

proposition for increasing Western Australia's population.

On motion by Mr. Mann, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.15 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 27th August, 1942.

	PAOR
Questions: Industries, financial assistance	344
Agricultural Bank, assistance to clients	344
Address-in-reply, tenth day, conclusion	344
Adjournment, special	362

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

QUESTIONS (2).

INDUSTRIES, FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER asked the Chief Secretary: 1, What amount of financial assistance has been granted to industries, factories, and undertakings during the last five years? 2, How much of such assistance has been repaid? 3, What amount has been written off? 4, What are the names of the industries, etc., so assisted? 5, Which ones have repaid the advance in whole, and the respective amount repaid? 6, Which ones have repaid only part of the advance, and the respective amount?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, £41,089. 2, £2,448. 3, Nil. 4, Electrical engineering, general engineering, clothing, fire extinguisher manufacture, flooring manufacture, instrument making, meat works, charcoal briquettes, canning and food manufacture, butter manufacture, fertiliser manufacture, woollen and textile mills, salt production, gas-producers, refractory minerals grinding, optical munitions. 5, Electrical engineering £500, clothing £500, fire extinguisher £200, instrument making £300, optical munitions £350. 6, Canning £150, refractory mineral grinding £100, salt £48, general engineering £300.

AGRICULTURAL BANK, ASSISTANCE TO CLIENTS.

Hon. J. CORNELL asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Were all non-interest bearing sustenance advances made by the Agricultural

Bank to its necessitous clients for the twelve months ended the 31st March, 1942, made solely from drought relief money granted by the Commonwealth Government? 2, If not, how many settlers received sustenance from: (a) drought relief money; (b) State money; and what were the totals of the money involved in each category? 3, Is the 1½ per cent interest-bearing sustenance money now being paid for the current year a charge upon drought relief funds only? 4, If not to what extent are State funds involved? 5, Is the free of interest sustenance money now being paid to marginal areas settlers for the current year derived from Commonwealth money only? 6, If not, what other money is being used for this purpose?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes—12 months for season 1941-42. 2, Answered by No. 1. 3, Advances for 1942-43 season from Commonwealth Drought Relief loan moneys will carry interest at 1½ per cent. 4, Answered by No. 3. 5, Yes—money has been granted to settlers from Commonwealth Funds derived from Commonwealth Wheat Industry Assistance Act 53 of 1938. 6, Answered by No. 5.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Tenth Day—Conclusion.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY [2.20]: I desire in the first place to express very sincere regret and deep sympathy with His Majesty the King and members of the Royal family, at the severe loss they have recently sustained in the tragic death of H.R.H. the Duke of Kent. The Empire has suffered a serious blow as a result of this tragedy, and we in Australia, perhaps, feel it more deeply, because of the fact that we looked forward to the time when the Duke of Kent would have been directly representing His Majesty as the Governor-General of the Commonwealth. This loss simply goes to show that the Royal family is not immune from tragedies which so frequently befall so many others in the Empire in these times. We must recognise that every member of the Royal family is playing his or her part in the grim struggle in which we are engaged. So I feel sure that members will agree with me when I say that we feel deeply for the Royal family in their bereavement, and I trust that the struggle in which we are engaged will eventually come to a successful

end, and that tragedies of this kind will be no more.

Before dealing with the Address-in-reply, I would like to express pleasure at the fact that Mr. Baxter has been able to resume his seat in this Chamber. I regret that Mr. Thomson is not yet well enough to again take his place here. Recently we seem to have had a series of sicknesses attacking prominent members of the House which is, perhaps, indicative of the times in which we live, and in some instances of the very great strain under which many of us have to carry out our duties. Might I also take this opportunity, unusual though it may be, to express my sympathy to Mr. Drew in his recent sad bereavement. He is one of the oldest members of this House and one of the most highly respected members of Parliament not only in this Chamber, but in the State. Every member will sincerely endorse my remarks when I say that we feel for him in the bereavement he has sustained. I congratulate the two new members, Mr. Gibson and Mr. Cornish. Both of them have already given very fine service to the country in other spheres. They have had wide experience in somewhat different directions, and I feel sure this House will reap benefit from their membership. There is no doubt that we shall from time to time have the advantage of their knowledge gained during the years they have taken part in the public life of this State outside of Parliament.

The debate on the Address-in-reply this session has been no exception to the rule. Most members have spoken, and in their various contributions have covered a multitude of subjects. Many of them have no direct State application, in that they are matters which come under the Commonwealth authority. Still, as they affect the people of this State, they are fit subjects for reference. Many of them, however, are subjects which this Parliament cannot influence to any extent. In the course of my remarks I propose to refer to some of them, but first of all I shall follow my usual procedure of replying to what I consider are the more important State matters that have been raised during the debate, and I hope to give members a perspective somewhat different from that which they apparently have at present.

Usually Mr. Seddon can be relied upon to give the House a very thoughtful contribution, more particularly on the question of

finance, but on this occasion I am inclined to the opinion that he has not given the subject the same close scrutiny that is usually characteristic of him. I regret that, in his desire to criticise the Government's financial administration and in his reluctance to congratulate the Government on the achievement of a surplus in the Consolidated Revenue Fund for last year, Mr. Seddon based his criticisms on a very superficial examination of the financial figures for last year. He stated that the surplus was entirely due to artificial prosperity brought about by the war, and he proceeded to endeavour to show that the Government could have had a much bigger surplus if its control of expenditure had been more efficient. While it is admitted that in some respects the revenue figures were enhanced by the large sums expended by the Commonwealth for defence purposes, it must not be forgotten that many other avenues of revenue were seriously curtailed, if not entirely dried up, as a result of the war. Mr. Seddon forgot this aspect. He also forgot that the war has thrown on to the shoulders of the Western Australian Government the responsibility of meeting added expenditure, which would have been avoided if there had been no war. If I devote a few minutes to giving members details of those matters, the time will not be wasted. There is a side to the financial problems of the State which I feel is not generally understood by members who do not give the subject close consideration.

Dealing with the Government's control of expenditure, it has to be remembered that expenditure falls under three main heads:—

1. Special Acts.
2. Governmental.
3. Public Utilities.

Expenditure under Special Acts is not within the power of the Government to control. The liability on Consolidated Revenue Fund is contained in Acts of Parliament and can be avoided only if an Act is amended. An examination of expenditure under Special Acts shows that, omitting expenditure for interest and sinking fund, the amount spent in 1940-41 was £437,000. Last year the expenditure went up to £465,000—an increase of £28,000. This increase was due almost entirely to increased payments under the Superannuation and Family Benefits Act, the payments last year being £77,000 as compared with £48,000 in the preceding

year. Presumably Mr. Seddon would not suggest that during the war period pensions to retired officers should cease or that the Government should repudiate its liability in this direction.

Governmental expenditure in 1940-41 was £3,143,000; last year it was £3,214,000—an increase of £71,000. An examination of the details of governmental expenditure shows that expenditure directly attributable to the war cost the Government last year £93,000, and in the previous year the amount expended was £37,000—an increase last year of £56,000. Another item of expenditure directly attributable to the war was the premium for war damage insurance which last year amounted to £40,000. No expenditure was incurred under this heading during the preceding year. For these two items alone, therefore, the Government was committed to an additional expenditure of £96,000 as compared with the year 1940-41—an increase which more than accounts for the whole of the increase under governmental expenditure. Mr. Seddon, however, went out of his way to refer to various departments, and it will be of interest, therefore, to examine the figures of expenditure for these departments.

With regard to the Public Works Department, Mr. Seddon criticised expenditure on the assumption that loan expenditure by the Government is being almost entirely restricted to war requirements and that consequently the activities of the department should have eased off sufficiently to show a substantial reduction in expenditure. The fact is, of course, that the department is still carrying out some major public works entirely for the benefit of the State. The expenditure on salaries by the department was £103,000 last year, as compared with £104,000 the preceding year. The charge on revenue, however, was greater, because in 1940-41 we were carrying out more loan works and a larger part of the expenditure on salaries was charged to those works. Mr. Seddon will not deny that this is a legitimate practice and that revenue should bear its proper proportion of the salaries of the officers of the Public Works Department.

Under the Contingencies Vote of this department, the expenditure dropped from £37,000 in 1940-41 to £35,000 in 1941-42, while the expenditure on public buildings, that is, maintenance, etc., dropped from £39,000 to £29,000. I shall now deal with

the revenue of the other departments, as follows:—

Department	1940-41.	1941-42.
Forests Department ..	£29,000	£28,000
Lands Department ..	61,000	57,000
Agricultural Bank ..	93,000	91,000

In each instance a reduction is shown. It has to be remembered—and Mr. Seddon should have known this—that the officers of the Agricultural Bank are largely engaged in administering schemes inaugurated by the Commonwealth Government. For example, the drought-relief money is being distributed by the officers of the Agricultural Bank on behalf of the Commonwealth Government, without charge to that Government.

With regard to the Child Welfare Department, the expenditure for 1940-41 was £132,000, and in 1941-42, £109,000. Mr. Seddon may not think that this is a sufficiently substantial decrease, though it is a reduction of £23,000, or nearly 20 per cent. In his desire to indulge in adverse criticism, Mr. Seddon referred to the fact that with the introduction by the Commonwealth of a widows' pensions scheme, the expenditure of the Child Welfare Department should have shown a material reduction. He should know that the Commonwealth widows' pensions scheme did not commence until this financial year, and therefore it could have had no effect on last year's finances.

The Mines Department's expenditure for 1940-41 was £130,000 and in 1941-42, £123,000. One would have expected that Mr. Seddon, as a goldfields representative, would have familiarised himself with the activities of the Mines Department. He would then have known that its technical officers are engaged very largely in investigating the production of minerals, other than gold, required for Commonwealth war purposes.

The expenditure by the Health Department in 1940-41 was £210,000 and in 1941-42, £218,000. This department controls the mental hospitals, and, with the substantial rise in the cost of living, it is natural that the maintenance costs of those institutions would increase. Anyone examining the details of the expenditure of this department will realise that they alone afford sufficient justification for the small increase in the year's expenditure.

I now come to the Police Department, which is under my own control. The expenditure for 1940-41 was £270,000 and for 1941-42, £280,000, an increase of £10,000; but the increase is due entirely to the war, the strength of the Police Force having had to be increased. This has thrown an additional financial burden on the State.

With regard to public utilities, Mr. Seddon referred to increased expenditure in this direction. It is true that the expenditure under this heading has increased, the expenditure last year being £4,141,000, as against £3,767,000 in the preceding year. However, the revenue earned by public utilities has also increased, the figures being £6,066,000 last year as against £5,683,000 the preceding year, despite a reduction of £48,000 in the earnings of the Goldfields Water Supply, due, of course, to the diminution of activities in the goldmining industry.

Enough has been said to show that Mr. Seddon's criticism was almost entirely unfounded and that, in fact, a very strict control over expenditure has been exercised by the Government. Mr. Seddon is loath to give the Government credit for the reduction effected last year in the public debt. He asserts that the credit is due to the Financial Agreement, though later in his speech he does admit credit is due to the fact that the Government has honoured the Financial Agreement and has maintained the sinking fund in a condition whereby it is able to meet its obligations. Mr. Seddon, as well as every other member of this House, should know that the Financial Agreement was an arrangement forced upon the States by the Commonwealth Government. The basis of Federation was that the Commonwealth should return to the States certain Commonwealth revenues to compensate the States for the loss of the customs duties which were taken over by the Commonwealth on the inauguration of Federation. That right has been gradually but surely whittled away by the Commonwealth Government. Though that Government contributes to the sinking fund for the reduction of the State debt, it does so because it recognises the rights of the States to that assistance.

All States benefit under the Financial Agreement, not Western Australia only, but the agreement imposes a liability on the States to contribute to the sinking fund from Consolidated Revenue. Despite Mr. Seddon's

assertion, the plain fact remains that the public debt was reduced because the State Government borrowed less money in 1940-41 than the amount by which the public debt of the State was reduced. The Government secured all the loan money which it requested last year. It was not a case of the Loan Council refusing to give the State the money it asked for. In that instance, the amount asked for was granted, and it was less than that which was used from the sinking fund to reduce the public debt. There is nothing in the suggestion that the reduced borrowings were forced upon us against our will.

The hope was expressed by Mr. Seddon that future Governments will go on steadily reducing the public debt. He states he is prepared to give full credit to any Government that is able to maintain its obligations under the Financial Agreement. The present Government is very anxious to be successful in that direction. Not only has it given indications of its desire to do this, but I think it has given proof of its ability to do so. I suggest that Mr. Seddon can assist this or any other Government in the required direction by limiting his criticism to helpful suggestions, instead of indulging in adverse comments that are not based on facts. As a rule Mr. Seddon has suggestions to make of a constructive character. On this occasion he endeavoured to criticise the financial activities of the present Government without in any way indicating specific details of the direction in which the Government could have done better than it has. I point out, also, that in recent times this State has been expanding. If we are to progress, we must necessarily expand, and in the process of doing so, we must find additional money from one source or another. That is illustrated to an extent by the figures I have quoted in connection with public utilities. In that instance I pointed out although there has been considerable increase in expenditure there has been more than a comparable increase in revenue derived from the expenditure of that money.

In order that the position may be set out in a form easily understood, I have had a table prepared somewhat on the lines of that which I presented to the House last session or the session before. It will appear in "Hansard," and members, if they care to read it, will then have a proper perspective

of this subject. The statement sets out the position accurately and clearly, and is as follows:—

CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND EXPENDITURE.

1941-42.		£	£
Expenditure from Consolidated Revenue Fund	....	11,938,381	
Of this amount, the following items of expenditure are outside the control of the Treasurer:—			
Amounts appropriated by Parliament under Special Acts:			
Interest and Sinking Fund on the Public Debt	....	4,101,921	
Other Items under Special Acts	....	481,612	
Exchange on Remittances to London—mainly for the payment of Interest	....	498,242	
			5,081,775
			<u>£6,856,606</u>
Of this amount, necessary expenditure incurred on Public Utilities such as Railways, Tramways, Electricity, Water Supplies, etc., to earn the Revenue expected from them was			
			4,129,606
			<u>£2,727,000</u>
Out of which the undermentioned amounts have to be expended on Departments controlling:—			
Education	....	831,095	
Police and Justice	....	368,015	
Medical, Health, Mental Hospitals and Homes	....	217,856	
Public Works, etc.	....	113,744	
Agriculture and Forests	....	136,015	
Mines	....	123,341	
Child Welfare and Outdoor Relief	....	108,833	
Prisons	....	32,372	
			<u>£1,931,271</u>

This leaves a balance of £795,729, out of which other departments have to be financed for the year's operations, as follows:—Premier's Department, covering Tourist Bureau, London Agency, etc., £116,257; Lands Department, £57,191; Native Affairs, £44,000; Harbour and Light, £29,513; Chief Secretary's Department, £20,516; Legislative Council, £15,867, and other departments such as Factories, Friendly Societies, Fisheries, Arbitration Court, etc. If members will examine and thoroughly dissect that statement, I think they will find that any Government, let alone the present one, could possibly effect only a small reduction in expenditure.

More than one member has referred to the subject of industrial development, which is a most important phase of the State's activities that will make a tremendous difference to this State as the years go by. From my knowledge of the operations of the department concerned, I am aware that a tremendous volume of work has been done. Of much of that work we can have no knowledge, and much of it will, I think, benefit this State in an indirect manner rather than directly. The technical officers of the de-

partment spend a great deal of time examining all sorts of proposals, some of which do not come to anything; but in the case of others, where there appears to be a worthwhile reason to continue investigations, experiments and inquiries are made in the hope that they will eventually lead to something being accomplished of tangible value to the State.

One of the largest projects handled by the department in recent times is that of the alumite deposits at Lake Campion. More than one member in the course of this debate referred particularly to that subject. Mr. Seddon said it was time a report was presented to Parliament, and stated that more information was necessary. I have obtained particulars regarding these deposits, but point out it is information that any member can obtain for himself; and I will tell him how. Mr. Seddon remarked that any attempt to establish in Western Australia a large scale industry such as this, must obviously be affected by the price of fuel. He wanted information on that particular aspect. Further on in his remarks the hon. member, again referring to the activities of the Department of Industrial Development, said a considerable amount of money was being expended by that department, and that a report should be laid on the Table of the House stating the activities on which the officials had been engaged to indicate what was being done. Full reports on these activities are circulated monthly and a copy is forwarded to the Leaders of the Country Party and the National Party, who would no doubt make the reports available to Mr. Seddon for his perusal. The hon. member or any other member can also have access to them on application to the department, if desired. These reports indicate that progress is being made despite the difficult conditions created by war.

The construction of the plant to produce potash and other by-products at Lake Campion is well advanced. Difficulty has been experienced in obtaining certain machinery that is not available in this State. There is every reason to believe that a great chemical industry will be developed at Lake Campion. Research work is being continued in respect to the recovery of by-products, and the results today are very encouraging—so much so that it appears that the so-called "by-products" will be of even greater importance than the main product, potash. Testing by

boring has shown that the deposit is estimated to contain 16,000,000 tons of high grade of alunitic clay, representing 1,750,000 tons of potash, 3,250,000 tons of alumina, and 750,000 tons of sulphur. This quantity of material is sufficient to maintain the contemplated rate of production for 100 years.

This is perhaps one of the biggest undertakings yet launched by this or any other Government. In view of the fact that the progress already made is so encouraging, I think I am safe in saying that before long we shall have established here an industry that will prove of the utmost value not only to Western Australia but to the Commonwealth as a whole. It is proposed to use local timber as fuel, and the present contract provides for the delivery of timber at the works for approximately 12s per ton. That particular information, I think, replies to Mr. Seddon's query regarding fuel. When the plant is in full production it is estimated that potash will be produced at less than the pre-war landed cost of imported potash.

Details were also requested by Mr. Seddon regarding the charcoal pig-iron project as mentioned in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech. The hon. member said that while we have considerable forestry resources in this State, and that charcoal iron is the purest form of iron it is possible to get, apart from electrolytic iron, the magnitude of output necessary for iron to be produced at anything like a satisfactory cost was so great that he could not see how it would be possible to establish a blast furnace to operate on charcoal, and at the same time produce iron commercially profitable to Western Australia. He suggested that the scheme was one on which more information should be given.

As I have already said, many experiments are carried out by the department from time to time. We cannot afford to neglect any proposal that may appear on the surface to be of advantage to Western Australia. All I can say on this particular matter at the moment is that the time is premature to give definite information regarding the charcoal iron project, as the details have not yet been finalised. However, Mr. Seddon can rest assured that the matter is being actively pursued and that every care is being exercised to ensure that any action taken will be based on sound economics. Already valuable information has been obtained is respect to the industry.

Wood distillation processes by which it is proposed to obtain charcoal for iron smelting and also to recover by-products are receiving attention. A pilot wood distillation plant has been in operation for some time and valuable information has been collated in respect to the yields obtained from a number of our hardwoods.

I am advised that the production of pyrite to replace imported brimstone has already commenced. Local sources of pyrite have been investigated and it is hoped that before long the whole of our raw material for the manufacture of sulphuric acid will be supplied from these sources. Before the war brimstone to the value of £250,000 per annum was imported into Western Australia. The successful establishment of that particular project will be a matter of great importance to the State.

These are matters mentioned in monthly reports of the Department of Industrial Development and clearly indicate that real progress is being made. New minerals such as vermiculite, steatite and ochres are being produced. Eight factories are engaged in canning foods for the Fighting Forces. Amongst the foods canned are vegetables, meats, fish and crustaceans. A large modern vegetable oil extraction factory has been established; linseed is already being cultivated to supply this factory, and attention is being given to other vegetables for oil extraction such as peanuts, tomato seed and soya bean.

Special attention is being given to the production of fibres from indigenous plants and trees. Progress is being made with the project to produce fibre from cape tulip as a substitute for sisal hemp and also with a project to produce a substitute for bass fibre and cork from the *Kingia* palm. Additional cast steel capacity plant is being installed at Government workshops. The Commonwealth Government, in anticipation of additional munition orders involving cast steel being placed in Western Australia, has provided a grant to cover the cost of the installation. A considerable volume of work is being done in connection with the future establishment of industries to provide for employment in the post-war period. The value of this work will become evident when hostilities cease and may prove in the future of even greater value than at the present moment.

Unfortunately Western Australia has not shared to the same extent in the prosperity

which has followed the establishment of war industries in the more densely populated States, and our position has been aggravated by the tendency of large Eastern States business interests to still regard this State as a milch cow. Western Australia suffers a serious handicap in respect to the supply of raw materials. Large interests in the Eastern States are apparently able to secure space for the shipment of manufactured goods to Western Australia to the exclusion of raw materials urgently required by our own manufacturers.

Hon. H. Tuckey: Is there no means by which that can be stopped?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I think there should be. We know that the shipping position is very acute. Several committees have been appointed by the Commonwealth Government—in some instances there is State representation on them—to supervise matters of this description, but nevertheless from time to time most extraordinary things have happened. Possibly members have in mind two or three instances that occurred quite recently. One was mentioned in connection with gas producers. It is generally recognised that Western Australia can claim to be, in some respects at any rate, the pioneer in the manufacture of gas producers. Some of our firms have specialised in that direction and it is most galling to think that in many instances they have not been able to continue manufacturing owing to inability to secure supplies of raw materials from the Eastern States. At the same time we had the spectacle, which was an outstanding example of what has been happening, of the recent importation of 264 Nasco and 30 International gas producers. This does not help our industrial expansion, and the importation of made-up gas producers manufactured in the Eastern States takes up valuable shipping space urgently required for materials to expand industries in this State.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Shame!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: They took up space that could have been occupied by necessary raw materials that had we been able to import them, would have enabled many more gas producers to be manufactured here than were actually landed.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Who controls the allocation of shipping space?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: As I mentioned previously, the Commonwealth Gov-

ernment set up two or three committees that were given extraordinarily wide powers to deal with this problem. We have to recognise that those bodies are confronted with serious difficulties, but there is one committee which is supposed to have a knowledge of goods awaiting shipment and to have authority to determine priorities of despatch. Unfortunately it is very hard to pin the responsibility for delays upon any one individual, and therefore such happenings do occur. Some members have referred to the importation of salt, of which we can produce huge quantities for our own requirements, and also the importation of flour. Such instances make one feel at times that Western Australia does not receive the consideration it should in these and other matters.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Has the State Government made any protest to the Commonwealth Government against such importations?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. The Government has taken the matter up with appropriate authorities in the Eastern States and has drawn attention to the effect upon Western Australia. As a result of such protests certain action has been taken which I hope will put a limit to such occurrences.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Good!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: During the course of his remarks Mr. E. H. H. Hall referred to copper supplies in this State, more particularly in the Northampton district. He stated that in August last the Under Secretary for Mines was reported in the Press to have said that Western Australia possessed four good sources of copper supplies, namely, Ravensthorpe, Whim Creek, Ilgerarie and Northampton, and that reports thereon had been placed before the Federal authorities. The hon. member asked whether or not the Commonwealth Government had done anything in the matter.

The Press statement referred to by Mr. Hall merely mentioned these centres as possible sources of supply, information concerning which had been forwarded to the Commonwealth. This information was based on past records, no up-to-date records being available for the reason that copper mining in this State had been decadent for many years. Certain investigations have since been made, and all available information has been submitted to the Federal authorities. As a result, the Commonwealth in-

augurated drilling operations at Whim Creek, in order to ascertain the extent of the deposits there.

Regarding the Northampton district, I am advised that following the investigations to which I have just referred, a visit of inspection was made by a senior technical officer of the Mines Department, but I regret to say his report indicates that deposits there do not warrant development. The Under Secretary for Mines is now the Deputy Director of Mineral Production and is actively engaged in speeding up the production of strategic minerals, including copper, and members can rest assured that no stone will be left unturned in this connection in the State's interests. In matters of this description all Governments naturally have to be guided by their technical officers. While it is not at all times possible to adopt the reports of the officers concerned, nevertheless when an adverse report is received the Government cannot very well proceed much further with the matter.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: The mine I referred to could not have been inspected because the water has covered the workings for years.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If the hon. member desires more information regarding the inspection that was made, he can procure it; but I think if he peruses the report he will agree that it is not possible at present to recommend that the deposits be developed as he would like.

In his rather brief remarks Mr. Parker saw fit to criticise the Government's action in dispersing children from schools in areas which would obviously be target areas in the event of any enemy action, in the form of either raids or full-scale attacks. The hon. member expressed the opinion that the children should be sent back to their old schools, and that the lack of full educational facilities, and a similar lack in the upbringing of small children, are things which will affect future generations. Mr. Parker added that only as a last resort should we interfere with the educational facilities afforded to our children, and expressed the hope that I, as the responsible Minister, would examine the position with the idea of reverting to normal school hours and re-opening closed schools.

This is indeed a most important matter, and it is being carefully watched by the Education Department from day to day.

The departmental policy has been one of caution, and it is not at all consistent with what one may term the complacent atmosphere evidently surrounding Mr. Parker. A few months ago the action of the department received the full support of every section of the community. We then felt, when we were faced with almost imminent attack, that such was the action we ought to take. Members will recollect my advising the House that the course adopted by the department was decided upon only after the opinions of competent authorities had been obtained. The result is that we have dispersed the children from the concentrated metropolitan area. In consequence, many of the school buildings are still occupied by one arm or another of the Defence Forces.

Apart from the risk of casualties in the event of a raid, the department had to consider other risks attendant on the presence of 2,000 adolescents attending schools in the centre of Perth—60 per cent. being girls—of whom the greater part used public conveyances. In the event of a raid during a school session, there would be difficulties and dangers owing to disorganised transport. That is one reason for the dispersal of children attending suburban schools. This dispersal minimises the attendant risks, as the majority of the pupils concerned are now receiving their instruction nearer their homes and in less dangerous areas. Admittedly there are inconveniences, and possibly the education of these children may be affected—though I think this aspect can easily be exaggerated. The department prefers to be cautious rather than incur risks. It is easy to criticise actions taken when enemy threats were more apparent though, I maintain, no more real than they are today. I do not think there is justification for assuming that the present improvement of the situation is permanent.

The moment it is considered safe to re-open any of the closed schools which may be available, that course will be taken. I may say that I have received numerous letters from parents and organisations on this phase of the subject. Some of these letters deal with minor matters, such as the staggering of school hours and the matter of transport for young children who have been compelled to attend schools a little further from their homes than were the schools they formerly attended. Our endeavour has been to minimise, as far as possible, the

inconvenience to which children and parents have been, and are, subjected; but we must recognise that the country is at war, and that any inconveniences suffered in the metropolitan area, at all events to date, are a mere bagatelle compared with what the inconveniences would be had we to face a genuine threat of attack. In the event of there being further necessity for action of this kind, our organisation should work very smoothly indeed.

Difficulties have been experienced by both the department and the teachers. The dispersal of 6,000 children into other and smaller schools has presented problems of accommodation and interference with teachers as regards the classes they have to control. I wish to compliment the teachers affected, because male and female teachers alike have endeavoured to meet the altered situation, in many cases at great inconvenience to themselves. They have paid regard solely to the benefits to be derived by the children. Therefore, while the department is quite prepared to revert to the old order of things at the earliest possible moment, it looks as if some considerable time must elapse before the closed schools can be re-occupied departmentally. In the meantime all must make the best of things.

Another subject discussed during this debate is that of technical education. Members have shown by their remarks that they are seized of the importance of extending the scope of this branch of our educational system. If the Government had not realised earlier the importance of technical education, the war would certainly have forced upon Ministers the prime importance of this branch of secondary education. However, the Government did see, in a progressive policy of technical education, the sure foundation of industrial efficiency; and a further extension of facilities has been carried out in spite of the financial curtailments made a few years ago. The construction of a new block of buildings at the Perth Technical College at a cost of £60,000, and of the Domestic Arts School at a cost of £15,000, was completed during 1940 in the former instance and during 1941 in the latter. These establishments represent a substantial step forward, and fulfil a long-felt want. Furthermore, the department has just completed the trade block at Fremantle, which is the first step towards the provision of a technical high school for that centre. It

will provide post-primary education with a decided technical bias for pupils; and boys completing the course there will naturally move on to senior technical courses.

As part of the Commonwealth provision for Army technical training, workshop units are now in course of erection at Leederville and Midland Junction at a cost of £25,000. These buildings are urgently needed for Army technical training, and their design is such as will enable them to fit in with post-war technical developments. Great care has been taken in the allocation, in order that those units will serve as a nucleus of suburban technical schools. A very fine site has been resumed at Leederville, and future educational development at Midland Junction is envisaged. Owing to the dislocation of staff due to military service, the policy recently formulated of extending technical education to country towns through the use of high school facilities has not been implemented. The matter will, however, receive attention as soon as circumstances permit. Taken in its wider sense, agricultural instruction comes under the heading of technical education.

Recently the Narrogin School of Agriculture was taken over by the Army to be used as a convalescent hospital; and in view of the important services rendered by this school in the education of youth in farming theory and practice, the department has arranged to conduct the school at Denmark in conjunction with the research station there. This was only accomplished after considerable trouble and inconvenience, but the Government could not allow so valuable an instrument of education to lapse until all possibilities of carrying it on had been explored. Nobody will doubt the important service rendered by that school in years gone by. It has a wonderful reputation. I think it is recognised throughout the Commonwealth as being one of the finest schools of its kind. To the department it came as quite a shock to receive such very short notice that the school had to be vacated in order that it might be used for the purpose I have mentioned. The pupils were dispersed. They went home and the department endeavoured to find a substitute for the vacated school. I am very pleased to say that with the co-operation of the Agricultural Department, we have been able to make use of the Denmark Research Farm, and the school is now established there. Without exception, every

organisation and, I think, every person in the district has been only too pleased to do everything possible to make a success of this attempt to use Denmark as the location for a farm training school, in the place of Narrogin. I have a feeling that it is going to be a very big success and that it will probably lead to further experiments of this nature when the time is opportune. Our facilities at Denmark are not up to the standard reached at Narrogin, but that difficulty is rapidly being overcome and from the reports I have received to date I feel sure that the students will not suffer in any way as a result of the transfer.

I now come to a subject that has been giving a good deal of concern not only to members of Parliament, but also to the public generally. More than one member has referred to the menace of venereal diseases. That is a very important matter and one which the public generally is beginning to realise cannot be dealt with too drastically. The consequences are too serious for us to ignore for any length of time and I assure members that the Government is no less concerned than they regarding this problem. I do not propose to speak at any great length on the subject but I intend to give members a little information which I hope they will accept as being satisfactory.

When the Venereal Diseases Act was first introduced in 1915, it was agreed that ignorance was largely responsible for both immorality and the resulting diseases which so often followed, and that the time had come when, in the interests of the individual and the race, plain speaking should supersede veiled utterance and the conspiracy of silence which had existed in regard to sex matters. In the interim, the provisions of that Act have been conscientiously applied by the Health Department, with the result that infected persons have been kept under treatment, ignorance to a considerable extent has been banished, and punishment has been meted out to those who have defied the provisions of the Act. Educational pamphlets regarding these diseases have been available to all wanting them, and for many years the Commissioner of Public Health has, on request, issued to parents leaflet letters for guidance in the instruction of the young in sex matters. These have been largely sought throughout Western Australia, and have been asked for by many people in other States.

Until the outbreak of this war there had been a very considerable reduction in the incidence of venereal disease; especially syphilis. Since the war started it is true that a rise in the incidence of venereal diseases has taken place, much of which cannot be due to ignorance. As in all wars, it is only too evident that moral inhibitions have broken down under the glamour of the service uniform, too often assisted by alcohol. It is becoming evident, too, that much of this looseness is due to lack of parental control and guidance in the past.

The war is in progress, however, and soldiers are being put out of action every day by venereal disease. We have done what we could in peace-time by more peaceful measures; we must now segregate the diseased to prevent the spread of disease, punish the recalcitrant and the aider and abettor of vice, and, above all things urge, to our utmost, parental control where this appears to be lacking.

For those reasons it has been found necessary to take unusual steps in regard to this problem. Members who have referred to the subject also spoke of the actions of the vice squad. The Police Department does not recognise a vice squad. We certainly have what is known as a special squad, to which special duties have been allotted. In view of the criticism which has been offered regarding the activities of this so-called vice squad, I feel it is necessary to point out that the duties being performed by the special squad—I do not want to use the word "vice" if I can help it—are those that have always been carried out by the police. The only difference is that, prior to the appointment of the special squad, the work was part and parcel of the general duties of members of the police force. Today we have satisfied ourselves as to the necessities of the situation and have appointed the special squad to deal with these particular duties and nothing else until such times as the position has been cleared up. From my inside knowledge of the operations of the squad, I am sure that it is to be congratulated on the way in which it has carried out its duties. It has had a most unpleasant task to perform and I am rather surprised when I hear some of the criticism which is offered concerning the officers comprising the squad.

Hon. H. Tuckey: There is not very much criticism.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No, not very much, but it is very ill-informed. I would point out that our experience during the present war is really no different from our experience during the previous war and we can, perhaps, to an extent profit from earlier experience. I think we are doing so. The number of cases that appear in the Police Court are not all that are handled by the special squad—not by a long way. When I tell this House that in scores of instances the special squad has spoken to, and given advice to, young women and girls, placed them in the control of their parents, and taken action that has been successful from our point of view, without any publicity being given to the circumstances, I think it will be agreed that the job is being done in the right way. I go further and say that in no case where a prosecution has been taken under the Police Act have the police taken action without every justification for that course, quite irrespective of the possibility of the persons concerned requiring medical attention. That should dispose of the criticism levelled against the department for the publication of names in the Press.

In that regard I would point out that the publication of the names does not come within the jurisdiction of the Police Department. The Court is an open tribunal but it is possible for the magistrate, if he so desires, to clear it. To date our magistrates have not considered that to be necessary. Consequently the proceedings have been open to the Press, which has published the names in cases of this kind. The department has done its utmost to protect the interests of those people who might be adversely affected in matters of this description. But when I repeat that in every case there has been ample justification for the prosecution of these people, quite apart from the possibility of their requiring medical attention, I think it must be admitted that there is no reason for the suppression of the facts. When all is said and done, if a person is charged before the court with any other offence, there is no agitation that his name should not be published.

So far as offences under the Police Act are concerned, and more particularly where the vagrancy section of that Act is utilised, members can be assured that the prosecutions are based, not only on the necessity

for medical attention, but on the actual facts of each case. I have before me a statement from the Commissioner of Public Health dealing with the question of V.D. It indicates that from 1937 to 1941 the total number of civilian cases in this State was reduced from 1,089 to 431, and that for the year ended the 31st July, 1942, the recorded number of civilian cases was only 270. That shows, as I have already said, that there has been a progressive improvement during recent years. That improvement is very definite so far as the civilian population is concerned, but I regret to say that during the last 12 months particularly, the number of cases affecting our Armed Forces has tremendously increased. The department is co-operating as far as it can with the military authorities in this matter.

When speaking yesterday afternoon, Mr. Cornell suggested that if we took the same steps as the military authorities, or if the military authorities took the same steps today as they did during the 1914-18 war, that in itself would improve the position considerably. I do not know very much of the details of what took place during the previous war, but recently I have had an opportunity of conferring with some of those responsible for these matters so far as the Military Forces are concerned, and I can assure members that the position is being tackled in a proper manner. Its seriousness is appreciated, and I express the hope that with the continued co-operation of our own State departments with those concerned in the various branches of our Armed Forces and the American Armed Forces, this terrible scourge, which apparently is so greatly on the increase, will not only be checked but will be reduced to as low a percentage as possible.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: The position is much more serious than it was during the last war.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: A different set of circumstances is operating. The position is more serious in Australia than it was during the 1914-18 war. We have large congregations of troops in various parts of this State, and the trouble is not confined to the metropolitan area. It is a serious position and has to be faced. None of us likes openly to discuss the subject, although, on the other hand, the time has arrived when we should not be afraid to state the facts.

Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. G. W. Miles: Quite right.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: And to indicate what steps are being taken by the responsible officials in order to meet the situation.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: I am not discounting any efforts that have been made. I think wonderful service has been given.

Hon. J. Cornell: The entire blame belongs to high-ranking military officers.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not propose to blame any particular individual. It has been said that the State itself might have taken action earlier. There is no ground for such an argument. Immediately it became apparent that it was necessary to do more than is normally done in matters of this kind, action was taken. It was only at a certain stage when positive action had been taken in the way I have described, by the appointment of a special squad, that any publicity was given to this subject. While some criticism is ill-informed, at the same time I have to admit that we do not as a rule give great publicity to the activities of those people whose duty it is to deal with this matter. As I pointed out a little earlier, all matters affecting the civilian population under our Health Act have to be treated in a very confidential way. I know of no department which recognises its obligations under an Act as does the Health Department in relation to this matter. It carries out the terms of the Act to the fullest possible extent. The position, however, has now become very serious, because so many soldiers have become incapacitated, and it is necessary that special measures be taken. They are being carried out sensibly, and I feel sure that, with the co-operation of all concerned, we will reach the stage when we can say that we have at least stopped the drift, and that the time is not far distant when the problem will be properly under control.

Hon. J. Cornell: My information is that the military authorities are not, even now, taking half the preventive measures taken towards the end of the previous war.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am afraid I cannot discuss that matter with the hon. member. I wish to refer to some of Dr. Hislop's remarks. He made a very interesting contribution to the debate, and drew attention to the loss which he said could accrue in certain instances to enlisted mine workers by their forfeiting all rights to a State pen-

sion or a pension from the Repatriation Department. I understand the position as outlined by him is adequately covered by the provisions of the Mine Workers' Relief (War Service) Act passed in 1940, which made special provision for the protection of the rights and interests of mine workers, within the meaning of the Mine Workers' Relief Act, 1932-34, who are continuously engaged on war service in time of war. That amending Act provides that where a mine worker, either by reason of enlistment or call-up, is engaged on war service continuously during the time of war, he shall be covered by the following provisions while engaged on such war service and for a period of six months thereafter:—

- (a) He is deemed to be still employed as a mine worker so as to enable him to submit himself for examination and to be examined by the Commonwealth Health Laboratory and to obtain a medical certificate as provided for under the principal Act.
- (b) His liability to contribute to the Mine Workers' Relief Fund is wholly suspended.
- (c) If, upon examination by the laboratory he is found to be eligible for any benefit under the principal Act and is then no longer engaged on war service, he shall be entitled to receive from the board out of the fund the benefit for which he has been found eligible.

Hon. J. Cornell: Is he still covered by workers' compensation?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This refers to mine workers' relief.

Hon. J. Cornell: Today he gets it from both.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: A man who enlists from the industry or is called up is regarded as still being in the industry.

Hon. J. Cornell: As long as his workers' compensation is covered, it is all right.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: He is therefore eligible to report upon the end of his service, or within six months of the end of the war, for further medical examination. If he is then found to be entitled to any benefit under the Mine Workers' Relief Act, he can obtain it. If he complies with these requirements, he does not forfeit any benefits under the Mine Workers' Relief Act. The logical thing to do in each instance is for the man concerned to report and be examined.

Hon. J. Cornell: Today he is entitled to get £650 from workers' compensation, and then 25s. a week.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am giving the information supplied by the department. I am not in a position to go into the details as to the amount involved, or just how far the benefits apply beyond what I have stated. These remarks are in response to the contention put forward by Dr. Hislop that, on account of the examination made of these men when they enter the Armed Forces, there is a possibility of their losing some of the benefits when they leave the Army because no trace has been found of their having suffered from the disease concerned.

I desire to refer to another matter which was raised more particularly by Mr. Miles. He is not the most frequent speaker in this House, and when he does rise in his place, he is usually terse and to the point. On this occasion I think he excelled himself, but he rather spoiled what was otherwise a pleasing effort by his vitriolic words at the close of his remarks. After his outburst I hope he felt somewhat relieved, because I can hardly think he meant what he said when he described the action of the Government in connection with the basic wage as diabolical.

Hon. G. W. Miles: I maintain it still. The Government went over the head of the Arbitration Court.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I can understand that it is very hard for any man, after a life-time's association with those organisations and activities which are more concerned in preventing the working classes from improving their positions from a wages point of view, to change his views.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Do not accuse me of that! I have paid more than the arbitration wage all my life.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am not suggesting that the hon. member has done otherwise, but I am suggesting that when he describes the action of the Government in this case as diabolical, he is going a little too far.

Hon. G. W. Miles: I do not think so, not for a minute.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. member is entitled to his opinion. I propose briefly to relate the facts of the case. In the early part of the year the Commonwealth Government, under a National Security Regulation, decided to do several things, one of which was to peg wages as at the 10th February, with certain exceptions.

Those exceptions included a provision that where any automatic adjustment of the basic wage was the law, it should continue to operate.

Hon. L. Craig: And also under agreement.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There would be no restrictions insofar as such adjustments were concerned. It so happens that in Western Australia the quarterly adjustment of the basic wage has not been automatic. It has been permissive. In other words, the court could decide whether the variation should take place in accordance with the Government Statistician's figures or not. Western Australia was the only State not affected by the regulation. On inquiry, the Government found that those responsible for drafting the regulations were under the impression that they would apply to Western Australia. We must not forget that the regulations were to apply to the whole of Australia and not merely to one or more States. The Government took the view that it would be most unjust if the workers of this State were denied what the workers in every other State of Australia received under the Commonwealth National Security Regulations. We made representations to the Commonwealth Government on that account.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Do you still maintain that a worker here is worth more than a worker in the same industry in other States?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I still maintain that the worker in this State is entitled to the same treatment as is meted out to workers in other States of the Commonwealth.

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch: Is he entitled to better treatment?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am not suggesting that he gets better treatment.

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch: That was the argument used by the employees' representative in the Arbitration Court—that he was entitled to better treatment.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am not suggesting that he is entitled to better treatment. I am stating that he is entitled to the same treatment as is given to workers in the other States.

Hon. G. W. Miles: He gets better treatment.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I should like members to understand that Western Australia has a very fine reputation industrially.

Hon. G. W. Miles: It ought to have.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There was every possibility that that reputation might be somewhat damaged. The Government took the stand that as a matter of common justice—no other argument was needed—it was essential that the workers of this State should receive exactly similar treatment to that being meted out to their colleagues in every other State of the Commonwealth.

Hon. G. W. Miles: But what is mentioned in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech? You were going to give Parliament an opportunity to decide it. Why was that done?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Parliament will have an opportunity to determine that question, but the point raised by the hon. member has nothing whatever to do with that with which I am dealing. I have already told the hon. member that in this State, under our Industrial Arbitration Act, the variation of the basic wage in accordance with the Statistician's cost of living figures is permissive, and this House will have an opportunity before long to decide whether it shall be automatic or not.

Hon. L. Craig: It is permissive in two of the other States.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No, it automatically applied in each of the other States.

Hon. L. Craig: It is not compulsory in all the other States.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This House will have an opportunity to consider the amendment. Had we waited until Parliament had amended the Act, the workers of this State would have been refused what, in my opinion, they are entitled to for the period that would elapse between the time the Government acted and the time when the Act was amended. If I am any judge at all of probabilities, it would be extremely difficult indeed to get this House to recognise, even if it is prepared to amend the section of the Act, that the alteration should have retrospective effect. I think it was Mr. Cornell who suggested that the Government had shown indecent haste in making the adjustment. The Government did not act without consideration. The matter was the subject of correspondence with the Commonwealth Government for a considerable time. This Government, through the Premier, acted at the earliest possible moment, and, as it happens, at the only time it was possible for the Government to act, for owing to the wording of the regulation it was

necessary that action should be taken at the time when and for the period over which the decision would have been given, upon receipt of the statistician's figures. So there is nothing in the argument that the Government not only acted "diabolically" in the matter but showed "indecent haste" in doing so. My personal feeling is that the workers have received only that to which they are fully entitled. I have not yet met one person prepared to argue seriously that Western Australian workers are not entitled to receive from time to time the difference in cost of living as indicated by the Government Statistician.

It is all very well for those in receipt of higher incomes to suggest that Western Australian workers should be quite prepared to make that sacrifice. I contend that the workers of this State are prepared to make as big sacrifices as any other section, but I do not think it fair to call upon a worker to sacrifice some portion of what has been commonly called the basic standard of living when so many others in the community have hardly been called upon to sacrifice any appreciable portion of their higher standard. In this House, during the current debate, we have heard complaints not as regards the basic wage or the cost of living generally but as regards the very high cost of requirements which are necessary but which are not included among those items upon which the Government Statistician's figures are based. We are all well aware of the numerous items forming part and parcel of the ordinary, every-day necessities of the people but not included in the 42 items the cost of which goes to constitute the cost of living figure upon which the basic wage is fixed. Therefore the Government's action in this matter has been only common justice to large numbers of working men and women in this country who are behind the war effort one hundred per cent.—nobody can deny that—and who are prepared, if the necessity does arise, to make the fullest possible sacrifices.

There are other matters with which I desire to deal briefly. Mr. Hamersley, in the course of his remarks, criticised the Water Supply Department's action in respect of enforcement of payment of rates for country water supplies, but the hon. member gave only one side of the story. Mr. Wood also referred to this matter, saying that a person residing in the Bencubbin district had

written to him stating that water had been cut off because the Agricultural Bank would not pay the miserable amount of his water rates. I dealt with similar statements two sessions ago, and can only reiterate what I said then, that the departments concerned have given every satisfaction to their clients. However, I have again had inquiries made, and as a result find that the general instructions issued this year are that cut-off action should be taken only in those instances where the departmental communications have been ignored and where no offer of payment by reasonable instalments has been received.

Members will appreciate that the departmental officials are held responsible for seeing that the duties imposed on them by Parliament under water supply legislation in connection with recovery of revenue are adequately performed. Of course, if rate-payers fail to take the officials into their confidence at the right time, regrettable and unavoidable embarrassment is caused to both sides. The minimum period which elapsed this year between the issue of the first rate notice and the cutting-off of the water was two months, which in my opinion gives consumers ample time within which to approach the department. It can be definitely stated that drastic action has not been taken in any case where a farmer or other debtor of the Water Supply Department has placed a reasonable statement or offer before the department. It can also be definitely stated that no instance has yet come before the department in which a farmer has been forced to leave his land solely owing to the department's endeavours to enforce payment of water rates.

When I advise members that the arrears owing by farmers on account of these rates totalled £170,000 as at the 30th June, 1941, it will be apparent that the department has shown itself anything but unsympathetic. Again, for the five years ended the 30th June, 1941, the amounts written off on account of these rates totalled £62,565. I do not think there can be any criticism of the department in this respect when the facts are appreciated. The capital cost of the district schemes—those not supplied entirely from the Mundaring reservoir—as at the 30th June, 1941, were as follows: Barbalin district £300,970, Narembreen district £74,749, Kondinin district £40,321. If the whole of the rates now levied were collected, the amount would not be sufficient to meet

all the charges, including loan servicing. Some two years ago a special arrangement was entered into with the Agricultural Bank Commissioners as to farmers in the declared marginal districts. No cut-off action has been instituted this year in the case of these particular properties. General experience has shown that many farmers pay, if not all, at least a reasonable proportion of their liabilities, but that for some reason or other they neglect to make any effort to assist the Water Supply Department in clearing the very substantial total of arrears now outstanding on country lands.

I would like to submit a specific case to members. In that instance, which was recently taken up with the department by a farmers' organisation, the department pointed out that the farmer in question owed a total of £531 for water rates on one property, representing six years' accumulation, and that on another property leased by him a further £333 was due. The farmer submitted information to the effect that his total income from wheat and wool last year amounted to £1,550; but nothing was paid to the Water Supply Department, notwithstanding that he freely admitted in his communication that his farm could not have been worked without the use of water.

Hon. L. Craig: Did the department make every effort to secure payment?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The farmer also stated that the whole of the proceeds of his sheep were taken by a stock firm. His payments to the Water Supply Department amount to £10 in the last two years; but he did not place his position before the department prior to the water being cut off. If there were many similar cases, one could easily understand why it is necessary for the department eventually to take drastic action. I am pleased to say that the collections for country lands for the year 1942 are substantially higher than those of the previous year, thus indicating that many farmers have made efforts to meet their water supply obligations. Mr. Wood said that the rates should be paid by the Agricultural Bank; but the question of payment is really one between the department and the farmer. Where advances are made by the bank to enable a client to carry on his farming activities for the year, the Commissioners are unable to favour any particular creditor, such as the Water Supply Department, as any advance made for such a pur-

pose would create a precedent having far-reaching results and payments could not be confined to water rates, but would extend to road board rates, licenses, machinery hire and numerous other claims. Mr. Tuckey raised the question of the payment of outstanding road board rates; these would be brought within the same category and consequently an impossible position would arise for the Agricultural Bank.

Hon. H. L. Roche: The other banks recognise their obligation to pay road board rates.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: But other banks are in an entirely different position from that of the Agricultural Bank. The question of lighting restrictions was raised by several members in the course of the debate. I listened with interest to their expressions of opinion, and am gratified to know that they appreciate the voluntary services of the Civil Defence Council, even though they do not agree entirely with that council in respect to lighting restrictions. I am, however, rather surprised at some of the statements. For instance, Mr. Wood said—

Last session this House disallowed certain regulations, and in another place members of all parties expressed their disapproval of masked headlights, especially on country roads. About a month later, the Minister for Civil Defence rushed to Canberra and obtained the gazettal of a Federal regulation over-riding what the State Parliament had done.

A statement was made by Mr. Tuckey to the effect that he was surprised the State Government had invited the Federal authorities to upset the decision of this House. Hon. members must have short memories. They should know that this House disallowed the lighting regulations while the Minister for Mines was actually attending a civil defence conference in Melbourne, and gave him no opportunity of then explaining the latest developments. Actually, the Minister heard of the disallowance by telegram from the present G.O.C., Major-General Gordon Bennett. That telegram urged that the restrictions be retained on account of the State's vulnerable position. The matter was then discussed with the Commonwealth authorities, who stated that, as the position was most serious, they were going to discuss it with the military authorities and then prepare any necessary Commonwealth orders. The matter was discussed at the civil defence conference and members will recall that eventually the Commonwealth decided

upon a change in the lighting restrictions, but only as these affected certain States. Consequently, some of the restrictions in Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania and in parts of New South Wales, were removed.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Why does not Major-General Gordon Bennett see that the military authorities in this State obey those regulations themselves?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. member might ask Major-General Bennett that question.

Hon. G. W. Miles: You quoted him as an authority that advised the reinstatement of the restrictions.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is so.

Hon. G. W. Miles: It is up to him to see that the restrictions are observed.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Members are aware of that decision of the Commonwealth authorities, and know that motor car lighting restrictions are to continue throughout the Commonwealth. I am in agreement with some of the remarks made by members on this matter. I cannot see what difference the restrictions will make to vehicles used 400 or 500 miles inland; but we must be in a position to impose the restrictions in their entirety at any moment.

Members: Hear, hear!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We have the experience of other countries to guide us. I presume most members know of a happening only a few months ago when there was a sudden enemy attack at night-time and hundreds of motor cars had not their lights masked. As a result, the enemy was able to succeed in the way it did and as quickly as it did. We do not want to be put in that position. We want to be able to take necessary precautions at any moment of the day or night.

In referring to the lighting restrictions in Adelaide, Mr. Piesse quoted an extract from the "Adelaide Chronicle" of the 23rd July last, indicating that some relaxation of the restrictions had been permitted in South Australia. This served to show, he said, that the South Australian Government was able to deal with the matter itself, and he asked why this Government could not act similarly. That, however, is not the actual position. The restrictions apply to the whole of Australia, with exceptions in certain States. So far, the Commonwealth is not prepared to remove the restrictions in certain areas in Western Aus-

tralia. I may add that the action of the Commonwealth Government was taken after due consideration of the subject with the Defence authorities.

Hon. J. Cornell: It would be better if the Federal authorities had a look at their own buildings.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Considerable improvement has taken place in that regard quite recently. I have observed in recent weeks that every military vehicle I have passed has, without exception, had a mask of one kind or another fitted over its lights. I am also satisfied that the instructions of the Army authorities are very frequently not obeyed by the men in charge of the vehicles. I have good grounds for saying that on many occasions vehicles have left camp fitted with the proper mask and then have been seen away from the camp with one mask and in some cases both masks removed. That is a matter for the military authorities to attend to, and I think they do so when they are aware of the facts.

Hon. J. Cornell: If such things had happened during the 1914-18 war, those responsible would have appeared in the orderly room.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The trouble is that this kind of thing can occur without the knowledge of those in authority. Mr. Roche raised the question of the application of the restrictions where burning-off operations are likely to take place. I understand from the information supplied to me that this matter has received the attention of the Civil Defence Council, and that the police have been given instructions that will have the effect of removing any further cause of complaint in that regard.

Hon. H. Tuckey: The police have an impossible job.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is an impossible job, but at the same time I agree that it would be ridiculous to expect that in the case reported by Mr. Roche anything of that kind should be done. Referring to the zoning of cream deliveries, Mr. Roche said:—

There is another matter which I think has not yet been brought to a conclusion. It is another of those instances where, if what I hear is correct, the State Government has approached the Federal authorities to shoulder the responsibility for something for which it is not prepared to accept responsibility itself.

That is the burden of the remarks of other members besides Mr. Roche. However, the Government's actions have not been guided by such thoughts at all. It has not asked the Commonwealth Government to do something it was not prepared to do itself. It has certainly used Commonwealth regulations in instances where it has not been possible to use State regulations. Members must be very well aware that regulations made under our own State Acts have to be carried out. They must also be aware that we cannot do some things we would like to do, without amending those Acts, and if we had to wait until that could be done, it would be too late, in some instances, to take action at all. In most of these instances we have used the machinery available, in some cases pending the amendment by the State Parliament of our own legislation.

In connection with the zoning of cream deliveries, Mr. Roche said:—

The matter I refer to is purely within the State's sphere. I heard a report in Parliament House that Commonwealth regulations are being promulgated to effect the zoning of cream deliveries to butter factories. I hope that is not true. With the principle of zoning I have no quarrel, but before zoning is brought about, I want to feel reasonably satisfied that the farmers will secure at least as good a return by sending their cream to some other factory as they have been getting by sending it to a factory that is possibly outside their district.

In presuming that the State Government has approached the Commonwealth Government with suggestions or recommendations connected with the zoning of cream deliveries, Mr. Roche is incorrect. It is understood, however, that a company situated in Mr. Roche's province communicated direct with a Commonwealth Government department strongly recommending that the zoning of cream should be instituted immediately as a measure of war organisation. It will be remembered that the present Government presented amendments to the Dairy Industry Act in December, 1939, among which were provisions for controlling the supply of cream to factories with a view to reducing costs of transport. These provisions were deleted from the Bill in this Chamber. A number of factors would have to be considered if a scheme for the zoning of cream were introduced, one of which would be to ensure equal returns being re-

ceived by all farmers irrespective of the factory to which their produce was forwarded.

I appreciate the general attitude of members towards many of our problems and towards the State Government. There has been some criticism of the Government. That was inevitable but, generally speaking, members have shown that they are desirous of co-operating with the Government and assisting it in the very heavy task it is endeavouring to perform. It can be said that we live in one of the greatest moments in history, and that never again in our lifetime are we likely to take part in a drama so stupendous. The whole universe has become a seething cauldron with carnage everywhere, on a scale almost beyond human comprehension. We are engaged in a struggle to preserve our national honour, a desperate struggle for survival. The very foundations of our civilisation are in jeopardy, and this has been brought home more forcibly to this country following the entry of Japan on the side of the Axis Powers. Since that event took place, there has been a long list of grim events which have stirred Australia and America to a full realisation of the threat of a powerful enemy.

It needs no words of mine to impress upon members the seriousness of the situation, but I am hopeful that in the near future we shall be able to see a little more daylight than at the present time. This is really a struggle of mechanical power, of diabolical intrigue and propaganda by which the Axis powers endeavour to undermine our democracy from within. Victory depends equally on those who fight in the field and on those whose lot it is to remain at home to play their particular part. On this account it is necessary that all our resources shall be utilised to the fullest possible extent. Mechanised power alone will not suffice. Certainly we must obtain mechanical might in the way of tanks, planes and guns with which to equip our Forces so that we may be enabled to defeat our enemies, but victory requires something more than that from the people—a high morale, the will to win and the courage to carry on despite every obstacle. Our Fighting Forces are possessed of these qualities and the people, too, are possessed of the high morale and will to win, which are so necessary if we are to be successful.

It is inevitable that in such a struggle unpleasant duties have to be performed not only by the Commonwealth Government but by all Governments. The change-over from peace-time to wartime activities has already meant the dislocation of industry in many ways. It will mean inconveniences for the public generally which to date have not previously been experienced. I feel sure that, whatever the task that may be placed upon us, we in this State will be willing to carry our share of the burden. No matter what the sacrifice; no matter how hard the task may be we, as members of Parliament, will be willing not only to set a good example but to give what assistance we can to that large number of people unable to help themselves in times like these, and to show them what is necessary to be done not only in their interests but in the interests of Australia as a whole. I also feel sure that even if things do not improve in the near future as we would like them to do, we will do our best—and goodness knows, when we look about us, the picture is black enough. At the moment, it does not matter whether we look at Russia, Egypt, India, or even our own northern sphere of war—and action is at present taking place there which we hope will be successful—the picture is not as bright as we would like it to be, and we, as members of Parliament, can do a lot to help the general public in the serious times ahead. I could well quote the words of the Prime Minister who said, "You cannot call up vast numbers of men, push them over from the routine of their lives, without having some growing pains." Might I suggest that that is a stage through which most of us have to go in our ordinary lives, and that it is a stage through which we are passing in regard to our war effort. Even though we might desire to be critical about many of the matters affecting us at the present time, that stage, nevertheless, is one that is passing, and before long our war effort will be functioning much more smoothly. Notwithstanding that greater sacrifices will have to be made, I trust that the goodwill and co-operation of the people generally—and it has been given to us to date in an unstinted manner—will continue and that successes will eventually crown our efforts.

As I said in my opening remarks, Mr. President, many subjects were touched upon by members to which I could not possibly hope to reply at one sitting of this House.

I have endeavoured to cover what I considered to be the more important matters submitted, and if I have omitted to reply respecting any question a member considers to be of real importance, I will be only too glad to provide him with whatever information is available. I appreciate the way members listened to my remarks.

Question put and passed; the Address adopted.

On motion by the Chief Secretary resolved: That the Address be presented to His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor by the President and such members as may desire to accompany him.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY [4.47]: I move:—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, the 15th September.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 4.48 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 27th August, 1942.

			PAGE
Questions: Wheat, guaranteed price	....	....	362
Health, venereal disease effects	....	....	362
Flour and Bread	....	....	362
Address-in-reply, twelfth day	....	....	363

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

QUESTIONS (3).

WHEAT, GUARANTEED PRICE.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, What is the guaranteed price fixed for the No. 5 Wheat Pool, free on rail port? 2, What are the charges debited against the wheat farmers from a 4½d. freight siding for handling charges, etc., on wheat acquired by the Commonwealth Government for this pool? 3, Can he advise whether the Minister for Commerce intends paying 2s. net on all wheat grown on licensed areas over the guaranteed price of 4s. for the first 3,000 bushels?

The **MINISTER** replied: 1, There is no guaranteed price fixed for the No. 5 Wheat Pool (1941-42 season) free on rail port.

There was a guaranteed price of 3s. 10d. per bushel free on board bagged wheat basis for a maximum delivery for sale of 140 million bushels, but on the 15th May, 1942, the Minister for Commerce announced that since the receipts to that date were 153 million bushels, the guaranteed payment would be on the basis of about 3s. 6½d. a bushel on an f.o.b. bagged basis. 2, Since the handling of the No. 5 Pool (1941-42 season) is not yet complete, no figures are available for handling charges, etc., on wheat acquired by the Commonwealth Government for this pool. The charges to be debited against this pool for handling charges, etc., will not be known until the pool is finalised. 3, I have no information other than that which appeared in "The West Australian" on the 25th August, 1942, to the effect that the Minister for Commerce stated that an advance of 2s. net a bushel would be made against any farmer's production in excess of 3,000 bushels and that growers ultimately would receive the market realisation of such excess wheat less marketing costs.

HEALTH, VENEREAL DISEASE EFFECTS.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER asked the Minister for Health: What are all the diseases or after-effects directly or indirectly traceable to venereal diseases?

The **MINISTER** replied: The answer to the question is lengthy and consists of a list of diseases, the names of which are difficult to pronounce. I shall treat the answer as a return and place it on the Table of the House.

FLOUR AND BREAD.

Mr. NORTH asked the Minister for Health: 1, Is he aware that an old discarded stone mill has been resurrected and is being used to supply 100 per cent. stone-ground flour in the metropolitan area? 2, Is such wholemeal flour superior in health-giving qualities to that supplied in the average wholemeal loaf? 3, Are bakers free, if they so desire, to supply as wholemeal loaves what is actually plain flour with some bran thrown in? 4, Is there any special health value in the wheat germ, which it is alleged is often excluded from wholemeal loaves?

The **MINISTER** replied: 1, No. 2, No. 3, Not if such bread is labelled as "Wholemeal Bread" or is supplied when wholemeal is demanded by the purchaser. 4, Wheat