for Williams-Narrogin did not enter this field in his survey of Victoria; but if the position had been reversed and the development of minerals in Victoria during the war had been as substantial as their development in this State, then I imagine we would have heard a great deal about it from the member concerned.

Mr. Doney: I imagine members would not, because it is not a comparison.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I must ask the member for Williams-Narrogin to keep order. He has the right of reply, but if he does not keep order he might not be able to reply.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: During the war there has been development in the Hamersley Ranges in the North-West in the production of asbestos. Here, again, the member for Williams-Narrogin would probably claim that this is not a secondary industry. This industry produces raw material upon which very vital big secondary industries will be established in Western Australia. An industry has been assisted at Tammin by the State Government for the manufacture of certain types of agricultural machinery. At Wundowie, as members are well aware, the State Government is expending a considerable sum of money for the purpose of developing an industry for the production of wood distillation products and charcoal-iron. I would say that the two industries being developed in the State in the country districts, namely, the one at Chandler for the production of potash and the one at Wundowie for the distillation of wood products and the production of charcoal-iron, would in themselves be ever so much more important than the 41 factories established in the country districts of Victoria by the State Government.

Mr. Seward: We have been waiting for a long time for some production at Wundowie.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: The member for Pingelly may be a long time waiting for production at Wundowie, but that is evidently because he has no conception of the importance of the undertaking.

Mr. Seward: I am watching it closely.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: He has no understanding of the technical problems associated with the development of that industry. I have no doubt he is closely watching it through the carriage window as he goes up and down every week. I suggest most sincerely to the member for Pingelly that, if he had any interest in this project, he would take advantage of the opportunity that is always open to him to discuss it with the technical officers charged with the responsibility of establishing the project.

Mr. Seward: That is all right. I am not condemning it; I merely remarked that we have been waiting for a long time for some production.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I know the hon. member is not condemning it but his words might suggest to anyone who might hear him or read what he has said that things are not going well with the project, that there is some unexplained delay that may mean that things have gone wrong. On the other hand, I can assure him earnestly that in view of all the difficulties created by the war with respect to manpower and materials, the project is developing reasonably well.

Members are aware that the Government in December last sent to America one of its technical officers for the purpose of thoroughly investigating matters connected with the technical side of the project. That officer stayed in America for six months and investigated several similar activities operating in that country. As the result of his investigations and inquiries, he found it necessary to make very few recommendations of any consequence in connection with the plans for the establishment of this project. I can assure members that the Government and the technical officers concerned were extremely careful before they set out to establish it. We realised that unless we were extremely cautious there were some people in this State who seemed to take a delight in the State failing in any undertaking of this character, and who at the first possible opportunity would become calamity howlers and utterly condemn the project in every shape and form. So members can take it for granted that the Government and the technical officer associated with this project have been extremely cautious and have proceeded step by step only after making all the inquiries and investigations possible in different parts of the world where similar industries are in operation.

Mr. Doney: You have reached most unfair conclusions there—most unfair.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I am responsible for any conclusions I may draw.

Mr. Doney: Quite so.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I say again there are some people in this State who are watching all the time for an opportunity to condemn utterly any undertaking for industrial ex-

pansion in Western Australia, especially where the Government is responsible for any such undertaking.

Mr. Doney: I know what you said.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I say, too, that there are in this Parliament, although I had hoped not in this House, two or three people of that description.

Mr. Doney: This is not the time to mention it.

The Minister for Lands: The time is not ripe, I suppose!

Mr. Doney: It is not opportune.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I have gone to some trouble to indicate to members and to the country the extent to which the Government of this State has concentrated, even despite the difficulties arising out of the war, upon the task of trying to develop in the country districts industries other than primary industries, or industries in addition to primary industries, so that in the post-war period it will be possible in those country districts to develop additional activities, to create greater opportunities for employment, to increase the circulation of money in those parts and to assist in the general building up of the rural districts of Western Australia.

Mr. McLarty: They will first require to have cheap power.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: As the member for Murray-Wellington knows, the Government has made decisions in that direction and will push ahead for the purpose of implementing those decisions as soon as circumstances will allow it to do so. I can say in addition that just as we have concentrated on that phase during the difficult years of war, so will we concentrate even more upon them in the post-war period, especially when the situation regarding manpower and materials becomes easier. I am sorry to say there are several other corrections which I must make regarding the speech delivered by the member for Williams-Narrogin.

The Premier: I think you have given him the works already.

Mr. Doney: I am not worrying about that.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: The real point is that when a speech is made in this House on an important question of this description—

Mr. Doney: It should be taken seriously.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: —and it contains information that is incorrect, it is the bounden duty of the Government to put right those mistakes.

Mr. Doney: I do not grumble at that part of it.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: That must be done.

Mr. Doney: I grumble about something else.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I must ask the member for Williams-Narrogin to keep order.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I am glad that the member for Williams-Narrogin appreciates the necessity for doing something along those lines.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: In a nice way.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: Not only those who may have heard his remarks but those who read "Hansard" may be misled, and also those who read the report in the newspaper of his incorrect statements may likewise have been led astray. It is always desirable that an inaccurate statement shall be corrected as soon as possible. For instance, the member for Williams-Narrogin said in connection with the industrial development that the Board of Area Management in this State had had to bid very high for every contract it had obtained. The Board of Area Management was a creation of the Commonwealth Munitions Department and was the agent in this State for that department. The Board of Area Management, as such, manufactured nothing. It was the distributing agency in this State for contracts on behalf of the Munitions Department. The member for Williams-Narrogin was so upset about this question of the Board of Area Management in this State having to bid so high for defence contracts that he said he was almost moved to embrace secession from the Commonwealth as the remedy for a situation of that kind.

Mr. Doney: You are right there.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I may inform the member for Williams-Narrogin that the Board of Area Management did not have to bid for any such contracts, as it was only the distributing agent in this State for defence contracts made available through the Munitions Department.

Mr. Doney: You know what my meaning was.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: The hon. member also said that an area officer of the board, Mr. Hallam, went abroad on behalf of the board and went to Burma, Malaya, India, Ceylon and the Netherlands East Indies searching for markets for goods manufactured in Western Australia. Mr. Hallam did not go abroad on behalf of the Board of Area Management at all.

Mr. Doney: Did he go there at all?

Mr. SPEAKER: Will the Minister resume his seat? I have asked the member for Williams-Narrogin to keep order. If he persists in his attitude, I shall have to take action.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: Mr. Hallam went abroad as the representative of a local syndicate called the Industrial and Trading Syndicate of Western Australia. He did not visit Burma or Malaya or Ceylon or India or the Netherlands East Indies; he visited South Africa, England and the United States of America. He was away from Western Australia for approximately 12 months. The hon. member then went on to tell us that, as a result of the visit of Mr. Hallam abroad, the Board of Area Management had secured a number of important commercial tie-ups in the United States of America. I tried to put him right on that point when he was making his speech; but he would not be put right, and rather indicated to members that I did not know what I was talking about in that regard; that he had his information from a very authoritative source; and that he preferred to rely upon that source rather than to take any opinion which I had in connection with the matter.

As I explained a few moments ago, the Board of Area Management in this State—as in every State of Australia—was an agency of the Commonwealth Munitions Department through which that department

distributed contracts to various factories and workshops for the production of munitions and other requirements of war. The Board of Area Management has no interest whatever in getting commercial tie-ups in America, England or anywhere else. As a matter of fact, if the board has not already gone out of existence it will do so very soon, because there is no further reason why its activities should continue. Mr. Hallam went abroad as a representative of this syndicate to which I have referred, and he did obtain very valuable commercial tie-ups in Great Britain. But as far as I am aware, he did not obtain any in the United States, though I would not be positive about that last point. The member for Williams-Narrogin said he understood that representatives of the syndicate were likely to approach the State Government for the purpose of trying to convince it of the advisability of the syndicate's efforts in the direction of industrial expansion in Western Australia being supported by the Government. He expressed the hope that the Minister was not tied to the Commonwealth Government's policy of the subjugation of private enterprise to such an extent as to prevent him—the Minister—from looking fairly and reasonably at this approach by representatives of the syndicate.

Here again, the information made available to the hon. member was hopelessly astray. If I were in the position of the hon. member, I would—tonight if possible, or tomorrow morning—have a very stormy interview with the person or persons who made all this incorrect and misleading information available to him; because unfortunately the person or persons concerned caused the member for Williams-Narrogin quite conscientiously to come to Parliament and make available to Parliament information which was far astray from the facts on very many important points. The truth about the Government in connection with this syndicate is that, as far back as 1943, the Government made available to the syndicate £500 to enable it to finance the sending abroad of Mr. Hallam in order that he might explore the situation overseas in the direction of ascertaining whether it would be possible after the war for the factories and workshops of Western Australia to obtain contracts to supply the needs of the Netherlands East Indies authorities and other

authorities concerned with the government and management of the islands north of Australia; and also in the direction of ascertaining whether it might not be possible for the syndicate concerned to prevail upon some of the most important manufacturing enterprises in Great Britain either to transfer their manufacturing rights so far as markets in this part of the world are concerned to this syndicate; or, failing that, whether it might not be possible to establish branch manufacturing enterprises themselves within the State of Western Australia.

The visit of Mr. Hallam abroad was successful. As a result, there has been established in recent weeks in Western Australia the Western Australian Industrial Corporation, Limited, which, it is hoped, will be responsible in the reasonably near future for giving a very great fillip to industrial production in this State. The Government has been so interested in this matter, and so anxious to assist in the direction in which the enterprise is striving, that it has agreed to grant £5,000 by way of financial assistance to these people to help them in their endeavours on behalf of the State. In agreeing to make this money available, the Government has established certain safeguards and restrictions which it felt it was its duty to do on behalf of all of those concerned in the proposal and in the company's operations when they get under way. So I think that the member for Williams-Narrogin will clearly see—as will every member of the House—that the Government has been particularly interested in the activities of this syndicate since the middle of 1943 and has assisted it financially and in many other ways, as I am sure Mr. Hallam in particular would acknowledge if he were approached; and any member of this House has my complete permission—if that is considered necessary—to approach Mr. Hallam and discuss the matter with him in the frankest possible manner.

I think I have indicated that the Government is doing very effectively, and as effectively as possible the work which the proposed Select Committee would be called upon to carry out. I would suggest it is doing that work more effectively than could a Select Committee. To sum up what I said in that regard: Negotiations are already proceeding between the Commonwealth and State Governments for the

taking over of the aircraft production factory at Bayswater by the State Government. The Railway Department will take over the munitions annexe at Midland Junction. The small arms munitions factory at Welshpool is continuing in production and will continue in production in regard to small arms ammunition for at least six or nine months to come.

As I also said, it is the hope of the State Government—and it has made representations in this regard—that the Welshpool small arms ammunition factory will become one of the permanent factories in Australia for the production of small arms ammunition. I indicated what had been attempted in connection with the fuse section of the factory and also that proposals—at least two—are now under consideration for the purpose of using the fuse section for the production of the requirements of civilian industry when the present activities in that section come to an end, as I understand they might do within the next two or three months. In view of all these things I suggest that this motion is not justified, and I therefore ask members to vote against it.

On motion by Mr. North, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.52 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 13th September, 1945.

	PAGE
Question: Public Trustee, as to estates administered, etc.	662
Papers: Housing, as to negotiations, costs, etc.	662
Bills: Rights in Water and Irrigation Act Amendment, 2R.	667
Mines Regulation Act Amendment, 2R.	668
Mine Workers' Relief (War Service) Act Amendment, 2R.	669
Police Act Amendment, 2R.	670
Police Act Amendment Act, 1902, Amendment, 2R., Com., report	671
Supreme Court Act Amendment. (No. 2) 2R.	672

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