

then got to the stage where the individual should be called to account. I have figured in many political arguments, and I have witnessed quite a few. One of my friends scabbed on me on one occasion and got into a brawl without me, and I resented it.

Hon. A. H. Panton: You were a bit lighter then than you are now.

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes. But never has any member of this Chamber stooped to such depth of degradation as to rob some member here of his good name. Now we look over yonder and see the accuser and the accused. The guarantee against deception and intrigue is there.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Which one?

Mr. MARSHALL: Right over there. That is where those who are accused of intrigue and deception sit. It is strange to relate, but a libellous statement was made on the public platform and published in the Press.

The Chief Secretary: What is it? We have not heard it yet.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Do not get excited.

Mr. MARSHALL: It was said of the Liberal Party and the Country and Democratic League. Their interests are bound up in intrigue and deception. I have a copy of the publication here, but it is not essential. A photo of the individual is there as a guarantee against these things. There was to be no more deception, no more intrigue because that particular candidate was a guarantee against those things which, apparently, are inherent in party politics. But we find a change. Seemingly this is a case of Parliament at any price. No matter what the sacrifice, he will mix with intriguers and deceivers to get into Parliament.

I would like to know what the electors of Middle Swan have to say about this affiliation. It would be interesting to know what they think of it, now that the public life of this country is being controlled by men who will belong to party politics, and party politics is based on intrigue and deception. These individuals are kept in their responsible positions by the accuser who has now decided to absorb intrigue and deception for the sake of Parliamentary honours. I do not mind it and, if members have no regard for their good name, and are prepared to put up with this, then that is all right. But, Mr. Speaker, as you cannot address the House, I will speak for

you, and I will go so far as to speak for the primary producers who are members of the Country and Democratic League and who are resident in the Middle Swan electorate. I will also speak for the members of the Liberal Party who reside in that electorate.

Mr. Bovell: They have spoken.

Mr. MARSHALL: They spoke without being conscious of what was happening. It has not really struck home yet. Members here who belong to the Country and Democratic League should know of this because it is not an accusation simply against members of Parliament, but against the Party, and every member of it. Well, there are in my electorate members of the Country and Democratic League and of the Liberal Party. Those that I know are honourable men, though they may not be predisposed towards my politics. But I take strong exception to their being accused of carrying on intrigue and deception. But we have the picture here now of the accuser and the accused. They sit in beauty side by side; such is politics!

The Minister for Lands: You have all the beauty on your bench.

Mr. MARSHALL: All that I want now is for the public Press to paint that picture for the electors of Middle Swan and those of the rest of the State, with or without cobwebs!

Mr. Grayden: Now tell us how you got the name of "Lavender Bill." That would be much more interesting!

On motion by Mr. Graham, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.41 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 26th August, 1947.

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

MOTION—SHEARERS' ACCOMMODATION ACT.

To Disallow Hut Regulation.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [4.34]: I move—

That Regulation No. 5 made under the Shearers' Accommodation Act, 1912-1944, as published in the "Government Gazette" of the 4th July, 1947, and laid on the Table of the House on the 5th August, 1947, be and is hereby disallowed.

Paragraph (ii) of Subsection (2) of new Section 6, inserted in the Shearers' Accommodation Act as the result of a Bill passed in 1944, reads as follows:

Any building provided for sleeping accommodation at the passing of this Act, or any such building which is in the course of erection at the time of the said passing or erected thereafter shall be divided into compartments to accommodate not more than three shearers in each compartment.

The regulation to which I take exception is based on that provision. There are still a number of sheds that are not in a position to comply with that particular portion of the Act. Pastoralists cannot procure the material or the labour to make the necessary extensions. Unfortunately, this House cannot amend a regulation; but if this regulation goes through as it stands without any instruction from the department to the inspectors, the latter will be in the unhappy position of having to enforce it.

If I know anything about union organisers they will see that regulations are adhered to. This particular one might create a very awkward position for a number of pastoralists at a critical time, when there is no chance of extending their properties to provide the requisite accommodation. There is another phase of this matter. New Section 6A, inserted as a result of the passing of the amending Bill, reads—

If any building provided by any employer for the accommodation of shearers was erected before the passing of this Act, then notwithstanding the provisions of the preceding section, the employer shall not be required to alter the building so that it complies with the said provisions until after the expiration of 12 months after the conclusion of the war in which His Majesty was engaged at the time of the said passing . . .

I would like the Government's definition of the phrase "the conclusion of the war." If this regulation stands, it will be enforced by the inspectors right away whereas the Act directs

that this particular section shall not apply until 12 months after peace is declared. My contention is that the war has not ended by any means, and that Section 6A cannot be enforced until 12 months thereafter. So I am afraid that the regulation contradicts the Act in that respect. There are conditions in the regulations that I think it is only reasonable should be applied, because after all shearers, as well as other sections of the community, should receive proper consideration. Moreover, Parliament has agreed to alterations to the Act to meet the convenience of these men, and to cut them out now, does not appeal to me in the slightest.

I would like an assurance from the Government that the department will instruct the inspectors not to enforce this particular regulation providing for extensions so that a compartment shall contain only three beds instead of four as at present. I would ask the Government to realise that the regulation is contrary to the Act passed by Parliament, in this respect: It was never intended to, and cannot apply until 12 months after the end of the war. I move the motion in the hope that the Minister will clarify the position. I have already notified the Leader of the House of the two points I intended to bring up so that the Government could have them investigated. All I require is an assurance with regard to those two matters.

HON. F. B. WELSH (North) [4.40]: I support the motion. When the measure went through the House the time given for its commencement was 12 months after the end of the war. Without entering into a discussion about the termination of the war, on account of the difficulty of obtaining labour and materials I do not think the regulation could be enforced at present. It is more difficult to get material for work of this nature today than it was during the war, quite apart from the fact that the labour shortage is more acute now than it was then. I am speaking, of course, of the pastoral areas and the outback. I hope consideration will be given to the postponement of the operation of this regulation until such time as the position has eased. I regret having to ask for such a postponement, but I hope the House will give the matter consideration as Mr. Baxter has requested.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. G. B. Wood—East) [4.42]: I think the answer is contained in what Mr. Baxter has already read from new Section 6A. The regulation cannot be enforced until 12 months after the end of the war.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Then why have that provision in the regulation?

THE HONORARY MINISTER: It is there in order to be ready when it can be enforced. The inspectors have already been informed that it is not desired by the Minister in charge that anything should be done about it at present. As a matter of fact, an inspection will not be made of the North-West until next year, following which the Minister will consider the position.

The Government knows that this regulation cannot be enforced at present. Surely Mr. Baxter does not think it would impose on the pastoralists conditions which it knows they could not fulfil! At all events, the Government could not do that under the Act. The war is not yet over, and action under the regulation cannot be taken until 12 months after the end of the war. Even then, action will not be taken until material and manpower are available. I can assure Mr. Baxter, Mr. Welsh and other representatives of the North-West that the Government will take no action in this matter until the time is ready for it. Having given that assurance, I respectfully ask Mr. Baxter to withdraw the motion.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East—in reply) [4.45]: I must accept the assurance of the Honorary Minister. He said that the Government has already given instructions that the regulation is not to be enforced; then why put that provision in the regulation? Under the wording of the regulation, it could be operating now, and it could operate for some considerable time without the knowledge of the Minister. I want to make sure that the department—the head of which is a conscientious and reasonable man—has been instructed that the inspectors are not to harass the pastoralists. If that has been done, it will be all right, but I do think the regulation should have been placed before Parliament without this reference. I accept the assurance given and ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Eighth Day.

Debate resumed from the 21st August.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (East) [4.46]: I wish to join with other members in expressing the hope that the President will have a speedy return to good health and will soon be again in his place in this Chamber. I desire also to express thanks to those who have been generous enough to welcome the new members to this House, and particularly those who have expressed a welcome to me. At the same time, I hope they are not expecting too much from me in my position here.

I propose to diverge from the general trend of the discussion so far, by referring to the position in the Old Country and Australia's relationship, with other parts of the Empire, to the Old Land. Britain has had a trying time and has succeeded up to date, but has now reached a climax which will mean a hard test to ensure survival in the commercial world. For a long time London was regarded as the financial centre of the world and today I feel that we will, with regret, see the passing of that position to another country. We in Australia can do a great deal to help, but are we doing all we could? It is all very well to preach austerity here, but that will not help the Old Country unless, through the austerity we practise, we are able to transport to her more of the things she requires.

A little while ago the Commonwealth Government was good enough to make the Imperial Government a present of £25,000,000, but money is not what the Old Country needs now; it requires food, clothing and raw materials. I am doubtful whether we are making available all we could, or should, supply. When looking at the returns two or three days ago, I noticed that Australia's exports have fallen considerably this year as compared with the previous twelve months. I dare say the excuse will be that sufficient shipping was not available, but that excuse should not hold valid much longer because, if the trade route between Great Britain and America is closed, a great deal of shipping should be available for trade with other parts of the Empire.

It is not a question of whether the Old Country is to stand alone, because if she falls so will all other parts of the British Empire. The success of the Empire is due to the dependence its branches have on one another. That dependence was strengthened a little while ago. For that reason I would have liked to see—when the recent conference was held at Canberra—the Prime Minister and State Premiers getting together to determine in what way we could best help the Mother Country in its time of need. I think a great deal can be done by the people of Australia, both individually and collectively. They are prepared to make a sacrifice, and, after all, that sacrifice will be made in their own interests as well as those of the people resident in that small island.

I am hoping that we in Australia will turn our attention to speeding up the production of the goods required and consider what we can make available to the Old Country in the way of such raw materials as we have. Pitiful tales are told by people coming here from the Old Country. True, the people of the British Isles are bearing their burden with great goodwill but, unfortunately, the responsibility seems to be thrown upon Great Britain to provide also for a large part of Europe, and it is from that portion of the world we hear the pitiful tales. Whatever we can do ought to be done. I do not think the matter is taken sufficiently seriously. Even the Press does not seem to be able to suggest anything whereby we may do a great deal more than we are at present.

If we get the requisite shipping, I sincerely hope that the people who have had charge of the Government for some time, who determine the foreign policy of Australia and decide what goods shall be exported, will take a very kindly view of the position of their fellow-workers oversea. I refer particularly to the waterside workers who, for some time, seem to have determined the foreign policy for Australia and decided whether they will permit exports to be despatched here or there.

Recently these workers have placed a ban on the export of potatoes and onions. This shows that the Government of Australia is in the unfortunate position of having to delegate its powers to the waterside workers. These men individually are not a bad lot, but when they are led by somebody who holds views at any rate different from mine,

they seem to assert themselves in an unfair way. I hope they will realise that they are in a position to do much. I am satisfied they could do what the British people are being asked to do, namely, work a little longer hours and work a little more during the time they are employed. This would materially assist, because it would enable the ships that call at the ports to turn around more rapidly, and this would be a great help to the Old Country.

I now wish to deal with the policy of the Commonwealth Government, a policy that materially affects this State, and that is the scheme of nationalisation upon which the Federal authority has embarked. I feel sure Australia has just awakened to the fact that nationalisation has been proceeding in a very quiet way for a long time. Probably this fact has been brought home more clearly to citizens recently by the announcement that the Commonwealth Government proposes to nationalise the banks. I know that farmers for a long time have not had the management of their own business; it has been entirely in the hands of the Federal Minister for Agriculture and his officers. We have been restricted in all sorts of production. I do not say that in some instances this was not advisable, but ever since Germany collapsed, farmers should have been encouraged to produce all they could, knowing that the world was waiting for food. It could not have been otherwise, because the very machinery, seed and everything else in Europe had been diverted to war purposes.

That should have been an indication to the authorities, but instead of this, we have had restriction of prices and endeavours to manage the affairs of farmers from Canberra. If we want to get the best from the people of Australia, we must leave them to conduct their business in their own way. Looking back over the years, I cannot see anything that those engaged in the industry have reason to blush about. There has been no exploitation by the farmers. If there has been any exploitation, the farmers are the ones who have been exploited. The men on the land engaged in production were well able to conduct their own business until the Government took a hand in managing their affairs for them.

We have an agreement entered into between the Imperial Government and the Commonwealth Government to purchase

all the wool we produce on the understanding that a fixed price would be paid, the price to be adjusted from time to time and any profits made by the Imperial Government on re-sales of wool to be shared equally between the Imperial Government and the producers of Australia. But what do we find? Although the Prime Minister of the day, a Labour man by the way, agreed that our share should be refunded to the producers, his successor shortly afterwards decided to repudiate that arrangement, and a sum of over £7,000,000, which should have been distributed amongst the producing community, has been turned over to the Federal Treasurer.

That is a breach of faith, the like of which cannot encourage production. In my opinion, the effect must be to stifle production. That is one thing to which I take strong exception. Another is the manner in which the Commonwealth has handled the financing of our wheat. True, under the powers contained in the Constitution, the Commonwealth has the right to acquire anything during a period of war, or at any other time, but the goods acquired must be paid for at a just price. The Commonwealth started off very well in the early stages. After having acquired the crop, however, it found that the price of wheat was rising, and evidently considered it would be too much to allow the producers to have the whole of the proceeds of their crop at the world market price. Consequently, it was decided to supply wheat to the Australian people at 4s. a bushel at sidings. Irrespective of whether it was payable or otherwise, that was the price fixed by the Commonwealth. As a matter of fact, wheat cannot be produced today at 4s. a bushel. It is impossible to make a profit at that price unless a farmer has a particularly good area of land and experiences a particularly good season. However, that is the price fixed by the Commonwealth.

Then, in order to assist another Government, and I should say to ensure that the price of wheat did not rise too high in New Zealand, a sale was made to that Dominion at a price far below world parity, and the wheat farmers of Australia were expected to carry the difference between the cost of production and the sale price. I understand that since then the Commonwealth Government has decided to make the payment to the producers, but the taxpayers

of Australia will thus be making a present to another country of a considerable sum of money, a country to which, when we purchase articles from time to time, we have to pay the full commercial value. These are things that cannot possibly encourage production; it is a slow form of nationalisation. This is the sort of thing that has been going on, and now the Commonwealth has decided to assert itself and take control of the banks.

Gradually the powers of State Parliaments have been taken away. The trend in this direction began in 1928 when the Financial Agreement was entered into under which it was resolved that the State Treasurers and the Federal Treasurer should meet to determine what amount of money should be borrowed for the purpose of Australian development. The next step was when it was decided to have a uniform method of taxation. We had a loophole after the loan funds had been controlled, more or less, by the Federal authorities who are the borrowing people. They then decided to take charge of taxation. I may say that on each of those occasions I opposed the step in the interests of Western Australia. I believed it was not in the best interests of a country with such a large area and such a small population, and which required a great deal of money for developmental work. I venture to suggest that owing to the lack of finance over a number of years for all Governments in Western Australia, very slow progress has been made towards peopling this State.

It was interesting to me to hear, as I did recently, the Prime Minister of Australia repudiate the agreement entered into between the States and the Commonwealth Government, an agreement which is contained in an Act passed in the Western Australian Parliament and assented to on the 23rd September, 1942. I will quote this for the benefit of Mr. Fraser, who I understand was recently at Geraldton and stated that the present Leader of the Opposition in the State Parliament had protested against the rights of Western Australia being interfered with. At that time Hon. J. C. Willecock was the Premier of this State. I think it was quite all right at the time for there was complete agreement then that the Federal authorities should control all finance during the war. The agreement that was entered into was the measure known as the Income and Entertainment Tax (War Time Suspension) Act.

It consists of six sections. Section 2 deals with the suspension of the provision of income tax rates for deduction and contains the following:

2. (1) The provisions of the Income Tax (Rates for Deduction) Act, 1939, as amended by the Income Tax (Rates for Deduction) Act Amendment Act, 1940, shall be and be deemed to have been suspended with respect to salary or wages paid within the period from the first day of July, One thousand nine hundred and forty-two, up to and including the last day of the first financial year to commence after the date on which His Majesty ceases to be engaged in the present war, and no longer.

Also, in connection with the suspension of certain provisions of the Entertainments Tax Act, the Goldmining Profits Tax Act and the Hospital Fund (Contributions) Act, these words are inserted in each appropriate section. This shows that the agreement was to remain in existence until one year after the war terminated. His Majesty is not engaged in any war now, and in 1942 the war with Germany was the only one in progress. I say that clearly repudiation is indicated there. The control of finance should have returned to the respective States if the agreement had been honoured. I am fearful of what is going to happen in Australia. If anything is urgently required in these times it is population. Australians have been put to a very mild test compared with what they may have to submit to in the future. I speak feelingly on this subject.

We were indeed lucky to escape invasion. The best and cheapest possible defence is to people our country. I think that the Asiatics with their teeming millions, India which has just been given its independence, China and Japan must look with greedy eyes on the unpopulated parts of Australia. I remember years ago, in pre-war days, talking to a distinguished Japanese, who pointed out to me that his country was about the size of Victoria. He said that Japan had a population of 47 millions and Victoria one of only two millions. He knew something about statistics. He said our population was very slow in doubling itself whereas the population of Japan doubled itself every seven or eight years. He also said "What can we do with our people; we must get an outlet for them," and he went on to ask why Australia could not give Japan the northern portion of the continent, seeing that we were not using it ourselves.

The Japanese do not believe in birth control, this man pointed out, and he said they were not cannibals and that they must do something for future generations. This applies equally in the case of India and China. We will not be allowed to hold this country unless we use it. We must people Australia but we cannot do that without industry; we cannot have industry without finance; and we cannot have finance without confidence. If the nationalisation policy of Australia in the future is to be carried into effect, I cannot see people coming here with their brains and their money to assist in the development of this country.

We have struggled along in a small way, gradually but slowly increasing our population. In the matter of natural increase the situation is deplorable. Even when we bring people here, we have political parties charging the Government with having brought them here so that we can have cheap labour. We will not have any independence at all unless we see that we do people this country. We have to look at the matter from that angle. If nationalisation of banking will help Australia, let us have it. What can it do? Will it encourage finance to come here?

Hon. E. M. Heenan: You were talking about peopling the country.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: We cannot have people here without industry. What use is it to bring them here unless there is work for them to do?

Hon. E. M. Heenan: There is plenty of work.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Work is the only thing that counts.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: There is no shortage of work now.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Not now perhaps, but a little while ago the Labour Party threw a lot of nasty remarks at me because I was associated with the Government that was compelled by the Labour Prime Minister of Australia to do certain things that we objected to and we were asked to carry the odium of having done those things. At one time there were too many people for the employment that was available. Temporarily there is a lot of work to be done, but we can do a great deal by working much harder.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: That is the point.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I cannot understand the advocacy by any party of a policy, the effect of which would be merely to keep men on wages or salaries. No country was built up merely by a man earning a pittance from one week's end to another. My idea is to give people piecework. Let them earn what they can, and get out of the rut as wage earners. I know of many men who came to Australia with nothing but who have, by their perseverance and hard work, become employers of labour. I know the attitude that was adopted in Western Australia with regard to backyard factories. I used to dislike them myself, but now I do not object to any man trying to better himself. I have also seen legislation introduced on that subject.

Today we have on the statute book the Factories and Shops Act, which defines a factory as a business place employing one person. That is ridiculous. If a man likes to engage another person to work with him and thus help him to advance in life, why should he not do so without being hampered? I want to see a change of policy and of heart in this country. I want to see the worker given the opportunity to become an employer of labour if he so desires. When I was in another place, I saw men kept on the roads year after year. What outlook did they have at the end of the road? Only to look for another! That cannot help. We must give encouragement and opportunity. This is the land of opportunity if we leave people alone and do not hamper their movements by administrative acts that prevent them from embarking upon what they desire to do. The nationalisation of banking or anything of that description will not, in my opinion, assist this country.

Most of us owe a great deal to the land. It has been very kind to us. There is still a terrific amount of work to do there and a big area to populate. I read with disgust the remarks of a man who went through the North the other day. When I think of the difficulties we have had in the North and of the political parties that have tried to do something to build up the population, and the efforts we have made to let people know what kind of territory we have there, I am disgusted that a man should go through it casually and condemn that part of the State. That does not help.

I had a hurried trip to the North-West and the Kimberleys with Mr. Miles and others and saw something of the potentialities of that part of Western Australia. Much requires to be done there, but it cannot be done if critics continue to condemn that part of the State every time we make an attempt to do something. I hope we will not be gulled into the belief that scientists know all there is to know. During the few years I have lived I realise that the man who can help most is he who knows his country. For the most part scientists work on theory; they very often fail on the practical side. I have seen illiterate men, illiterate through lack of schooling, do the very best for themselves and their country without education. It is the man that tries who gets on, the man who will work. He is the man that will help us to build up this country.

I was surprised that a gentleman occupying an important position in another place should have quoted Hon. King O'Malley as saying: "It will settle all depressions now that we are to have the nationalisation of banking." It does not require a great deal of intelligence to realise that if the Commonwealth Bank, when completely nationalised, can expand credits, so can it contract them. Unless the Government that believes in the expansion of credits remains in office continuously, there may be another Government that will want to contract credits.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: Was not credit contracted in the depression days?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I say it was. Mr. Scullin invited Sir Otto Niemeyer to come here and advise him, which Sir Otto did, with the result that the Government of this State—and I happened to be an unfortunate small part of it—had to force on the people a policy that we have been kicked with ever since. I want members to appreciate that. At that time there were only two non-Labour Governments. We had to introduce the Financial Emergency Act which controlled everything.

People can say that Latham believes in low wages and in people starving, but that is all bunkum. The finances were controlled by the Commonwealth Government and the Prime Minister in his wisdom took the steps that he did; and I am not too sure but that we got through it very nicely. I

admit there was some suffering, but Western Australia came through the depression the quickest and easiest of all the States, and we probably made some improvement to our finances inasmuch as we did, at that time, make the pound worth much more than it is today. We gave power to the Arbitration Court to reduce, or otherwise vary the basic wage quarterly, and that has been done ever since. It is rising now, so it is all right; but when we allowed that to be done it was wrong.

Hon. E. M. Davies: But you did it when the cost of living was falling.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yes. We were making the pound worth more. That is what the people did not understand. Unfortunately we lead the people astray when we make them believe that the only things that count are pounds, shillings and pence, when it is the purchasing power of the pound that counts. When I was a young fellow I knew what I could buy a pair of boots for, but if I went into a shop today with the same amount of money they would throw me out. The value of the currency was greater in those days. The more we dilly-dally and mishandle our finances the greater will be the depreciation of our currency.

Even the younger members here know very well that today the pound does not purchase anything like what it did when they were youngsters. If we give a child a penny today he will toss it back, but when I was young I was glad to get a penny because it was worth something. Today we want help, people, industries and money, and we do not get them simply because we cannot instil confidence in the people whom we want to come here. Many persons believe that the Commonwealth Bank will be able simply to get all the money that is wanted when depressions come—and I suppose they will come. I have seen them in my lifetime. The last was not the only one I have experienced. If this power is handed over to a bank politically controlled, the control might be exercised equally in another direction.

What is going to happen in nine years' time to our State Savings Bank which we transferred to the Commonwealth Bank? Many people do not know the history of these things; they have short memories. In 1931 we transferred to the Commonwealth

Bank—not the Commonwealth Government—the State Savings Bank for a period of 25 years, and that period will expire in nine years' time. There is an agreement which forms a schedule to an Act known as the State Savings Bank Transfer Act, which was passed in 1931. It was assented to on the 16th October, 1931, and came into existence, by proclamation, on the 1st November of the same year. Clause 15 of the agreement entered into, which is part of the First Schedule of the Act, provides—

This agreement to be for a period of twenty-five (25) years from this date the Government to have the option of continuing the arrangement for a further period not exceeding an additional twenty (20) years.

It is left to this State Government to determine whether or not it will continue the agreement. I suppose we will be so deeply involved with it, as we are with all the agreements we have entered into with the Commonwealth Government, that it will be impossible for us to recover control of the State Savings Bank. I shall be interested to see if the Government of the day desires to exercise its powers under that agreement, and what will happen. The agreement was signed by the then Premier of this State, Mr. E. C. Riddle the Governor of the Commonwealth Bank; and the Prime Minister, on behalf of the Treasurer of the Commonwealth of Australia, approved of the agreement.

If we have nationalisation of banking we will certainly have the Rural and Industries Bank so long as it does not get into difficulties as the State Savings Bank did. If that happens, the Rural Bank will be non-existent, so there will be only one bank, which will mean that the independence of the individual must go. There is a good deal of hoarding today. From the figures disclosed from time to time we find that £17,000,000 or £18,000,000 was all that was in the pockets of the people in 1939, and it has now reached the enormous figure of over £200,000,000. That is a terrific sum of money to be out among the people. It is not in the banks. The usual term to describe it is "under the carpet." But certainly the people must be carrying a great deal more money now than they did a few years ago.

I do not know whether the public will have any more confidence because of its money

being placed in the Commonwealth Bank than it has today. The Commonwealth Bank has been in existence for a long time and the people have had every opportunity to transfer their accounts to it, but for some reason they have not done so. They have preferred to remain with the Associated Banks. Why there should be interference now, I do not know. When the Commonwealth Bank took over the State Savings Bank the money in the Commonwealth Savings Bank was just over £2,000,000—in round figures—while our State bank had £8,000,000. The people always seem to have had more confidence in something over which they can have close control, and they had closer control over the State bank than was possible over the Commonwealth Bank with its board of management in Sydney. I am hoping that whatever action is taken, it will not mean the delaying of the peopling of this country.

I want to say a little about the 40-hour week. To me it seems paradoxical to hear members of this Chamber, and of other places, advocating, and rightly so, an increase in the price of gold. I agree that it ought to be higher because of our depreciated currency. But to come along simultaneously and ask for a 40-hour week seems to me to be something that can best be described as a paradox. On the one hand we want more money for a certain product and on the other we ask that less work shall be done. If industry can stand it and the people are willing to continue with an inflated currency, it is all right; but there must come a time when they will realise that they will never catch up with it.

Surely this is not the time for us to advocate shorter hours. I can picture how, if this Government were to advocate what the Imperial Government is urging in Great Britain, it would be hounded from one end of the State to the other. The British Government is asking for longer working hours and more work, and is even including the junior workers and the women. Why is that being done? It is to try to save the country. Surely we in the Commonwealth should not ask for shorter hours when the Mother Country, which has stood to us in every way possible since the birth of Australia is doing what it is today. Britain needs our help and wants us to hand over everything we can to assist it.

We should do that. It is wrong for Australia—an important part of the Empire—to be advocating shorter hours when our fellow workers in another part of the Empire have to work longer hours, and with less food. I would like to see this advocacy of shorter hours abandoned for the time being.

I believe in the production of gold. After all, I would like to see our pound note backed by something and for that purpose I know of nothing more stable than gold. The Goldfields members spoke truly when they said that the goldmining industry has done a great deal for the development of Western Australia; it has also done a lot to help Australia. I can remember, as a youngster, when the Goldfields were opened up, and money was flowing from here to the Eastern States where it helped the people out of a very serious depression. When agriculture slumped, goldmining flourished, and we maintained a very good balance because of that. We ought to give the Goldfields people any help that we can, and I agree with Mr. Bennetts who stated the other day that the State Government is not doing sufficient to encourage the people on the fields. I am told that at Norseman water supplies cost 10s. per thousand gallons. That is scandalous.

Hon. G. W. Miles: It is 30s. at Port Hedland.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Where do they get their water from?

Hon. F. R. Welsh: It is 3s 6d. per 100 gallons.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: And you cannot always get it at that price.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: On the Goldfields we have run a main to Norseman, and any contribution the city people can make towards lessening the cost there should be made, no matter what Government is in power. To ask women and children to go to such a dusty and dirty place to live while their husbands produce gold for us, is wrong. Let the Government of the day at least show that it is anxious and willing to encourage people to leave the city and go into the back country. I have seen the places they live in. I consider that with another 1d. rate levied in the metropolitan area, we could almost supply these people with free water.

Personally, I am right behind those members in this House who advocate better treatment for the people on the Goldfields and in outback areas. Sacrifices cannot always be made by the rural community. The city folk enjoy all the amenities that we can possibly provide. Let us appreciate the fact that our brothers and sisters who go out into the country areas, produce the real wealth of the State. I do not think there is any man or woman residing in the metropolitan area who, if the case were put before him or her in a reasonable manner, would not agree to make some contribution towards alleviating the disabilities of those who live outback.

The Government seems to be rather afraid to deal with such an aspect. The trouble is that too many Ministers take the advice of their officers, who are real typical public servants and desire to see that anything done must be made to pay its way. They attempt to make every project pay by means of direct contributions. The people who reside at Norseman, I would remind the House, do not pay merely taxation but also have to pay high railway freight charges.

Hon. W. R. Hall: That applies to those living in Kalgoorlie and other Goldfields towns.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: That is so. What city people fail to realise is that those living outback have to pay these very high charges and, in addition, make many indirect payments towards the revenue of the State. Last session legislation was introduced with the object of inaugurating a comprehensive water supply scheme for the rural areas. In such matter there is altogether too much attention paid to the aspect that those to whom the water is supplied must be individually responsible for paying for it. The more water that is supplied to a farmer the more crop he can sow and the more stock he can run, with consequent greater production from his holding. Not only is such a man a great benefactor to his country but he contributes additional revenue to the funds of the Treasurer. I hope that the Ministers, who are new to office, will take that phase into consideration.

Let us make the life of the country people more attractive. We must not forget that it is the people in the rural areas that will provide for the defence of the Commonwealth. During the last war we discovered

in no uncertain fashion where the weak links were in this State and, in fact, in Australia itself. We remember the talk about the Brisbane Line and suchlike considerations. The authorities knew very well that there was no-one available for the protection of the country. If we were to string our people along the huge coastline that we possess, what defence could they offer? None whatever! I emphasise that we must make country life more attractive, whether those outback are engaged in agricultural, mining or pastoral pursuits.

I listened with a great deal of interest to the speech by Mr. Bennetts when he referred to the utilisation of land in the Esperance district. Some years ago a Select Committee, which was converted into an Honorary Royal Commission, investigated the problem of dealing with the light lands of the State, particularly in parts where the Government had already provided necessary facilities such as railways, roads, water supplies, schools and the like. During the course of the inquiry, we paid a visit to Esperance. At that time Mr. Nulsen, the Minister for Railways in the Labour Government, was a member of the Select Committee. I am amazed to think that, although holding ministerial office for so long, that gentleman did not stir some of his fellow members of Cabinet to do something in the interests of that part of the State.

To a certain extent the Esperance people have demonstrated what can be done with the country there. I admit that, like other farmers, the men down there picked out the best of the land available at the time. However, they clearly demonstrated, at any rate to me, what could be done to develop fully some parts of that area—and yet no progress has been made since. Probably the trouble was that some failures had been experienced in the heavier country to the north of Esperance. The fact remains that the rainfall in the belt surrounding that port is fairly reasonable, but further north at Salmon Gums some difficulty certainly was experienced. The soil there was proved to be deficient in some respects and whether that was due to lack of moisture or to moisture not being available at the most appropriate period, has not been clearly established.

Certainly, a great deal of money has been spent in that part of the State but I do not think it can be regarded as altogether wasted because the results of the experiments carried out there have taught us some lessons. However, that does not apply to the Esperance district where there is so much light land that is, I believe, capable of growing good pastures and even cereals. I am certainly surprised that Mr. Nulsen, who was such a great advocate of the development of our light lands and made such a point of the Select Committee visiting the district to see what success had been achieved, has not since done anything towards encouraging settlement in that part of the State.

I trust the present representatives of the province in which Esperance is located, will submit a scheme to the Government and that the Government in turn will adopt it in the interests of the State as a whole. Esperance is a very important place and it is worth while settling people there if they can make a living. Obviously, it is useless putting them on land where they cannot succeed, but the prospect of profitable operations in the Esperance district is reasonably good. I am certainly anxious that something should be done to further development there.

Dealing with land settlement, I am rather surprised that discharged service men who want to follow farming pursuits should be taken down to some huts at Harvey in order to be instructed in farming. To me that is most extraordinary. I should have thought that they would be given some more adequate insight into farming operations and agricultural methods. To do that I imagined that the assistance of some successful farmers would have been obtained and the ex-Service men placed with them so that they would be taught not only tilling the soil but the business side of farming. They could get that from practical farmers.

The Honorary Minister: Do you not believe in taking the advice of research officers? That is why they were sent there—to get advice from some 20 research officers.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: There is nothing like a little practical work.

The Honorary Minister: They get that, too.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Fancy a wheat farmer going there to get some practical knowledge!

The Honorary Minister: He does not go there to get practical knowledge; he gets that elsewhere.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Minister interjected that they got not only the theoretical but the practical side as well.

The Honorary Minister: I did not say that.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Surely to goodness, if such men are going on farms and they have to milk a cow, they know on which side of the cow to go!

The Honorary Minister: You go down there and see the work that is being undertaken.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I have been to some places where there have been a lot of lectures and so forth. I remember one very clever man, one of the cleverest of his type in Western Australia, who paid a visit to the wheatbelt. I happen to be a wheat farmer and know just as much about wheat production as most people. The man I have in mind—I will not mention his name—was addressing a meeting about wheat production. One of the farmers present said, "If I sow clean wheat, will it prove smutty?" The expert said it would not. He did not tell that man that even if he did sow clean wheat he would not be able to tell if it was free of smut.

In consequence of what the expert said at the meeting, the man sowed his wheat and later asked me strip it for him. I certainly never want to strip another crop of smutty wheat; it was three-quarters smut and the rest was partial wheat. That was what happened through following the advice of an expert, one of the outstanding men of his type in the State at the time. So I happen to know all about the advice of such men! I know about curing smutty wheat and in the instance I have referred to, the expert did not tell the farmers what the position really was.

The Honorary Minister: You do not cure smut; you prevent it.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: That is quite all right; I know that. A farmer cannot tell whether there is any smut on the small hairs or spores attached to a grain of wheat, unless he examines it under a microscope. I am satisfied that if the Government had secured the assistance of such practical and successful farmers as Maisey of Dowerin,

Lundy of Cunderdin and Bert Teasdale of Merredin, the prospective soldier settlers would learn in six months more of the practical side of farming than would be possible otherwise. They would certainly learn to appreciate the fact that farming is not just a question of tilling the soil but of the possession of intelligence.

The Honorary Minister: That is what they are taught at Harvey.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am sorry for the innocence of the Honorary Minister.

The Honorary Minister: I am sorry for you and your innocence!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I can tell members that there was a former member of this Chamber—I shall not mention his name—who was a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture, and he was one of the worst farmers in his district.

The Honorary Minister: He was a great friend of yours.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Even so, that is quite possible.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yes, but it shows that a farmer must have the practical side as well as the theoretical. It is all very well talking about the theoretical side but we must not lose sight of the fact that there is the practical side as well. I can quite imagine myself as a young man, coming back from World War I and being herded into a hut with others at Harvey to be taught farming along the lines I have indicated. I hope that when the soldier settlers are sent on to farms they will not be placed in districts about which they know nothing. It is no good sending a man who has spent all his life in the Geraldton district down to, say, a farm at Gnowangerup, because the conditions are totally different.

I am very anxious that failures similar to those that were experienced after World War I shall not occur this time. I think we are too prone to exaggerate the failures that take place and are inclined to forget the successes about which we hear nothing. Those who succeed are the silent people, while the failures are those that make all the noise. I commend that advice to the Honorary Minister in charge of the Agricultural Department who, I am sure, does not pretend to know the last word about everything. I hope he will accept in the

right spirit advice tendered him by people who have had years of experience. For my part I am merely anxious that we shall not have failures this time. It must be borne in mind that the same opportunities are not available now as there were during World War I. I am beginning to feel that the new settlers will start with a great load of indebtedness because the cost of farms, machinery and stock and the capital necessary to establish them on their holdings are so much greater today.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Costs have trebled.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: If the Commonwealth Government is to fix the price of wheat at sidings at 4s. a bushel, the new settlers will have very little hope of success. The mistake the Federal authorities made in fixing the selling price of farm commodities was that it means, in effect, imposing such a liability on the unfortunate settler that he will have to carry it indefinitely.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: He will have no hope of getting rid of that liability.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It is essential that while prices are high, farmers shall be given every opportunity to get as much as they can for their products and so clear their holdings of past indebtedness and at the same time build up their reserves, particularly of requisites for the farm. At present their farming implements are in a state of disrepair and it is impossible to buy new machines. Their horses are old. Their ewes have deteriorated because it has not been possible to finance the importation of other breeding stock. The Commonwealth Government should leave these men with sufficient money so that when bad times come—do not make any mistake, in spite of the Commonwealth Government's efforts at nationalisation, we shall not have all peak years—these men will be able to go even to the Commonwealth Bank and get temporary assistance.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: We hope!

Hon. C. F. Baxter: They might!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: That might be in the laps of the gods, too. We can do nothing with the Commonwealth Government, but it ought to be brought home to the Federal authorities that during the depression period and the years that followed it up to the time of World War II, many farmers had fallen deeply into debt. We

ought to give them a chance to free themselves of that debt and build up reserves to enable them to re-equip their farms. I would ask the Minister for Mines to convey to his fellow Ministers a little advice from our country districts. Year after year we appear to spend a tremendous amount of money on roads. The work is carried out under the supervision of unqualified men.

I hope that our country road boards will get together and decide upon employing an engineer. I understand the Minister for Works is advocating that policy, and it is a step in the right direction. I was for a long time associated with a country road board and I found that, so to speak, money was thrown on to roads and yet a year or two afterwards they had to be re-constructed. If the boards had the advice of an engineer qualified in road construction and consolidation, that waste would not take place. Many road boards are too small to engage an engineer, but they could amalgamate for that purpose.

Hon. W. R. Hall: Many road boards have insufficient revenue.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: That method was all right in the horse-and-sulky days; but today we have motorears and can travel great distances in a short space of time. Therefore, the supervision of a large area would not present so many difficulties. I have known some main roads that have been reconstructed three times and men are again working on them this year. That is probably due to inability to obtain the necessary material to topdress the roads.

Hon. W. R. Hall: Bitumen has not been obtainable.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: That has been the trouble. If a board wishes to build a by-road leading to a siding, it would be better for it to get an engineer to advise as to the best method of construction. Many roads get washed away. The sum of £1,000 may be spent on them each year for two or three years; whereas if £2,000 were expended under proper supervision in the first year the cost of maintenance would be considerably reduced and the recurring expenditure avoided. We have had men trained in engineering at our University who, immediately their course was completed, had to go elsewhere because there was no work for them in this State. This would be

an opening for such men, as one engineer could do the work for three or four boards, with the result that the roads would remain in a better condition for a much longer period.

Hon. H. Tuckey: You cannot make the roads better without spending a great deal more revenue.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am sure money would be forthcoming if road material were available. We are lucky in Western Australia. Gravel is conveniently situated everywhere. Members who have travelled over the prairies in Canada no doubt wonder how the devil roads are made there, because the black soil extends for miles and miles.

Hon. W. R. Hall: Gravel does not make the best roads unless it is mixed with clay. Gravel causes corrugations.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: We all know that gravel by itself would be useless. Sand on clay makes a good road. In fact, we all know the general uses to which soils can be put. I am sorry Mr. Heenan is not present, as I wanted to have a word or two to say on his statement about divorce. I am one of those who would discourage divorce in every way possible. For that reason I am probably in agreement with him; but if he thinks that the withholding of publication from the newspapers will help in any way, I assure him he is wrong. Many people who may be thinking of obtaining a divorce are sensitive; they would not like to see their names published in some weekend newspaper. I will admit that we must make a decision as to which is preferable, a divorce or an unofficial wife. There is no other alternative.

Hon. L. A. Logan: They call them de facto wives nowadays.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It is a serious matter, but the further we get away from the war period, the better it will be. The war was the cause in Australia and elsewhere of the breaking-up of many homes. People contracted hasty marriages during the war period. It will not, however, be any benefit to adopt a hush-hush policy. I agree with what was said by a judge a little while ago, that the publicity given to these cases sometimes acts as a deterrent. Anything we can do to stop people from rushing into marriages about which they are sorry afterwards, we should do.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: The sordid side could be kept from publication.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The sordid side of some criminal offences is much more demoralising.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: I agree with that, too.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I do not read the reports of divorce cases.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: You are sophisticated!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: As one grows older one gets sophisticated. It all depends upon the company one keeps.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Is that why you came here from another place?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: If I am entitled to answer interjections, I would say that I came here because there appeared to be no better place to go to.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: That is a compliment.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I have found it a nice spot. I have been well received and I hope that my stay will be a long one.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Hear, hear!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I feel that we shall get on very well together. If we get on as well as we have up to date, I shall be satisfied—and I hope members will, be too. That is my contribution to the Address-in-reply debate. I wish to congratulate the Ministers, who have taken on a big job, but they do not want to get the notion that theirs is the only opinion.

The Honorary Minister: You are a nice one to talk like that!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: In Western Australia there are many people anxious to help. That is the co-operative spirit of the people of the British Empire and it will get us out of our difficulties. We still have a difficult task ahead of us. I would not like to see the Old Country fail; I would give my last shilling and would work until I could toil no longer to prevent it, and I think my sentiments are shared by every true Australian. Let us give the Old Country whatever help we can to assist her to rally. She may be passing through a temporary phase, but her people are tightening their belts. Let us join with them and make sacrifices equal to theirs.

On motion by Hon. A. Thomson, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.54 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 26th August, 1947.

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

QUESTIONS.

RAILWAYS.

As to Tenders for Supplying Locomotives.

Mr. STYANTS (on notice) asked the Minister for Railways:

In the "Kalgoorlie Miner" of the 26th July he is reported to have said that since his Government took office, orders had been placed for about 65 locomotives. If correctly reported, will he inform the House of the following details:—

- (1) Classes and numbers of engines involved in each class?
- (2) Dates tenders were called for each?
- (3) Dates tenders were accepted?
- (4) Names of successful tenderers?
- (5) Approximate dates of delivery?
- (6) The date that tenders were called for the 25 PR locomotives, the contract for which was recently signed?
- (7) Date tenders were accepted?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) 55 locomotives are on order, classes and numbers being:—(a) PR, 25 locomotives; (b) 4-8-2 light rail, 30 locomotives.

(2) (a) Quotations were sought through Agent General by cable dated the 17th October, 1946; (b) In view of the necessity for early augmentation of light rail locomotive stock, approval was given on the 7th July, 1947, to placing an order for the light rail locomotives, subject to right of cancellation following report of Royal Commissioner on Railways.