

not less than £750,000. The bus owners are now faced with an urgent replacement outlay estimated at £300,000.

There is one other matter worthy of attention, namely, the question of manpower. It can be expected that if control of manpower continues—and it seems likely that it will—for quite a time, the Government departments, both Federal and State, will claim prior right to all required labour, particularly skilled labour; and what labour, if any, is left, will be placed at the service of private enterprise. This, to my mind, is what nationalism of transport will mean to the people of this State. Further, it would mean the creation of a new organisation, which, if run on usual Government lines, would be much more costly than private ownership methods. It is interesting to note that the cost of administration of transport comes entirely out of the funds I have mentioned. The total cost of running the Transport Board at present is met out of the revenue received, and this would, of course, be another loss in the event of Government control and would be a further charge on the State.

When we allow approximately £21,000, the amount paid over to local authorities—£8,000 of which goes to the Main Roads Board—it still leaves a matter of nearly £12,000 excess. These include road transport subsidies, purchase of equipment, maintenance, etc., but my contention is that, in addition to the loss of approximately £97,000 in revenue, as I mentioned before, the State would be forced to find £12,000; and then, if it intended also from some other fund to make the same payments to local governing authorities, an additional £21,000, making a total loss of revenue per annum to the State from the metropolitan area of £130,000. Surely, this is serious enough to warrant the House requiring to know all about it, not tomorrow, or next week or the week after, but today, and that is my object in bringing it before the House, so that the trouble may be nipped in the bud.

From the case I have endeavoured to make out, the Government would be very ill advised to proceed further with such a scheme. May I merely add that today Governments throughout the world are advocating and practising decentralisation. Here, again, the new order of things would be entirely opposed to this, as it would be

only a question of time when the whole of the transport required, other than the chassis, would be manufactured at the State works; and this, together with repairs and maintenance, could not be done nearly as satisfactorily under Government control as it is done at the present time in the various factories and shops in the metropolitan area. I sincerely hope that the Chief Secretary, in his reply, will be able to tell us that there is not as much in my story as I am led to believe. Somebody suggested that I might have some inside information. Well, I have sufficient information to know that unless the thing is stopped, it is the Government's intention to carry out this policy. I support the motion.

On motion by Hon. G. B. Wood, debate adjourned.

### ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 4.30 p.m. tomorrow, unless the Prime Minister of Australia officially declares before 10 a.m., Perth time tomorrow, that peace has been made with Japan, in which event the House stands adjourned till 4.30 p.m. on Tuesday next.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 6.6 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Tuesday, 14th August, 1945.*

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

### QUESTIONS.

#### SOLDIER SETTLEMENT.

*As to Purchase of Dairy Stock.*

Mr. McLARTY asked the Minister for Lands:

1, What provision is being made to supply dairy stock to discharged soldiers, under the proposed soldier settlement scheme?

2, Have any dairy stock been purchased to date? If so, what number?

3, What is the average cost per head?

4, What is the price per head the soldier settler will be expected to pay for this stock?

The MINISTER replied:

1, Cabinet has approved of the purchase of 10,000 heifers.

2, 834 heifers have been purchased and as more properties for grazing are acquired, more stock are being purchased.

3, £3 16s. 0d.

4, It is not possible to fix a price at present. Every endeavour is being made to keep costs as low as possible. Settlers will be charged fair market valuations for stock issued to them.

#### GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE.

##### *As to Shortage of Staff.*

Mr. PERKINS asked the Premier:

1, Is he aware of the acute shortage of staff at the Government Printing Office and consequent delay to urgent printing business?

2, Are steps being taken to remedy the position?

The PREMIER replied:

1, Yes. The staff of the Government Printing Office in September, 1939, numbered 120 males and 60 females, a total of 180; today the numbers are 97 males and 50 females, total 147. The increased volume of wartime printing has aggravated the labour problem. By arrangement between the Premier and the Prime Minister, the Government Printer has for some considerable time undertaken, in addition to the ordinary printing requirements of State departments, all the printing needs of Commonwealth departments in this State, including the Navy, Army and Air Force. Much important national printing, such as ration books, manpower survey cards, Commonwealth and State electoral rolls, has had to be made available on specified dates, and this has necessitated the institution of a system of priorities within the Government Printing Office itself. I am not aware of any serious delay occurring, though the

ordinary requirements of departments have naturally not been met with the same promptness as was the case in peacetime.

2, Printing does not rank particularly high in manpower priorities. Whenever the Government Printer felt a case could be made out for the retention of an employee in his civilian calling, without injuring the war effort, he has made representations to manpower and has received sympathetic hearing, but has not always been successful in his request. It is expected that a number of former employees will be released following upon the Commonwealth Government's decision to release 54,000 men on long service grounds, or because they are surplus aircrew personnel. Reference to "The West Australian" of the 10th inst. will reveal the categories for which releases will be approved on purely occupational grounds. Printing is not included in the specified categories.

#### COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES.

##### *As to Great Southern Scheme.*

Mr. SEWARD asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

1, When is it proposed to start the work of laying its pipe line from the Wellington Dam to the main dam on the Great Southern at Narrogin if that be the site of the main dam?

2, Could not the work of connecting that dam with towns other than Narrogin be undertaken at the same time, so that such towns would be served by water from the scheme as soon as it reaches the Great Southern?

3, If so, will that be done?

4, If not, in view of the urgent need for a water supply to Pingelly, why not?

The MINISTER replied:

1 to 4, In view of the opposition expressed to the scheme by some members of Parliament and the very qualified approval given to it by others, it is doubtful if any such work will be commenced until parliamentary approval has been obtained for the scheme as a whole.

#### COAL.

##### *As to Supplies for Power House.*

Mr. THORN (without notice) asked the Minister for Railways: Have steps been taken to rectify the shortage of coal which

yesterday caused partial cessation of electric current supplies and public transport utilities and thus caused great public inconvenience?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Railways) replied: The cessation of power yesterday was not caused by a shortage of coal but was due to a breakdown of the plant treating coal at the power station. Answering the question based on the hon. member's assumption that the trouble was due to a shortage of coal, I may inform him that the Government is paying particular attention to securing increased production, and is taking all necessary steps to that end.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

#### *Eighth Day—Amendment.*

Debate resumed from the 9th August.

**HON. N. KEENAN** (Nedlands) [4.35]: If reiteration of the good wishes that have been expressed by other members of the House is not embarrassing to the recipients, I should like to add my congratulations to the Premier on his having attained the highest post within the power of this House to bestow and also to the Deputy Leader of the House, and to the member for Murchison who has attained Cabinet rank as Minister for Mines and Railways. The Premier has a well-established reputation for hard work and he has also a well-established reputation for knowledge of an accurate character of the possibilities of this very wide-spaced country, and both those qualities will no doubt assist him materially in discharging the onerous duties he will be called upon to perform in his new office. Without saying anything of a deprecatory nature of his predecessors, I will say that the Minister for Mines undoubtedly possesses a knowledge of mining, both underground and on the surface, that is unique. I also wish to assure the member for Geraldton of our very good wishes for the recovery of his health. We all hope that he will be able to give this House the advantage of his mature wisdom in its deliberations.

I have on previous occasions in this House stressed the importance of the debate on the Address-in-reply. Under our Standing Orders and the rules governing our proceedings, there are very few occasions, apart from this one, when a private

member can voice the grievances of his constituents, and so it is of great importance to preserve this occasion. But it is of more importance than ever before because undoubtedly, owing to their own acts, the Parliaments of the States have allowed their prestige to be considerably lowered. Almost since the very earliest days of Federation, the habit has grown of passing on all major social questions and all major economic issues to the Commonwealth Parliament. It is true, as Mr. Deakin observed over 30 years ago, that the power of the purse constitutes a factor of such enormous and over-bearing importance that, if it is used ruthlessly, it imposes a complete control over all our powers. Although those who framed the Commonwealth Constitution had no intent that the Federal authority should enjoy that power, it has usurped that power by the lassitude of the States.

The Constitution, as originally framed, contemplated that the Federal authority should be the spender of only very limited sums of money. If any member would like to acquaint himself with the position as designed by the framers of the Constitution, let him read Section 87. He will find that originally the Commonwealth was entitled to use for its own purposes only one-quarter of the amount of the revenue collected for Excise and Customs. The other three-quarters had to be divided amongst the States. In respect of the quarter that was allowed for all Commonwealth expenditure, if there were any surplus—if the expenditure did not use up the whole lot of the revenue—the surplus had to go back to the States. When the Bill to bring about Federation was before the people of Australia, those who were supporting it received certain notes and instructions to enable them to advance reasons for its acceptance. One of those reasons was that the expense of maintaining the Commonwealth would be so small that it was estimated it would not exceed the amount then collected in Australia for the dog tax. That was put before the people of Australia as a cogent reason for their acceptance of the proposal to federate the six independent Australian colonies.

The first alteration that took place was the non-renewal of Section 87 after the expiry of ten years from the foundation of the Commonwealth. It was perfectly

competent for the Parliament of the Commonwealth to take that step, because the provision of Section 87 continued only if renewed by the Parliament of the Commonwealth. But the next evasion was one of principle, and that was the evasion of the obligation to hand over to the States surplus revenue. Under the scheme I have already outlined for the foundation of the Commonwealth all surplus revenue was to go back to the States, and surplus revenue meant all money over and above the absolute needs of the Commonwealth for the year. That was part of the principle on which the people of Australia agreed to federate; but that was set aside, and instead the surplus was paid into a trust account. I regret that although that was challenged, the High Court held that it was within the powers of the Commonwealth constitutionally to take that step.

The last evasion was one of the greatest importance, especially to our State. That was the entry by the Commonwealth into the field of direct taxation, thus cutting from under the feet of the States their principal large source of revenue. It is true that when, during world war No. 1, the Commonwealth Parliament for the first time imposed taxation on income, it was alleged that it was merely a war measure, and that when the war had finished there would be no more attempt on the part of the Commonwealth to enter that field. For ten years preceding that statute, the States had enjoyed unchallenged that one large source of revenue, so it was of great importance to the States that the Commonwealth's policy in that regard should be abandoned when the war was over. But the statement that it would be abandoned was falsified by the conduct of the Commonwealth, which has retained that source of income; and not only retained it, but is now using it in such a high degree as practically, if not absolutely, to shut the States out from it. But despite all this creeping usurpation, what has placed the States and the Parliaments of the States in their present humiliating position is their consent to allow their Parliaments to be degraded, as I hope I shall conclusively establish in the few remarks I am privileged to address to this House.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: You admit that the High Court has not been too helpful.

Hon. N. KEENAN: It has been the humble servant of the Commonwealth.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: No.

Hon. N. KEENAN: It has never failed, when asked for a decision, to give one as favourable to the Commonwealth as possible.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Then apportion the blame, if any, to the right source.

Hon. N. KEENAN: To return to the argument I am addressing to the Chamber! Through the supineness of the State Parliaments, the belief has been allowed to grow up that the powers of the State Parliaments have been entirely superseded by the Parliament of the Commonwealth. That is not only the case in all matters which are to be found in Section 51 of the Commonwealth Constitution Act, but generally in all Governmental activities. There is a general belief that it does not matter what difficulty is to be solved, or what trouble there is for which a solution has to be found, always it is something the Commonwealth can do, and apparently always it is something the States cannot do. It is incorrect to say that the Commonwealth has got exclusive powers of legislation, except in relation to a very few matters. I propose to tell the House what those matters are; and if anyone in the House is of a studious character and wants to check the matter I will give him the sections.

The sections in which exclusive right is reserved to the Commonwealth to legislate are Sections 52, 69, 90, and 114. These matters concern firstly, postal and telegraphic and telephonic services; secondly, naval and military defence; thirdly, light-houses—including light ships, buoys and beacons; fourthly, quarantine; fifthly, customs and excise; sixthly, granting of bonuses on the production of goods; seventhly, the maintenance of naval or military forces; and lastly, the printing of paper money and the minting of coins. Except for those limited subject-matters, the States today enjoy exactly the same authority that they did prior to Federation. That appears in a section also to be found in the Constitution Act of the Commonwealth—Section 107—which reads as follows:—

Every power of the Parliament of a Colony which has become or becomes a State shall, unless it is by this Constitution exclusively vested in the Parliament of the Common-

wealth or withdrawn from the Parliament of the State, continue as at the establishment of the Commonwealth, or as at the admission or establishment of the State, as the case may be.

Consequently, when we have tabulated accurately what are the subject-matters exclusively left to the power of the Commonwealth, we know that all the rest remain with the States. So the position under the Commonwealth is that the States always have had, and have today the power to make laws in almost every matter that is mentioned in Section 51, except, of course, the very few matters I have just mentioned, which are specially and entirely reserved for the Commonwealth, subject only to one reservation, that since the Parliament of the Commonwealth has power only to make laws for the subject-matters especially found in Section 51—if it does make a law and if the State Parliament makes a law in respect of exactly the same subject-matter—if the two are inconsistent the State law is invalid. But the word “inconsistent” means “contradictory.” There could be a supplementary law or an ancillary law. If the Commonwealth passed a law and it was not capable of being worked, there is nothing whatever to prevent the State passing a law in respect of exactly the same subject-matter, which would not be inconsistent but ancillary.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: The Commonwealth law is predominant, in some directions.

Hon. N. KEENAN: It is undoubtedly predominant in regard to the State law if the State law is inconsistent, but, if the State law is only ancillary it is just as valid as the Commonwealth law, and so the position could arise, in those matters, that two laws could be passed, one a Commonwealth law and the other a State law, but of course only in regard to matters to be found in Section 51. Outside of that, the range of State law is absolutely unlimited, but as to that portion of legislation by a State Parliament which is limited, it is only limited to the extent that if it is inconsistent with a law of the Commonwealth that has been passed in relation to some subject-matter appearing in Section 51, the State law is invalid. So it is due to the acceptance by the States of a position of inferiority, to which the Commonwealth Constitution has never condemned them, that in fact their prestige has al-

most, if not entirely, collapsed in the years that the Commonwealth has been in existence.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: The High Court has put them in that position in many instances.

Hon. N. KEENAN: If the member for Geraldton will be patient enough to allow me to do so, I will show that we have done it ourselves. We have not wanted the High Court, or rather the other side has not wanted the High Court. We have assisted to such a degree that it has not been necessary for the High Court to interfere.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: The Commonwealth, under the Defence Act, has the right to pass regulations in many directions, and they predominate over the State law.

Hon. N. KEENAN: That is so, particularly in Western Australia. I could give many illustrations, but I propose to give one only, because it is one that is before all our minds. It is in regard to the licensing laws. The Parliament of the Commonwealth has no power whatever to pass a law dealing with the sale or consumption of spirituous liquors. Members can bring that matter home to their minds very clearly by supposing that the Commonwealth did pass a law authorising the sale and consumption of spirituous liquors, and the State Parliament passed a law prohibiting that consumption and sale. Of course, the State law would be the valid law, because the Commonwealth has no power to make laws in that regard, and vice versa. If the Commonwealth were to attempt to prohibit the consumption or sale of spirituous liquors, and the State Parliament authorised it, again the Commonwealth law would be utterly, absolutely and entirely invalid.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Not under the National Security Regulations.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I am going to deal with that. It is perfectly true that under the dragnet of the Defence power in the Commonwealth Constitution, power may be claimed to pass laws dealing with the consumption and sale of spirituous liquor, as well as many other matters, which in peacetime would be entirely beyond the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth Parliament; but the authority which is exercised under the Defence power must have direct relation to defence. For once we get the High Court on our side, and that is the decision of the High Court, not in the matter of the consumption and sale of spiritu-

ous liquor, but in other matters. The exercise of the power which is known as the Defence power in the Commonwealth Constitution can only be valid if it relates to defence and I think there is no-one who can say that, for many a long day, it could justly be said that the sale and consumption of liquor in the City of Perth was a matter for Defence. I will admit that it may have been in the days when it was very much a matter of doubt whether this State would be invaded, but for many months past—and especially in recent days—it would be an absurdity to say that any exercise of the power of defence was required in the City of Perth in the matter of the sale or consumption of spirituous liquors, or indeed in any part of Western Australia, as things are today.

The only law, therefore, that validly governs the sale or consumption of spirituous liquors in Western Australia—and particularly so in Perth, because there may possibly be some grounds for saying that the Far North is still within the battle area—is the Licensing Act which has been passed by this Parliament. Yet only the other day certain hours were proclaimed as the hours for the sale and consumption of intoxicating liquors in Perth, and they are not the hours that are set out and prescribed in our Licensing Act. The proclamation authorising those hours was made on authority delegated by a Federal Minister. Is it at all to be wondered at that, if our own Ministers are prepared to flout our own Parliament and the law made by that Parliament, the public at large should hold little respect for this Parliament, or should imagine, as I put it to the House in my opening remarks, that in fact everything is a matter for the Commonwealth Parliament and nothing is a matter for the State Parliament? I know that the result of putting the Commonwealth Parliament, without any justification whatever, in the place of the State Parliament, is pleasing to a few who possibly think that if this Parliament is sufficiently humiliated it will be easy to wipe it out, but I am certain that that is not the view held by the Premier or by any of his colleagues.

Those who, in Western Australia, are in favour of the abolition of the Parliament of Western Australia are, in my opinion, very few in number. The great majority

are quite satisfied that, if Western Australia is to have any hope of making progress, it cannot have that hope if it is governed, as it has been governed for the last few years, by a Government over 2,000 miles away. And so the question of importance to us, and the question to which I address myself, is one that I shall to the best of my ability interest myself in. It is, how we will be able to retain the loyalty and allegiance of the people of this State to our own State Parliament, and how we will be able to regain the ground which we have lost. To begin with, it is perfectly clear that we must abandon the idea of sheltering behind the Federal powers, which has been going on in an increasing degree for the last 45 years. We must be prepared to use the powers of this Parliament to legislate for the wants of the people of this State. We must not wait until those wants become unbearable and, so to speak, arise and smite us in the face. We must not wait until the continuance of those wants produces in the people a growing belief in our incapacity, which so many entertain today. We must go out and search for, and find those wants.

For instance, I have noticed in the papers here, recently, advertisements of many concoctions which, it is alleged, will cure almost all of the ills that man is heir to. The member for Victoria Park referred to this matter in his very interesting maiden speech, on which I beg leave to compliment him. These advertisements are known to all of us, and they take every possible form that is calculated to induce the ignorant to purchase the goods referred to. They have gone so far as to include what they describe as a guarantee, which appears to be that if the cure as advertised is not achieved, then if the individual can go through some cumbersome form set out he can recover his purchase price from the advertiser. The last mentioned knows very well that not one individual in a thousand would succeed in complying with the conditions that are prescribed. It would be difficult to estimate what is the loss to the people of this State who purchase these goods. It must amount to many thousands of pounds every year, and at present the people who purchase these goods are left wholly and entirely unprotected from this class of temptation and robbery.

The people of Western Australia have an indisputable right to protection, and it is the duty of this Parliament and the Government to afford them that protection. It is done elsewhere. For instance, in the United States of America there is in New York the Board of Trade which has a department set up for the special purpose of providing protection of that type, and action is taken as I shall describe. The department examines the advertisements that are published and tests the truth of the allegations included in them. About 12 months ago I read an article in the American edition of "The Reader's Digest" which dealt with a report upon operations of the Board of Trade dealing with dental cases. Certain dental goods were advertised and in the advertisement it was claimed that by the use of a certain dental cream the muscles of the gums were made so much stronger that they resisted effectively any attack of pyorrhoea. I have seen an identically similar advertisement in our newspapers, and no doubt so have other hon. members. That is a matter of great importance to the public because pyorrhoea is a very dangerous complaint and if one could avoid it by the simple use of one of these dental creams, one would rush to buy it. In fact, people would be prepared to pay more for such an article than they would for ordinary dental creams. However, on examination, the Board of Trade of New York discovered that there are no muscles in the gums, and therefore the whole advertisement was bogus. The result was that the publication of such advertisements was forbidden in the United States of America. I do not know if the publication of that advertisement continues here. I have not noticed it recently, but we certainly have not taken any steps to forbid such publication.

Another case concerned a second dental cream in the advertisement for which it was alleged that the foam produced by its use had some strong antiseptic action on the teeth. It entered the interstices of the teeth and cleaned out any food that had lodged there. Again on examination the Board of Trade ascertained that the only effective result of the use of that cream was that the bristles of the toothbrush did to some extent remove deleterious matter that had collected on the teeth, but that was all.

That advertisement was also forbidden. I have read an advertisement dealing in exactly similar terms with the same dental cream, but nothing has been done to prevent its publication in our newspapers. The Board of Trade in America has always acted on the expert advice of others, principally on the advice of the experts of the Dental College of New York. We could adopt the same course here if necessary, and we could avail ourselves of expert advice. We could then take action in accordance with any law enacted by this Parliament, which has the right and power to pass such legislation.

And so I say, Mr. Speaker, that if there is a matter that requires the attention of Parliament—and we know that advertisements appear dealing with all sorts of human ills and providing all sorts of cures—surely we are not so busy and so entirely wrapped up in other matters that we cannot deal with the problem here. Those I have quoted are, of course, merely small instances. It so happened that I did not have the opportunity to read more than one publication showing how the Board of Trade in America dealt with these advertisements themselves or others of a similar character which are such as to suggest that they are of a bogus character. There is nothing in all the ills of human life that is not provided for in these advertisements, and of course the guarantee, which so often appears, takes down the ignorant who thinks that with the inclusion of the word "guarantee," the advertisement is one upon which he can place implicit reliance—and the fact is that he does. If it is the desire of this Parliament and this Government, in the interests of the citizens they govern, to afford them necessary protection, here is one way in which they can do so, and if attention were devoted to it they could save the citizens of the State a very considerable sum of money. There are many other ways in which this Parliament could identify itself with the lives of the citizens it governs. Parliament should be a leader amongst its own people and not a mere follower, accepting everything that is stated, no matter how misleading.

I have noticed that there is growing a feeling of carping criticism and even of hostility, which is finding common expression among our people, against the citizens of

the United States of America. What are the facts? Instead of that criticism being in any way justified, it has to be remembered that but for the extraordinarily prompt action of the United States of America, there might very well have been an invasion of Western Australia. Most of us can recall the tense and anxious moments in the early months of 1942. We can recall our feelings of comfort and of safety when we first saw in our midst the sailors, soldiers and airmen of the United States of America. It was almost a miracle. When we come to realise the great distance between America and Australia and the immense difficulties that had to be overcome in getting here, it was certainly almost a miracle that they were able to reach Australia in so short a time, and afford us safety against the dangers of invasion.

There is no degree of gratitude on our part that would be too much to extend to the Americans—none whatever. There could be no greater slur on our national escutcheon than that we should fail to render to the United States of America and its people a proper expression of our gratitude. There is, however, one drawback to our giving proper expression to that gratitude, and that is our resentment at some statements that have appeared in American journals in recording what purport to be accounts of incidents of the war.

The Minister for Works: Do you ever listen to "The Archer"?

Mr. Thorn: I hope you do.

Mr. Needham: The Minister's time is too valuable to waste on listening to "The Archer."

Mr. Watts: He listens to Herb. Graham!

Hon. N. KEENAN: I am sorry to say that I have not yet listened to "The Archer"; I have missed my opportunities to do so.

The Minister for Works: He comes under your criticism.

Hon. N. KEENAN: If the erroneous accounts of the incidents of the war were confined to newspaper reporters and commentators, although extremely irritating from our point of view, nevertheless, I think we could, and should, ignore them. Unfortunately this is influencing the friendship between America and Australia. As the maintenance of that friendship is of infinite value, I think it is desirable, by a candid exchange of views, to do everything pos-

sible to preserve it. In those circumstances, I propose to refer briefly to some of these stupid and very inaccurate reports. I read one article which was written by a man named Frederick C. Paynton under the title of "Old Man of Battle." The article that I read in the journal had been copied from another journal. Thus statements of this description have the widest possible circulation throughout America. In this instance it purported to be an interview by the writer with Major-General Patton, whom he referred to, in the jargon that nowadays appears to be so much adopted, as "Blood and Guts." I propose to read just what was said on the authority of so high-ranking an officer as a major-general in the American Army, whose remarks were published for the information of the American public—

At El Guettar he used his uncanny ability to figure out what the enemy will do to set a trap for Rommel's tanks. Impatiently he waited at headquarters for the first word of how the fighting went. Finally it came. Rommel had attacked with 60 tanks and 30 of them had been destroyed and several damaged in the trap. The defeat was so stunning that it was Rommel's last major counter attack. Patton beamed. He had achieved a secret ambition; he had met Rommel, fox of the desert, and outsmarted him. . . . And he was like a father to his men, shaking hands, saying, "You men did it. You stopped the Tenth Panzer and it's never been stopped before."

Can anyone imagine a statement so full of inaccuracies as this and so full of ridiculous empty bombast? As if the Eighth Army had never existed, as if it had not fought Rommel and his panzers on the frontiers of Egypt and chased them all over the 1,000 miles to Tunisia! The statement I read is published in all the papers in America and by its gross inaccuracy it panders to an extraordinary delusion held by the American people, that their army, or their armies, for they had more than one, did all the fighting in North Africa and, as this gentleman said, broke the power of Rommel and destroyed his panzers that have never been destroyed before. It is sufficient to say that the statement is grossly inaccurate. Major-General Patton is not the only offender in this regard. When von Runstedt broke out of the forests of Ardennes and routed the two American armies which were facing him under the command of General Omar Bradley and pushed on until he was stopped by General Montgomery he would, had he not been stopped, have reached the Meuse and



so might have entirely altered the complexion of the campaign. How was that reverse explained? The explanation I am about to read also had a wide circulation in America. It was an explanation appearing in the Congressional Papers and copied from them in the Press. The extract reads—

The Washington staff of the Scripps-Howard papers, posing the question, "Where did the Germans get crack divisions, supplies, air power, for their offensive in the west?" drew an answer from "Congressional sources":—

They are convinced we had an understanding with Russia that she would open a powerful drive against Germany when we did early last summer. It didn't happen. But for at least 90 days, they say, the Russians have been prepared to launch an assault against Germany—and still it hasn't started. If the Germans know this, as they probably do, why did they dare transfer their best fighting men, the supplies they need, and air cover for them from the east to the west?

There is still hope at Washington that Russia will attack, will realise that the United States can't fight alone in both Europe and Asia and continue to supply the Allies also.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Alone!

Hon. N. KEENAN: Alone! Yet, of all the United Nations, only England and her dependencies fought alone. They fought alone for the whole of 1940 and for half of 1941. Still, an inaccuracy of that kind is published in the Congressional Papers in America and sent out for the purpose of pandering to a miserable wretched delusion that the whole war is being fought by nobody except the citizens of the United States. Once more we have a statement grossly inaccurate and insulting. It does in some measure excuse a temporary departure from our proper attitude of gratitude to the United States. It is therefore not surprising that there should be a few in our midst who are so wanting in their proper feeling of gratitude. It is surprising that those who sit in the seats of authority should not have taken the opportunity to combat this dangerous feeling and bring home to every person in Western Australia the fact, that except for the wonderful aid which we got in 1942, except for the wonderful promptitude with which that aid was rendered, we here might have suffered all the horrors of invasion.

If the future world is to be a world worth living in, it is hopeless to imagine that that result can be achieved except by the friend-

ship of America and of the British Empire, including of course Australia, not only in war but also in peace. I hope, therefore, that we shall not be wanting in guiding our people, as we should guide them, in the right way. Another important matter in respect of which also guidance in the right way is necessary and wanting is one with which I now propose to deal. The late Mr. Curtin made numerous very eloquent appeals to the people of Australia to go in for a policy of thrift. Apart altogether from ethical considerations, he wanted the policy of thrift for the purpose of finding the money for the sinews of war. He appreciated the fact that very largely we carried on the war on the thrift of some of our citizens, as, of course, we all know from the mere fact that the largest subscribers to war loans have been the A.M.P. Society and other life assurance companies, all of whose funds are the result of thrift. What is the attitude of this Government to the question of thrift? Does it admire thrift? Does it think thrift is a virtue, something that should be encouraged and something that should be recommended as strongly as possible to the people? If the Government does think so, it is extraordinary that it has not come out into the open and said so. If there is one outstanding fact it is that thrift is penalised as if it were an evil thing.

There is not a member of this Chamber who has not had the experience of having to appeal for consideration for some of his constituents who have been deprived, or partly deprived, of the old-age pension because of some relatively small amount which they have collected by thrift. For instance, to save the sum of £500 would require an extremely great effort on the part of an ordinary working man in an ordinary working life. It is something we would commend him for; it is to his credit in the highest degree, but it will deprive him of an old-age pension.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Unless he invested it in a house.

Hon. N. KEENAN: That is so.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: If he had a house he would not be penalised.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I do not think I will enter into the intricacies of the old-age pension. Although he is entitled to live in his own house, should he vacate it the rule would apply no longer.

Mr. Fox: He could live on the £500 and then get the pension.

Hon. N. KEENAN: That is so. Take the case of the spendthrift: he has enjoyed himself all his life, he has spent every penny he could raise or borrow or get possessed of by any means, and yet he is catered for. He is looked after. But the man who has led a steady life, who has not wasted his substance in any unnecessary pleasure, who has saved money, is penalised. It is about time that those who believe in thrift—and I credit the members of the Government, and, indeed, every member of this House, with believing in thrift—should step forth and say that they regard it as a virtue which should be practised by the people whom we govern. Until this Government and this Parliament does so, they will fail to win back the confidence and the allegiance of our people.

I am endeavouring to cut some portion of what I intended to say because I find myself not quite as I should be; but before I conclude I propose to make a few remarks on the Lieut.-Governor's Speech. As usual, that Speech was somewhat lengthy, and also as usual, it contained very little real matter, if one throws the padding that is in it out of the window. The item that perhaps was most in the nature of a highlight was the reputed surplus. This highlight was, however, omitted in the very excellent speech which the member for East Perth delivered on the Address-in-reply. I have no doubt that he omitted reference to it because this alleged surplus is purely fictitious. It is known to everybody—in fact, it is admitted—that maintenance in all Government departments, especially the Railway Department, has been neglected during the past financial year to such an extent that it has been almost totally neglected.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Every man that could be obtained was employed on maintenance and repairs.

Hon. N. KEENAN: If it will please the ex-Premier, I will add that perhaps it was impossible to undertake maintenance work, but until the matter is further inquired into, it remains a "perhaps." What is the fact is that there has been little or no maintenance, with the result that our engines particularly are in a very parlous condition.

Mr. Smith: What about the new engines? Are they not in a parlous condition?

Hon. N. KEENAN: I am not prepared to criticise the new engines; I am dealing with those that are doing the job. It is quite a legitimate gamble, if one is a passenger in a train on a fairly long journey, to wager that the engine pulling the train will break down. It might go a few miles, but if the journey is of any length, one is pretty safe in making a bet that the engine will break down. This is not hearsay.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: You have had an unfortunate experience.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I will tell the House of an actual experience I had. Very recently I left Perth to travel by rail to Kalgoorlie. The engine which took us out of the Perth station broke down before we got to Northam. The second engine blew its boiler out on the other side of Southern Cross, and we were many hours late in arriving at Kalgoorlie. We would have been many more hours late if it had not been for the good luck that there was travelling on the train a man who was an expert in everything connected with locomotives. His advice was taken and followed with some success. This breakdown occurred simply for the want of maintenance. It is an everyday occurrence, and this instance was not exceptional. If any maintenance at all had been carried out—not maintenance of a thorough character or that would be demanded if the opportunity was there to carry it out—it would have completely absorbed the £5,000 surplus. So I warn all that they should not be deceived by this highlight of—"Once more a surplus!" It is a mere effort of deceit to show a surplus when it is known that it has been arrived at by not paying the bills. Added to that is the disadvantage to which the Leader of the Opposition drew attention, that this State by reason of that alleged surplus is debarred from claiming monetary assistance that it might otherwise be able to obtain.

With the exception of the Bill to amend the franchise of the Legislative Council no legislation of any importance is forecasted in the Speech. If the proposal to amend the franchise of the Legislative Council is the same as that brought down last session, that is to make provision for the election

of that Chamber on the adult franchise and at the same time to ask that Chamber to occupy a position of having only a mere semblance of authority, it will be impossible to forecast any favourable reception. What possible justification can be put forward for asking another place to adopt the franchise identical with the one on which this House is elected, and therefore to enjoy a mandate identical with that which we enjoy and become a mere rubber stamp? It would be far more honest, logical and more likely of acceptance if the complete abolition of the Upper House was advocated. The only other matter in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech that I want to draw attention to is that of housing.

The reference in the Speech to housing largely turns on the fact that the houses are to be constructed by day labour. That means that if any contract is let for the erection of these houses a condition of that contract must be that no piece-work is to be done. I am quite aware of the fact that it is said that piece-work is shoddy work, but I could never understand why, if it is shoddy work and there is proper supervision, it is not stopped. If any member of this Chamber privately builds his own house, he does not make that a condition of the contract. He would not get a contract at the price he could otherwise obtain if he did so. He takes care, by having his architect on the spot, that no shoddy work is done. Why could not that apply for the protection of the workers' homes? Why should not the Principal Architect, or some of his staff, be available to visit the houses being erected in order to prevent work of an inferior character going in?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: They would have to live on the job.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. N. KEENAN: There is another side of the picture, namely, that by a too rigid adherence to day labour the cost of these houses will be increased to a price beyond the means of the ordinary unskilled worker. The figures given in this House establish that. The costs for houses recently erected, with the land added, show that they are in the neighbourhood of £1,000. What unskilled worker can possibly face an expenditure of £1,000? Or if it be rented, how can an unskilled wor-

ker pay the rent if it be at all commensurate with the cost? We must remember, too, that the unskilled workers form the majority of our workers. In all probability these houses will be vacated within a certain number of years because of abandoned tenancies as a result of the rental that it will be necessary to charge for them.

The housing shortage might be relieved to some considerable degree if the events which we all expect to happen at almost any moment were in fact happening—that is to say, if the war with Japan came to an end. Many evacuees came here from the Netherlands East Indies and Malaya, and as soon as the war with Japan ends they will return to their own countries. In addition, with the ending of the war with Japan there will be a large demobilisation of the Australian Army and the men returning will, I hope—otherwise there is little hope for this country—go back to their farms and to employment in the country. If they do that they will take with them to the farms their wives and families who are now living in Perth. Also many of those who are living in Perth and its suburbs simply came here in the wake of the war to take advantage of the war industries. All this, undoubtedly, will largely relieve the position. Nevertheless, there will be a necessity for the erection of many new houses. The reason for that is that the ordinary quota of additional houses each year has not been maintained during the last four years. That leeway has to be made good. That will require an effort of a character of which there is so far little or no sign.

I never could understand why it was that when the evacuees came here in large numbers no attempt was made by the State Government to specify and control what part of Western Australia they were to live in. Of course the only body that had the right to determine whether they should enter Australia or not was the Commonwealth Parliament. The State could not refuse these people the right of entry, even if for a moment we could imagine that the State would do such a thing. But what the State could have done, and what the Commonwealth Parliament could not prevent its doing, was to say what part of Western Australia the evacuees were to live in. These people came here, not only

from the Netherlands East-Indies and Malaya, but, in the case of the Jews particularly, from every part of the world and they crowded out Perth and its suburbs. Yet there were many towns in the country that were partially hereft of population owing to the war, and which would have been available for their settlement. However, it is too late now to think of that matter. If the news is only good enough, and there is any justification for all the paper that has been thrown out in the streets of Perth, a few days ought to see the matter finalised and these people on their way home. I am afraid I have detained the House longer than I meant to, although I have left out portion of what I had in mind to say. I have indulged in a speech somewhat beyond my powers and it has, therefore, been perhaps too dilated; but there is one matter I wish to emphasise before I sit down, and that is that we should rely on ourselves, and on our own Parliament, and take every possible opportunity to learn the wants of our people.

We should identify ourselves with the people and so cultivate in them a belief in us and the belief that we are capable of rendering them service. If we do that, we will have gone a long way towards rendering them service, and we certainly will have done something extremely useful. For 45 years we have looked to the Commonwealth Parliament to pull us out of trouble. Who can congratulate himself on the state of Western Australia today? I do not want to make or attempt to make any speech in the nature of advocating secession, but those are the facts. Who can congratulate himself on Western Australia as it stands today. Let us, therefore, make up our minds that we must adopt a different policy and a different attitude. We must try to get the people of Western Australia to fall in behind us in asserting our rights to protect their interests. There is little I desire to add except to say this that perforce I must reconcile myself to the position of being largely an on-looker, but I would like to say to those who are still full of energy and the incentive of youth—

Do not fear change. Change is the immutable law of Nature, and the great designer of all progress. But do not go in for change merely for change's sake, as if of all that has been done in the past there is nothing whatever left worthy of your reverence.

**MR. THORN** (Toodyay) [5.42]: I move an amendment:—

That the following words be added to the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply—

“But this House regrets—

(a) That the impending end of hostilities in the war finds both your Government and the Government of the Commonwealth almost totally unprepared for speedily and effectually dealing with problems associated with post-war reconstruction, including—

- (i) housing;
- (ii) building of needed schools and hospitals;
- (iii) rehabilitation.

(b) That your Government appears unable to avoid recurring and increasing public inconvenience and loss by ensuring satisfactory working in the Collie coal mines, and the provision of a sufficient supply of coal to enable public utilities to function.”

The Minister for Works: Would not your leader take this on?

**Mr. THORN:** My leader, and those associated with me, feel that before the Premier leaves for the Premiers' Conference these matters, of such grave importance to the State, should be discussed by this Chamber. It will be noted that in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech, which is prepared by the Government, these statements were made—

With the successful conclusion of the war in Europe and the great progress in the Pacific, we all fervently hope that the time is fast approaching when final victory will enable the men and women of the Services to return to their homes.

Unfortunately, it looks as if there will be no homes for them. His Excellency's Speech continues—

The twin tasks of rehabilitation and post-war reconstruction, therefore, become even more pressing, and Ministers continue to devote ever increasing time and attention to these vital aspects of Government activity.

His Excellency later goes on to say—

The acute housing shortage is receiving consideration and attention and legislation will be submitted to you to ratify an agreement made between the Commonwealth and the State Governments to share in losses which may arise from the War Housing Scheme now in operation.

**Mr. Needham:** Is this a serial, or a complete story?

**Mr. THORN:** The hon. member should listen to “The Archer.” The Speech continues—

Under this scheme 475 houses were approved for Western Australia to the 30th June last, of which 74 have been built and occupied, and

117 are under construction. Houses have been approved for the metropolitan area and various country towns.

The outstanding difficulty in hastening the building programme has been the extreme shortage of manpower and material, notably bricks, and action has been taken to increase substantially the number of bricks produced.

I will come to the matter of bricks later.

The Commonwealth Government is releasing an increasing number of men from the Armed Forces which will assist in overcoming the shortage of labour.

That ought to be explained to us later. I should like to quote a few words uttered by Mr. Semple, Minister for Housing in New Zealand, and reported as follows:—

Over 29,000 homes had been erected in New Zealand during the war years.

Mr. Semple compared New Zealand's total with Australia's poor figures. According to the report of the State Advisory Committee on post-war housing, made in June, 1943, the committee came to the conclusion that in a five-year housing programme, 21,248 new houses would be required, and recommended the erection of 20,000 houses at the rate of 4,000 houses a year. The report continues—

This is twice the number built each year in the pre-war period. This does not take into consideration the renovations or additions to sub-standard homes, of which many thousands of the 126,000 houses in the State as at 1941 require attention.

Most people will agree that their homes are in need of maintenance work. My own is badly in need of it, but I can get neither material nor labour to do the work.

The Minister for Lands: Why not?

Mr. THORN: The Minister knows why. Throughout the country districts maintenance to farm houses is badly needed. Yet there is neither manpower nor material to carry out the work.

Mr. Needham: Because the country is engaged in war. You ought to know that.

The Minister for Works: He wants it both ways.

Mr. THORN: Obviously, therefore, a great increase in the number of skilled workmen is required. No steps appear to have been taken to provide them. New Zealand has a population of 1½ millions. During the war period, 29,000 houses have been erected in that Dominion, according to a statement by the Minister for Housing; 13,300 have been erected by the Govern-

ment, and the balance by private builders up to the 11th July. Western Australia has 30 per cent. of the population of New Zealand and, on that basis, should have erected about 9,000 houses altogether during the war period. Nothing like that number has been erected. In the 12 months ended the 30th June, 1945, 475 houses were approved under the Commonwealth-State housing scheme, but only 74 were actually built and 117 were commenced. This left a deficiency of 264 on the year's operations. On the 27th July, it was reported that the Commonwealth Government had written to the State Premiers pointing out that up to the 30th June, the number of houses built averaged only 35 per cent. of the target set. On the 16th July, it was reported that a target of 24,000 houses had been set for the first year after the war, but unless there is a radical improvement in the position, not more than 9,000 or 10,000 will be built.

I have quoted the recommendation of the Housing Committee set up in this State and consisting of very capable men who understand the requirements of the State. In a White Paper tabled in Parliament House, Canberra, a deficiency of between a quarter of a million and 300,000 houses in the Commonwealth is reported. It is also reported that the Commonwealth Government proposes to give housing first priority to the exclusion of all other types of buildings, except those of the most essential character. What is going to be the result regarding schools and hospitals? Are they going to be included? Elaborate promises have been made, and the public is in grave danger of being hoodwinked and there is a likelihood of greater chaos arising in the post-war period than prevailed before the war. The newspapers have been full of matter relating to plans for this and plans for that, but what we want is action, not plans. Let me quote from a statement by the Commonwealth Minister for Housing, Mr. Lazzarini, published in "The West Australian" today. He is reported thus—

The time for talking had finished and we must get results.

Mr. W. Hegney: Why not sit down?

Mr. THORN: The hon. member seemed terribly embarrassed last week and feared that the Government would be embarrassed from the fact that we had sent a representa-

tive to Whim Creek to attend a meeting. I do not think he has got over that yet. Anyhow, I hope I am not doing anything to embarrass the Government. Mr. Lazzarini was reported as follows:—

The time for talking had finished and we must get results.

The Minister for Lands: He must have heard that the war was over.

Mr. THORN: He continued—

The housing plans had been laid and it was now a question of manpower and materials.

What a wise statement! Everything is in readiness and all that is lacking are manpower and materials. Consequently, we may expect housing to go ahead by leaps and bounds—

If the war ended suddenly more men would be released for building.

That must be in addition to the thousands already released, though we have not seen any of them yet.

—and they would be brought back to the mainland as quickly as shipping became available. He had conferred with timber millers of N.S.W. and learnt that they required thousands of men to provide the timber needed for the huge programme. He frankly admitted that the timber position was not good, but the Government was not pulling back.

So the Government is still willing; it is not pulling back, though it has not material or manpower to go ahead with.

I would be happy if I could announce that we are going to build 200,000 houses, but I will not give any stab target which would only mislead the people.

That sounds like the same old lip service.

The use of aluminium and prefabricated houses did not appear to be practical in Australia at the moment.

Mr. Withers: He made it possible for you to read a speech instead of making one of your own.

Mr. THORN: Mr. Lazzarini concluded—

The only practical way to build houses was by the use of timber and bricks.

That is only lip service; it is what we have been getting throughout the war regarding home building for our returning men—showmanship and lip service. We are happy to know that there is a prospect of the war with Japan ending very soon, but we are in the unhappy position of having been served up with wonderful schemes on paper, and nothing more. If our soldiers begin to return within a short space of time, we shall

find ourselves in great difficulty, because we shall not be ready to receive them. Far from it!

Mr. J. Hegney: Why is that?

Mr. THORN: If the hon. member can assimilate what I am telling him, he will be much wiser.

Mr. J. Hegney: It would be difficult.

Mr. THORN: Difficult for the hon. member. The report of the State Advisory Committee on Post-war Housing also recommends that sufficient manpower be released to keep the existing established brickyards going and that at least 50,000,000 bricks be at grass on the cessation of hostilities. Fifty million! And I do not suppose we shall have 2,000,000.

The Minister for Works: Why?

Mr. THORN: Because the kilns are not working.

The Minister for Works: Why?

Mr. THORN: Because the manpower has not been provided.

The Minister for Works: Why?

Mr. Seward: Because the Government has not taken steps to get men.

Mr. THORN: Because a host of kiln workers are still in the Workshops sitting down doing nothing.

The Minister for Works: That is an insult to them.

Mr. THORN: It is true.

The Minister for Works: It is not true.

Mr. THORN: It is only too true.

The Minister for Lands: That is how an argument starts.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. THORN: In the Middle Swan electorate some of the finest brick kilns in the State are located with a capacity to turn out 60,000 bricks per day. They are equipped with modern brickmaking machinery imported from Sweden, but those kilns have been idle throughout the war. Twelve or 18 months ago, the proprietors were advised that labour would be provided, and they went to the expense of stacking firewood alongside the kilns with the idea of beginning operations. The kilns are not operating yet. A large majority of the former kiln workers are in the Workshops. They are professional brickmakers, and if we had any set-up worth the name, those men would be diverted back to their own jobs. They came from the brickworks; that is where

they belong. But we cannot expect them to leave the Workshops voluntarily because their job in the Workshops is much easier than that at the kilns. If they were handled in the right way, they would return to work at the kilns.

Mr. J. Hegney: They want better rates than they were getting.

Mr. THORN: The hon. member is supposed to be looking after the interests of those men. The hon. member is an industrialist who reads the good old book every day, and he ought to know how to improve the conditions in the industry so as to encourage the men to return to the work of brickmaking, which is so urgently required.

Recently the Leader of the Opposition and I took an opportunity to inspect a prefabricated house erected at Greenmount. The member for Guildford-Midland is greatly interested in the house, but I do not know his views about that type of home.

The Minister for Lands: Financially or otherwise?

Mr. THORN: From the viewpoint of the interests of his own electors. That home, though small, we found to be well built and nicely finished. I am sure that in my early days on the land, had I had a little home of that type, I would have considered that I was living in a palace. The house cost £350 and is worth inspecting. We saw in that little home an answer to some of the difficulties that are confronting us. Consider our old age pensioners living in rooms or hovels! Consider the soldier pensioners and other people living under conditions that are not at all good! There is a little home that would house them very comfortably; and in all districts—in the Midland district and other districts—there are many blocks of land that are practically unsaleable and on which rates are not being paid. A scheme could be operated whereby those blocks could be given to people without homes, on the understanding that they should build on them. I hope that matter will be seriously considered and that something will be done about it. Then take the position of timber! My information is that if timber were under proper control, we would be able to build up stocks today; but I believe that one of the greatest weaknesses in the industry is that the mills are all too anxious to cut big and heavy timber, which is the most profitable.

The Premier: They are anxious to meet war orders.

Mr. THORN: I agree; but they are concentrating on the heavy stuff. After all, the Premier will agree, I think, that there is a tremendous lot of waste in wartime. That, of course, cannot be avoided up to a certain point; but if we had better and stricter control over the millers, we would be able to accumulate better stocks to meet building requirements in the future. I suppose small stocks are being gradually built up, but in comparison with requirements we have very little ready.

Mr. J. Hegney: I thought you wanted to get rid of controls!

Mr. THORN: So I do; but while control exists it ought to be proper control. We do not want the whole position messed up. We do not want mis-control. I have had an experience this year with regard to the shortage of box boards. That does not come under the subject of housing, but it has to do with the subject of timber. Packing sheds in the Swan district are unable to get box boards. We supported a local industry to the pleasure of the present Government by using local timbers, but now we have to beg for box boards in which to pack food which is very badly needed in the Old Country.

The Minister for Lands: Have you been able to get imported timber for the last two or three years?

Mr. THORN: For the information of the Minister, I would point out that timber is being imported from Canada.

The Minister for Lands: Not for case making.

Mr. THORN: Yes; and men are cutting up all the old scrap cases they get hold of.

The Premier: Have you any idea of the box requirements in one year of war?

Mr. THORN: It is tremendous.

The Premier: Would you believe that it is almost as much as the State's requirements for pre-war housing?

Mr. THORN: I know it is tremendous because of the necessity for exporting food-stuffs.

The Premier: I will give you that tremendous figure later.

Mr. THORN: I agree it is tremendous; but why are the firms not instructed to cut sufficient wood to make boxes for the export

of food? Why are they allowed to go uncontrolled and to cut only the most profitable timber? That is what I am objecting to; I am not in any doubt about the tremendous demand on the mills. Now consider the cost of homes—the homes that are being erected today for workers and returned soldiers! The cost is out of all reason. Some time ago I met a high official from Canberra who has a very good understanding of home building, and he told me that the people occupying those homes at present cannot help dropping from £100 to £200. That is the extent to which the homes decline in value as soon as they are occupied. That is no sort of a scheme! It is most unfair; and if we cannot do better than that for people who have served this country so well, it is a poor old effort. The member for Nedlands has said, with regard to day labour, that the supervision we have today is adding tremendously to the cost of our homes.

The Minister for Works: Where?

Mr. THORN: In this State.

The Minister for Works: There are no houses being built by day labour.

Mr. THORN: I am very glad to hear that; but the member for Nedlands mentioned day labour and the Minister did not deny it.

The Minister for Works: I do not have to deny everything.

Mr. THORN: I am glad we have that information. That is what I wanted to know; that is what we are here for.

The Minister for Works: You are making mis-statements.

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for Toodyay will address the Chair.

The Minister for Works: And get on to something he knows something about, which means—

Mr. THORN: The Minister does not know everything!

The Minister for Works: —which means that he will not speak much longer.

Mr. THORN: The Minister had better not be funny; I know he cannot take it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The Minister for Works: You will find out about that a bit later.

Mr. THORN: That is all right. The Minister does not worry me.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Toodyay will address the Chair and take no notice of interjections.

Mr. THORN: Regarding the coal position, I am glad to have the assurance of the Premier that the trouble yesterday was attributable to a breakdown of machinery. My information was that it was due to a shortage of coal.

Mr. J. Hegney: What has that got to do with the amendment?

Mr. THORN: If the hon. member had kept his ears open, he would know.

The Minister for Works: Most of your information seems to be utterly unreliable.

Mr. THORN: That is the Minister's idea. My information was that it was not a break-down of machinery, but was attributable to a shortage of coal. We have heard a lot about the production of coal and the reputation of the Collie miners for producing requirements during the war. I am very glad to know that yesterday's disorganisation was not due to a coal shortage, because we should not have one. We should be able to organise our coalfields so that the supply could be maintained. Shortages and stoppages in the electricity supply of this State are a tremendous inconvenience to the public.

The Minister for Lands: There have not been too many.

Mr. THORN: No; but the result of yesterday's stoppage was that there was no power for the Midland Junction workshops, so that about 1,500 men could not carry out their day's work. Surely some arrangement could be made to supply the workshops with power, even though there is a shortage!

The Minister for Lands: It was not a shortage but a break-down.

Mr. THORN: But there was power up that way; there was power in different directions. The stoppage meant a tremendous loss to this country.

The Minister for Lands: Any stoppage does.

Mr. THORN: Yes. In future I hope we will be able to have the workshops supplied with current. Look at the position of the farmers today through the shortage of coal supplies! Farmers are forced to use black wire and black netting, all ungalvanised. That is an absolutely uneconomical proposition. It is due to the fact that the W.A. Wire Netting Company cannot get



sufficient coal to keep its galvanising plant in operation. I understand that once that plant is lit up and the galvanising commences, it must not be allowed to cool off. It is in the nature of a furnace and, when a furnace is lit up, it has to be blown to pieces with explosives if it is called to cool off and harden. That is the position the farmer is suffering today through a shortage of coal for these firms.

Mr. Fox: They cannot get galvanised iron or wire in the East.

Mr. THORN: That is no consolation to Western Australia. The reason given for the lack of galvanising in this State is not that there is a shortage of galvanising, but that there is not sufficient coal to keep the plant working. Therefore, if we could step up our coal supplies and keep that plant going, it would be of great benefit to the users of fencing wire, wire netting, etc., that require galvanising, and it would be a great economic saving to the State because black wire will not last. It rots through in no time and is a big loss to the man on the land.

Mr. Wilson: And the farmers will get galvanised wire from Germany when the war is over.

Mr. Watts: That will be a mistake.

Mr. THORN: Yes, and if they do we will blame the Commonwealth Government for allowing it to come in. The question of rehabilitating our troops as they return to this State is a most important one, and I am very much afraid we are not prepared for it. A few men are in training. I have some figures here from the Ministry of Post-War Reconstruction. These figures deal with the building trade. The July, 1945, the W.A. Statistical Summary of that Ministry contains this paragraph—

The carpentry trade continues to attract many applicants, but during recent weeks several men have commenced clerical training, and this type of training is coming into greater favour.

That means that the training of carpenters is being neglected. That is a very serious thing. These men are going in for clerical jobs. We cannot blame them for doing that, but if there is any organisation in this matter, surely we could expect that the necessary trainees would go into the carpentry trade. This report gives figures of the men at present in training for carpentry, and also dis-

closes that there is not one trainee in the bricklaying industry at present under the post-war rehabilitation scheme. That is a serious state of affairs.

Mr. W. Hegney: Why is that?

Mr. THORN: Is not that for the Commonwealth Government, or those in charge, to answer? It is not for me to give a reply to the hon. member's interjection.

Mr. W. Hegney: Yes, it is.

Mr. THORN: I am pointing out that there are no trainees coming on, so how can we expect to carry out the great building and housing schemes that we have heard about?

The Minister for Works: This is a thoroughly destructive speech.

Mr. THORN: It is not destructive at all. I am trying to awaken the Minister to the fact of what is taking place today and what will take place in the future. He may not like it, and I suppose he does not, because it seems to me, during my experience of the last few years, that if one dares to criticise the Commonwealth Government the fat is in the fire. The policy of the State Government during this war has been, "Do not offend the Commonwealth Government; do not do anything that will upset its plans."

The Minister for Lands: Or upset the war.

Mr. THORN: But other States have carried on. Look at the progress in home-building and industry that South Australia and Victoria have achieved. They have made great strides because they have been prepared to fight the Commonwealth Government for their just rights. But that has not been the case with Western Australia.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: We co-operated to help win the war.

Mr. W. Hegney: They did not do as much as they could have done

Mr. THORN: This State has always co-operated.

The Premier: You admit that this State has co-operated?

Mr. THORN: Of course I do!

The Minister for Works: Be careful!

Mr. THORN: The Minister need not warn me. The fact remains that in this State we dropped everything, but there is a lot of industry that we could have gone on with. If it is good enough for the other States to make progress in their industries

and home-building, it is good enough for this State. It is because of our complacent attitude, and sitting down, not wanting to upset the Commonwealth Government, that we are in the position we find ourselves in today.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: No, it is through the patriotism of our citizens.

Mr. THORN: Patriotism can be ridden to death, too. I suppose that we have been no more patriotic than any of the other States during this war. That does not come into the question. We have played our part, and that is all that is expected of us.

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

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne—on amendment) [7.30]: The member for Toodyay, in moving an amendment to the Address-in-reply to the Speech of His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor, made his first pretence the fact that he wished to draw the Premier's attention to certain matters prior to his going to the Premiers' Conference. He wished to assist the Premier in this very important list of matters which he appears to think he alone knows very much about. It is obvious that during the last 24 hours someone has drawn the hon. member's attention to the fact that there is a likelihood of hostilities ceasing.

Mr. Thorn: I am not as thick in the head as that.

The PREMIER: The hon. member then has had a brain-wave—

Mr. Thorn: You got one.

The PREMIER: The hon. member has had a brain-wave and he is obviously under the impression that the war is about to end, and that, since the war is about to end, it is a very opportune moment for him to select to try to embarrass the Government instead of trying to co-operate, as both he and his leader stated they were anxious to do. Having had the brain-wave, and having had the amendment launched by the Deputy Leader of the Country Party, or of the Opposition, it is to be regarded in its proper place and in its proper perspective. The hon. member, during the course of his speech, acknowledged quite readily—in fact, he reaffirmed it—that this Government had assisted the war effort in every possible way by co-operating with the Commonwealth Government. He admitted that the State

had played its part, but because, in his words—or in the words of the motion—of the impending end of hostilities, he desires to take this course. I suggest that had anybody, three weeks ago, suggested to the hon. member that the position was such that hundreds of thousands of men would soon have either immediately or gradually to be discharged, and that it was necessary to prepare carefully for the requirements of rendering completely effectual preparations for rehabilitation, he would have rigidly and rigorously opposed such a course—

Mr. Thorn: Do not delude yourself.

The PREMIER: The hon. member now suggests that whether or not there is a prospect of an island by island fight, which was the prospect three months ago, it is very necessary for us to have many thousands of men available whose work and services we have had denied us. I make no apology for any attitude of mine regarding manpower. There has been no one in this House more active against the manpower authorities, or who has more rigorously opposed their decisions publicly and direct to the Commonwealth Government, than I have.

Mr. Withers: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: I make no apology at all for that attitude, but I desire at all times to adopt a reasonable attitude, even if the manpower authorities have not been the last word in reasonableness, and those outside of Government control have had the last word. I made the statement in this House, some years ago, that the most fruitful source of manpower—perhaps the only source of manpower of the type needed—was within the Army itself, but with the desire of this State to co-operative actively with the Commonwealth in an all-in war effort, we have had to take much of the responsibility because the Army has not seen fit to release very many men considered by us to be essential.

This country was saved from the enemy and from invasion by the grace of God, and had it not been for the close proximity of the enemy to this very city the position in this State would not have been as difficult as it is today. Let us be quite honest on the point, that this nation—and this State within the nation—pledged itself to exert every effort towards a total war effort, and it has achieved much. It is quite unnecessary for

me to outline the achievements, during the war, of this community, but it is idle to say that, with the biggest proportion of the population of any country in the world actively engaged in war, we could expect that business should be as usual. The very essence of this motion suggests that to a large extent and in a large degree the hon. member thinks that business should have been as usual for a lengthy period. No more selfish attitude could possibly be adopted. Let us analyse the amendment. It tells us that—

The impending end of hostilities in the war finds both your Government and the Government of the Commonwealth almost totally unprepared.

Mr. Thorn: We have been telling the Government that for the last two years.

Mr. Withers: How does he know?

The PREMIER: The hon. member, because of "the impending end of hostilities," becomes wise after the event and says, "You could have taken any risk possible. You should have had everything prepared to meet the emergency, and all the circumstances including demobilisation." "Almost totally unprepared" is certainly a gross exaggeration, and I wonder what this business-as-usual attitude could have led us into if this country had not made the proportionate sacrifice in the major effort that it has made.

Mr. Watts: You are not being as logical as you usually are and not as wise, either.

The PREMIER: To be totally unprepared is an impossibility in the eyes of the hon. member in regard to war, but to be totally unprepared for peace is his pleasurable anticipation because he has heard that the war is about to cease.

Mr. Thorn: I have not heard as much as you have. You might tell us something.

The PREMIER: That seems to be very obvious. If we are to exaggerate the position so grossly as to say we are almost totally unprepared, I think it is important to concede the point that this nation, in view of its major sacrifices, in view of its tremendous effort island by island, everywhere matching the Japanese wherever he could be found, could be regarded as having been totally prepared. Of course to be totally prepared would have to mean that there were no circumstances of war, and the extent to which we were unprepared has its relativity to the numbers of men available

to us, not only for maintaining industry but also for preparing for the expansion of industry.

Mr. Thorn: You are twisting the amendment now.

The PREMIER: The hon. member could not have understood the amendment as clearly as it reads.

Mr. Thorn: I am not as wise as you are.

The PREMIER: Regarding the words "speedily deal with the problem," surely the hon. member does not wish that, with the haste that was so pronounced following the end of hostilities in 1918, we should proceed with all haste on this occasion to mar any effort from careful preparedness!

Mr. Thorn: They were ready in 1917.

The PREMIER: The hon. member needs much reminding of the tragedies that occurred simply because of speed and the lack of plans and planning that followed the close of that war. Will the hon. member deny that chaos and confusion existed after that war and that hundreds of homes and hundreds of lives were sacrificed because of the unpreparedness, because of the desire for houses and the desire to stampede men into industry whether the man or industry was suitable or capable of such activity? The hon. member needs to be told frequently of not only the loss in money but also the loss in lives that occurred because of the desire for speed instead of planning on that occasion.

Let us be truthful in this matter. Let us face what has been done. The hon. member says that we are almost totally unprepared. He has either had the opportunity of second sight to anticipate that the war might end on the 15th August, 1945, or he must fairly concede to those who had the responsibility of maintaining the pressure to the extent necessary to enable Australia to make her major contribution, that that major contribution had to be continued. What does he know of what has happened in the last three years in regard to preparing for the peace? Does he know anything of what is going on in the Army in connection with the Army Educational Service, the Army Training Service, inquiries regarding housing and many other matters? He glibly refers to housing as if it were something suddenly thrust upon us as a dire necessity. The need for housing was apparent several years before the war.

Mr. Thorn: That is nonsense.

The PREMIER: It is utter ignorance to deny it.

Mr. Thorn: Nothing of the sort.

The PREMIER: If the hon. member will make himself conversant with the problems contained in his amendment, he will be in a better position to discuss them. Preparations that have been going on for several years in and out of the Army are in readiness for when the time for demobilisation occurs. Three months ago, however, there was not a member who would have dared anticipate that the war would be ending within the next few days.

Mr. Thorn: Will it?

The PREMIER: But this amendment offers the hon. member an opportunity to castigate State and Commonwealth Governments because the time, also appears to be opportune.

The hon. member made passing reference to timber. I challenge him to give us any information in the shape of facts and figures as to Australia's pre-war requirements and its war needs. Because he has a personal interest in an industry and an active interest in the export of the commodity, he spoke of the requirements regarding certain dried fruits. I do not blame him for his activity and interest in that industry, but I am sure that he could not inform the House whether 9 million or 900 million super feet of timber have been used for casing for war purposes during the last two years. All who have watched the trends of trade and the eating-up of our resources, know that Australia has had to sacrifice even its forests policy to meet war demands for heavy case timber for containers of all kinds, and hundreds of millions of super feet of timber grown in Australia has had to be cut for hutments and all sorts of accommodation within and without Australia. Because the timber has been used for war purposes, the hon. member endeavours to draw a red herring across the trail, asserting that because so much timber has been cut, there cannot be any quantity of housing material available to us.

This desire for business as usual flows through to the second portion of his amendment. I do not desire to deny that the coal position in this State is difficult.

There has been much worry associated with the keeping of industry going because of the very many circumstances affecting coal production, including the depletion of manpower and the increase in the average age of men in that and other industries. Both men and management have recently been very closely examined to ascertain what might be the maximum effort. When industry has been depleted in order to meet war needs, it is all very well for the hon. member to say that the Government has been negligent or dilatory because of inconvenience and loss arising from shortage of coal supplies. This is one of the very real difficulties that all Governments have faced during the war period, and all Governments must continue to face it in order to restore industries of all kinds and ensure that men in secondary industries particularly are rapidly absorbed.

Until we obtain the release of artisans and others and are prepared for the wholesale absorption of hundreds of thousands of men in industry, not very much can be done to alleviate the position in a matter of days or weeks. Let us all manfully accept the responsibility, not only for the rehabilitation period, which would of itself have been very difficult had the war continued while demobilisation was possible; but the war, likely as it is to end, with the majority of our men still in the Services, offers to any Government problems of the greatest magnitude and perplexity. This is no way to assist in the solving of those problems. If we could, with the large proportion of our men away from active industry, overcome the difficulties associated with power and manpower, it would be a very easy matter, but let us acknowledge without castigation and without glibly passing over the difficulties, that the difficulties are real; and if there is anything meant by the easy phrase "co-operation" let us co-operate still more fully in our endeavours to co-operate in the peace. We played our part as a nation.

We, as a State, co-operated with the Australian nation and we have no need to apologise at all for that effort. The member for Toodyay stated that we dropped everything for the war effort. I admit we dropped very many things, but we did not drop our bundle. While we face the future with tremendous concern, let us stand up to any test. We will not run away from

our problems, we will admit them, not cloud them over, and glibly decide that as the war is ended the Government has been negligent or dilatory because it is not wholly prepared, or, in the words of the member for Toodyay, almost totally unprepared for speedily dealing with the problems associated with post-war reconstruction. The member for Toodyay cannot have it all ways. He cannot yesterday or last week support and commend this part of Australia in its major war effort, and this week say that we are unprepared, because the war is likely to end, to absorb the hundreds of thousands of men who will be returning.

**MR. SEWARD** (Pingelly—on amendment) [7.53]: I cannot compliment the Premier on his reply to the speech of the member for Toodyay because I do not think the latter insinuated at any time that he stood up for the principle of "Business as usual." We know that the great task confronting this Government over the past years has been the prosecution of the war and I think we can say that we believe the Government has stood up to that task and done its very best to assist the Commonwealth Government. But we have to face the position that the successful prosecution of the war does not consist solely of putting every man we can find into the Armed Forces. Other work must be carried on. There is the provision of foodstuffs for the Fighting Forces, the housing of the public and many other things. I hold now, and have held throughout the war so far as Australia is concerned, that there has not been that study there should have been as to what number of people should be allocated to the Armed Forces and what number of people should be kept to carry on the essential business of the country.

It is not the member for Toodyay alone who is asking the question today, "What is going to happen if peace comes about in the next few days?" I fervently hope peace will come—everybody does—but I have heard people expressing the greatest concern and saying during the past few days, "Well, you have got the job coming to you now," and anybody looking around must realise that the Government has got the job. This is no new matter than has been taken up by the member for Toodyay today. Attention has been drawn to it. Tables

have been published. The Premier has given to the House on various occasions information concerning the housing problem for the succeeding 12 months. Has that programme been lived up to, or even approached? We have fallen down on the job; it is difficult even to recognise the programme put forward. I recall that I advocated the use of cement bricks, and I notice that at last these are being used in some construction work that is proceeding and to which the member for Murchison alluded on the opening day of the session.

I venture to say that thousands of cement bricks could have been made in Western Australia had a favourable attitude been displayed by the authorities towards their manufacture or some little assistance given to manufacture them. But the reply was, "We cannot have cement bricks. They are wet or damp or something of that description." We all know that cement bricks are largely used in many places; and had they been used here many more houses could have been built. I have had several applications—I will not say many, because my electorate is not concerned with a big shortage of houses—from people asking me to endeavour to get them a permit to erect a home, as they had not been able to obtain one. The widow of an airman who was killed two years ago has been trying for the last two years to get a house built. Some of the woodwork is already up, but she cannot get bricks and so is still without the house two years after she first came to me. That is one of many cases which I can quote. But to say that the member for Toodyay took up the attitude that we should have "Business as usual" is absurd and unworthy of the Premier.

**Mr. Thorn:** That is one of the Premier's red herrings.

**MR. SEWARD:** This State, I venture to say, if not totally unprepared, is seriously unprepared to deal with peace problems. I assure the members of the Government that they will have a heavy task. I can only repeat what the member for Toodyay, and I think the Leader of the Opposition, have said, that we at all times have been and are only too willing to co-operate with the Government; but we cannot allow that willingness to co-operate to dull our sense of responsibility when we see that things

are not being done which ought to be done, in order to enable us to be prepared to absorb into industry our returning soldiers who may be thrown on us at any moment. I have just said that we in this State are unprepared. I recall that in January last I wanted to compare what this State was doing in regard to housing, because I was not satisfied that we were doing everything we should do. Consequently I wrote to various States to ascertain what they were doing and I shall read a reply which I received. As I did not indicate to the Minister who sent me the reply that I was going to make it public, I shall not indicate the State concerned.

**Mr. Watts:** What was the form of Government in that State?

**Mr. SEWARD:** It was a Labour Government. The letter reads—

Your letter of the 24th January to hand in which you ask if it would be possible to have a list showing works to be undertaken in— from Consolidated Revenue, from Loan Money, and other post-war arrangements.

I will get in touch with the Co-ordinator General of Public Works in an endeavour to secure some suitable information for you.

I am pleased to see that you are taking an interest so far as the Commonwealth is concerned. We find—a bit out of the picture, and understand that Western Australia is somewhat in the same position. South Australia has been doing great work in regard to housing and has been complimented by the Prime Minister (Mr. Curtin), but we are wondering how they can get men and materials during the war years, as the whole of the staffs of my Works Department and my States Advances Corporation, which, prior to the war built about 400 houses a year for the people, have been occupied on war work for the past four years.

**The Minister for Lands:** That sounds like Dunstan.

**Mr. SEWARD:** The Minister is a very bad judge.

**The Premier:** The State Advances Corporation is in Queensland.

**Mr. SEWARD:** As I said to the Leader of the Opposition, the letter did not come from a non-Labour Government State. But even a non-Labour Government State is wondering why it is that South Australia can obtain the materials and men that they want. One has only to look around at the work done in these various States during the war years. I, too, would ask how it is that Tasmania, New South Wales and other States can get materials and manpower to

establish these works. Hobart can build a big bridge over the Derwent River; New South Wales can build one over the Hawkesbury River; but we cannot get steel to erect waterworks in the country. We cannot get men or materials. Why can some States obtain these things when this State cannot?

I am afraid our Government has not been sufficiently diligent in pushing the interests of Western Australia, with the result that other States have got what this State has been unable to secure. Only a few days ago the papers published figures showing the number of houses that South Australia has built. We are unable to do that. When houses are erected here, they are built at prices which all people agree are too high. In view of those circumstances, I venture to say there is need for some such amendment as that moved by the member for Toodyay, with a view to seeing if we can stir up some greater activity on the part of those in charge of affairs in this State, in order that we may be able to absorb these people in the Services, when they return, and live up to our promises that we would make available to them facilities of this kind and opportunities for them to fit in to suitable avocations. For that reason I support the amendment.

**MR. BERRY** (Irwin-Moore—on amendment) [8.2]: In a sense, I am sorry that this amendment has been regarded as a censure motion on the Government. If it represented a straightout desire on the part of the mover to obtain from the Premier a statement regarding the rehabilitation problem, with a view to our ascertaining from him what his attitude would be when he went to the Premiers' Conference, I would be in favour of it; but as a censure motion I do not like it. I do not like it for this reason: that some of us—I myself being one—pointed out in this House about four years ago the position that was fast approaching because of the attitude of the manpower authorities. In the early days of the war, greater consideration should have been given to necessary plans. I remember stressing that in this House before, and I have heard the Premier himself—when he was a Minister—make the same statement. I feel that blame for any falling away in our effort to get something done is directly ascribable to the attitude of the people responsible for handling the

manpower regulations. I do not hesitate to assert that I lay a great deal of the blame on the Commonwealth Government and very little on the State Government. Ever since I have known it, Western Australia has co-operated, particularly during this war, with the Commonwealth to the extent that it has not so much been pushed down a bank into a backwater but has actually slid into it.

We have now a new Premier who, I think, will stand up and demand that there shall be no more impositions placed upon this State by the Commonwealth Government. I cannot help feeling that in the matter of this rehabilitation problem there is a nasty undercurrent because of the adverse vote in connection with the powers that were sought by the Government through the recent Referendum. I feel very definitely that enough has not been done. We have in our midst today many soldiers who come to us, as members of Parliament, and tell us things that are almost harrowing. I know there are a lot of people who have not had the opportunities to which such great lip service has been given in all the Assemblies of Australia. I feel that there is much scope for this motion, for we are sadly behind with rehabilitation schemes for the soldiers coming back to Australia. The Premier stated that nobody knew this war was going to end in August. I venture to contradict that.

I am not allowed to bet in this Chamber but I am allowed to state that I am likely to win £1 because I assured people that, two months after Japan was struck hard by the Allies, it would not stand up to our Forces; and I fixed the cessation of hostilities for the 15th August. If the good news comes through tonight I win £1. That, however, is apart from the story. The story is that we have, as a community, not prepared ourselves adequately for a contingency such as this, which many men knew was likely to arise. To throw the blame entirely upon the new Premier of this State, or upon the ex-Premier, however, is not quite the correct thing. I feel that we should have an assurance from the Premier—which he has given us, up to a point—that he will now fight Western Australia's battles as vigorously as he possibly can, in order to see that the re-

habilitation plans are put into operation quickly.

I feel that, all the way through, the Army has had too much say. Many of us can quote amazing instances of that. I could tell of a man in Fremantle who at this moment is suffering from hookworm and from the effects of malaria. He is marked unfit for service outside Australia, and yet he is not allowed out of the Army to return to a more or less essential industry with which his father is associated. That is the sort of thing that has made the position so impossible that it became necessary for the member for Toodyay to bring his amendment before the House. I do not want to thrash this business. I do not like the amendment as a motion of censure against the Government or against the ex-Minister for Lands who, we all know, put up a mighty fine show. We equally know that the Commonwealth did not play with him too well. Had the Commonwealth Government exhibited reciprocity towards this State, there would have been no need for the amendment, but the co-operation so far has been thoroughly one-sided; it has been a one-way track entirely; and that, I think, is the bother. As an indication that we expect great things from our new Premier at the next Premiers' Conference, I am in favour of the amendment; as a motion of censure, I do not like it.

**MR. LESLIE** (Mt. Marshall—on amendment) [8.7]: After hearing the Premier's remarks, I was surprised to realise that he had decided not to support the amendment. I took it from his remarks that he practically confirmed the opinion of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that very little had actually been done towards facing the immediate post-war problems.

The Minister for Lands: What a weird mind you have!

**Mr. LESLIE**: The Premier said there were problems of great magnitude and great perplexity facing this Government and other Governments in view of the probable early termination of hostilities with Japan. Those were, in effect, his words. For years, since I have returned from this war, I have heard both from the State and the Commonwealth Governments that they were planning for the post-war period, but we have seen so

little evidence of preparation that I welcomed the amendment, believing that it would bring forth some information as to what those plans actually are. Now we have the Premier telling us, in effect, that there is justification for our concern. We have repeatedly been told of plans that have been made. Even tonight we have heard mention here of a housing agreement. Where is this housing agreement? What is it? We are, as a Parliament and as a people, entitled to be told this.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: You were told ten months ago.

Mr. LESLIE: Much water has flowed under the bridge since then.

The Minister for Works: It has been a wet winter.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. LESLIE: The number of houses that we were originally told were going to be built in one year have not eventuated. In spite of that the promise of houses for the next year was doubled. As we have had no tangible fulfilment of those promises, what was said ten months ago can be forgotten. I do not like to saddle those who occupy the present administrative positions with the difficulties that occurred in the past. We cannot blame the present King for the sins of King Henry VIII! I do not see that we can blame the present occupants of the Treasury Bench for what happened before they took over. But I do say this, and it has been confirmed by others, that while we have undoubtedly co-operated with the Commonwealth Government in the war effort, that co-operation by Western Australia has so far been more of a humble acquiescence in the dictates of the Federal dictators. It has been nothing else. I have, during the past few months, had occasion to cross swords mildly with the then Minister for Lands and Agriculture over the Government's attitude. I can see no evidence of the State having put up a battle for itself. The Premier told us tonight that the Government has made representations to the Commonwealth, and he has made public announcements of his objections to manpower restrictions. Where are the results of those objections?

The Premier: They are much more than you ever thought of achieving!

Mr. LESLIE: Are we not to be told of them? It is the Government's job to seek the confidence of the people.

The Premier: Ask some of your colleagues.

Mr. LESLIE: We have seen scant results. We are entitled to see some results. The manpower question is one that we have fought against. I have seen public announcements of the efforts made by our Government with the Commonwealth Government to get relief in connection with some of the difficulties that this State has experienced. We can come to only one conclusion, which is that either the representations which the Government tells us have been made, have not been made as strongly as they might have been, or, if they have been made as strongly as possible, we must confess to having had rather a futile Government in this State, because the success which has followed those representations has certainly not been what one would expect to result from vigorous representation.

The Minister for Works: This is Wyalkatchem logic.

Mr. Thorn: That is not smart.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. LESLIE: It may be, but it is good. I give an instance concerning one individual who has suffered from the manpower difficulty. This instance is apart from the national or wider sphere. In this morning's "West Australian" is the announcement of the death of a man at the age of 75 years at the Wyalkatchem hospital. That man had four sons in the Armed Forces. He tried to obtain the release of one as he was 75 years of age and working a large farm. All the people in his district signed a petition to get one of his sons released in order to assist him on the farm. Even after this man had suffered from two apoplectic strokes he was still unable to obtain the release of a son. He suffered a third stroke on Saturday and did not survive. The Premier has not denied the fact that the problems of this Government and of the Commonwealth Government are of great magnitude and perplexity. He stated earlier that after the last war men were stampeded into industry. I was one of the men who, after the last war, found himself in a camp. There was no stampeding of the men into industry; they stampeded the Government into action.

The Minister for Lands: Which Government?

Mr. LESLIE: Every Government. Those men were not prepared to stay in camp



while the fellows who had comfortable chairs in Government offices made up their minds what was to be done. If I have any knowledge of soldiers, and I think I have, exactly the same position will arise when hostilities cease on this occasion. We cannot hold these men in camp, unemployed. They will demand to return to civil life, and they will demand the things that, for the last three years, they have been told are waiting for them. It is up to us to tell them now that those things are not waiting for them.

Mr. Withers: How do you know?

Mr. LESLIE: We have not seen any evidence of them.

Mr. Withers: You are asking questions.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. LESLIE: I am not so green in Parliamentary procedure as not to know that this amendment will not be carried. It is not a motion of censure because we know very well that it will not go through. The Government is deserving of censure, but we know that we cannot get it through. The amendment is designed to obtain the information that the people are seeking. The Premier has replied and has told us nothing; in fact what he said is to the effect that there is every reason for the concern which this side of the House is expressing. I know very well that this amendment will not go through. The whole position is that all that has happened is that we have obtained confirmation of the fact that the fears which prompted the amendment are substantiated. I propose to support it although I know the other side, by weight of numbers, will defeat it.

MR. J. HEGNEY (Middle Swan—on amendment) [8.17]: I have listened to some of the speeches made in support of the amendment, and one would think from listening to them that we had not gone through one of the greatest perils that has ever confronted Australia. The member for Mt. Marshall spoke about the manpower position. We have been told, through the responsible Commonwealth Minister, that if every industry got its required allocation of releases from the Army there would be no Army left. Take the Education Department! There is a demand made for the release of school teachers. A demand is made for people to go into primary production. Our friends on

the other side of the House have spent years in their efforts to get every man possible back into the primary industries. The same thing applies to the housing problem. In fact, all industries are in the same position; they are all affected by manpower. Many of the men who should be in these industries are fighting in the front lines of New Guinea and other places. Housing has been mentioned in the course of this debate. Some years ago the member for Irwin-Moore eloquently pleaded for the construction of ships at Fremantle. Subsequently the Commonwealth Government made this work available on the Swan River near Fremantle. That work proceeded apace, so that over 300 carpenters were taken into the shipbuilding industry here as shipwrights. Today they are engaged in building ships, so how on earth can they be engaged in building houses?

It is utterly ridiculous for members who sit on the opposite side of the House to condemn the Government because of the housing problem, when these men have been engaged in building ships at Fremantle. I had the opportunity, just before the late Prime Minister went back to Melbourne, to make representations to him in connection with a dispute which existed in his electorate, at General Motors Holdens, Ltd., where there were a number of carpenters out of work. We urged that they be released to go into other work, and there was agitation, then, in the daily papers, the leading article urging that "there should be business as usual," and that we should get on with the job. The Prime Minister told us—we represented the Trades Union movement in this State in our representations to him—that it was ridiculous to talk along those lines, because the whole of the timber resources of this country were still required to provide hutments for Service personnel and warehouses to protect the materials, going up to the Service personnel, against the elements, which in those parts caused more damage than did the enemy. All the timber resources of the country were required for that purpose. That was in November last, and it is only August now.

Furthermore, in replying to that leading article the Prime Minister told us that he predicted that the war with Japan would last at least another two years. He told us, and he has told the country also, that if he had to choose between urgent necessities for the Military Forces of this country this

year, and a shortage of materials and food-stuffs next year, he would choose to defend the country this year. That is what happened, and because of the fact that there is some difficulty now in this community, and because the whole of the resources of Australia have been used for the purpose of defending Australia and for servicing the American Government's Service personnel who have come to these shores, and for helping other people who have come here to assist us in our dire necessity, this Government and the Commonwealth Government have been attacked on all sides. There is no question that, so far as primary production was concerned, it was urgently necessary to have as many men as possible engaged in primary production.

I know, from my travels about portions of the State, that there are many people engaged in primary production who have had great difficulties, particularly those in the fruit industry, because of lack of manpower; but the lack of manpower and labour affects every industry, including the primary industries. It is easy now to say that there is a shortage of houses, and of manpower and so on. We all know that—it is commonplace—and we know that because of that we have to face the situation. I think each one of us should thank God every night that the peril that confronted Australia a few years ago has gone from our shores and we can hope within a few days, at all events, to celebrate victory over the last of our enemies. We do not know yet all that has happened, but the whole of the resources of the Commonwealth have been engaged in this struggle, and a huge burden of debt has been built up. We knew that such a burden would be built up. It has been built up, and Australia's contribution in this respect has been tremendous. I have listened to Mr. Dedman, who holds a very high position in the Commonwealth Government. He has said that representations have been made to him for releases of manpower for various industries, but that he was not going to make an overwhelming number of releases in respect of teachers, for instance, though no one will deny that the release of teachers is an urgent necessity.

Mr. Doney: Did he say that?

Mr. J. HEGNEY: We know that many of the teachers whose release is asked for do not want to be released.

Mr. Mann: Are you sure about that?

Mr. J. HEGNEY: I can tell the member for Beverley that I am certain about that. Many of them hold high positions in the army.

Mr. Berry: They were never better off in their lives.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: Yes, and it is otherwise with some. The same thing applies in respect of the engineering and building industries and all the ramifications of the industrial and economic life of our State. There is a shortage of manpower everywhere, even in respect of the young women who have been brought into the Services. Look at the difficulties confronting mothers with regard to assistance in the home, and the difficulties as to nursing and so on. This problem of manpower affects everyone of us, and it is suggested that because of the difficulty which confronts the country the Government should be attacked. I think members on the other side of the House should have held their fire until the peace was signed.

Carping criticism at this stage ill becomes the Opposition, having regard to the fact that there has been a spirit of co-operation existing. I regret that the member for Toodyay should have launched a broadside such as this at this hour. He should have sought the information he desired in respect of rehabilitation and the placement of men back from the Forces. He says that nothing has been done, but as a matter of fact there have been conferences of the Commonwealth and State Ministers for Agriculture in connection with land settlement. Mr. Fyfe, who has been appointed here as Commissioner, has attended conferences in connection with the settlement of men on the land, and in connection with primary production. The Opposition must know that at least some activity has taken place along those lines.

Mr. Thorn: We have already had a statement dealing with that.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: If the war ends two years earlier than was anticipated we are not as well prepared as possible; according to the terms of the motion we are "almost unprepared," but that is not true in substance. A rehabilitation department has been set up and men are being trained in various trades. As men are released from the Army there will be opportunities for them to get that training which has been

promised to the young men whose lives have been interrupted. It is the intention of the Commonwealth Government that the men who have had their careers interrupted, and who have gone into the Army to fight for their country, shall be rehabilitated. I believe the Commonwealth Government will look after them and see that they are rehabilitated and put back into industry.

Mr. Berry: It will be necessary for it to do so.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: Of course it will do so. It is the intention of the Government. The fact is that the war is terminating a little earlier than anyone expected. No-one could foresee that the war was going to collapse, notwithstanding the prognostications of the member for Irwin-Moore, and the fact that he won some money on a prediction. Even our Military leaders could not foresee the early collapse of this war. But for the invention of the atomic bomb and the fact of Russia coming in on another front the war might have continued much longer. Those factors hastened the defeat of the Japanese. No-one could say, even a month ago, that there was about to be a sudden collapse of Japan, such as appears to be imminent now. Not even our highest Military leaders could foresee it.

The member for Toodyay made reference to a brickyard which was closed down some years ago, when men from the building industry were drawn into the Allied Works Council for the construction of air strips and defence buildings throughout the length and breadth of Australia. Carpenters and other skilled tradesmen went to Darwin and New Guinea, and so they could not be engaged in building homes here, however much our people were in need of homes. The housing problem existed before the outbreak of war and will continue to exist for some years. Therefore it ill becomes the Opposition to be critical of the Government on the matter of housing. Some years ago the Commonwealth inaugurated a housing scheme and set aside ten million pounds for the purpose. But how much of that sum was spent by the then Country Party-National Government? Only one million pounds! That was the extent of its activities. At least we must admit that the Labour Government has built some houses in the various States, but very few were built under the

Commonwealth Housing Scheme sponsored by the Country-Party National Government.

Mr. Abbott: This State is well behind its quota as compared with other States.

The Minister for Lands: What is its quota?

Mr. J. HEGNEY: This State has made a good contribution in the circumstances that prevail. We sought from the Commonwealth authority to build wooden ships, and because we had no shipwrights in this State, carpenters were taken into the shipbuilding industry to do the work. Consequently those carpenters could not be engaged on building houses. They had to make a success of the shipbuilding work, especially as the Commonwealth said that the matter of building ships to carry necessary supplies was of the greatest importance. The member for Pingelly complained of the number of men poured into the Army and of the difficulty of getting men released. It is not very long since everybody was singing the praises of the late John Curtin for the manner in which he had guided the destinies of the Commonwealth during the war period, and he told the country the reasons for the manpower difficulty existing in Australia. Therefore it ill becomes the hon. member to come here at this stage and indulge in carping criticism. As a representative of the people, he should show more commonsense and toleration. To be critical and even hypercritical will get us nowhere. Many things are required in my electorate, but I know that they cannot be done, and I have no hesitation in telling my constituents the reason why they cannot be done. We are engaged in a struggle with the enemy and that is the cause of our difficulties. For these reasons the amendment should be defeated.

Mention has been made of the questions of day labour and piecework. I do not know that much piecework is being done in the metropolitan area. In fact, there are only a few industries in which it can be worked. Some of the miners work under a contract system and some of the timber getters work under a piecework system, but I know of no tradesmen in the building industry who are engaged on a piecework basis. They work on the day labour system, whether carpenters, bricklayers or plasterers. Though bricklayers have a certain number of bricks to lay each day, they are, in the main, employed on day labour. Contractors gen-

erally budget for a profit of £150 or £200 for themselves in addition to the wages debited to the job, and day labour does not operate.

The Government proposes to set up an organisation under the Works Department to start building homes, just as that department has undertaken the construction of bridges and other large public works, but because the Government has decided to enter the field of building homes on an extensive scale, members say it is infringing the rights of other people. I hope the Government will pursue its policy of building homes on the day labour system. Many buildings have been erected under that system and they are a credit to the workers who were employed on them. The cost, too, compared favourably with the cost of buildings erected by contractors.

Mr. Doney: Are you sure of that?

Mr. J. HEGNEY: I am absolutely certain. Before I entered Parliament, I worked in industry for private employers and for the Government, and I say without hesitation that the workers in the employment of the Government give as good service for their money as do men working for private employers. In fact, I worked harder for the Government than ever I did for a private employer. Yet the member for Toodyay made sneering remarks about men who left a brickyard in the Middle Swan district to work in the Government Workshops. His reference to their present job being easy was unfair. He does not know whether it is easy or not. Brickmaking is a very arduous industry. I have made representations to the manpower authorities to secure the release of certain men to work in the brickyards in my electorate. The young men are the primary workers in that industry, not the old men, but the presence of old men makes the conditions in the industry more difficult.

As to the men being taken from the brickyards and employed in the Workshops, doubtless they were directed by the manpower authorities to go there. They might have had experience in brickmaking, but they are not skilled tradesmen, and if they have got less arduous work now, they cannot be blamed for taking it. It is difficult to get men to go out to the head of a timber line and engage in timber getting. Some men have been released for this work. Some weeks ago I made representations for the

release of a man to return to the timber industry. When he was released, he found it impossible to get a house at the mill centre, and the manpower authorities wanted to send him elsewhere. He refused to go because there were no amenities for himself and his family. The firm would not release him to go elsewhere, and the manpower authorities then ordered him to go to the other place or return to the Army. He preferred to return to the Army. The manpower authorities are often confronted with great difficulties when men are released for industry. My view of the amendment is that the attack made by the Opposition is based on very slender foundations indeed.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS** (Hon. A. H. Panton—Leederville—on amendment) [8.40]: I have rather enjoyed this little skirmish. The member for Middle Swan called it a broadside. God help Australia and the Allied Nations if the broadsides from the Navy had been as weak as this! I suggest that the member for Toodyay went on a little scouting expedition.

Mr. Fox: No heavy artillery came up!

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS**: Talking of artillery, the member for Toodyay is an ex-artillery man, and I suggest to him, with all due respect, that he dropped his shots a little short, as he did previously.

Mr. Thorn: You set the wrong range.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS**: I do not think there is great necessity for many Ministers to take part in this fight. I think it could be left to the scouts, but one or two observations were made with which I would like to deal. The member for Irwin-Moore suggested, or rather the suggestion came to me in this way, that he hoped our present Premier would adopt a different attitude when he reached the Premiers' Conference. I am sure the Premier will not mind my saying that it is not so much a change of Premiers—

Mr. Berry: I did not say that.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS**: Yes, the hon. member did. The Premier will not mind my saying that it is not so much a change of Premiers as a change of circumstances. I have had the privilege on more than one occasion of attending a Premiers' Conference. I assisted our previous Premier at such conferences in civil defence and health matters. It was very interesting

to watch the member for Geraldton, when he was Premier, putting up his case, with the full realisation all the time that we were engaged in a total war. He gave to the Prime Minister and to the country, backed up by the people of Western Australia, all the support it was possible for him to give. He did a remarkably good job as Premier. If we are successful in getting peace before the present Premier reaches Canberra, I would be very disappointed in him if he did not adopt a different attitude. I know he will adopt a different attitude.

Whether or not the member for Irwin-Moore meant what he said, he left me with the impression that it was not so much a change of Premiers as a change of circumstances. I venture to say that during the whole term of the war, State Premiers, with the loyalty demanded of them, did their best to assist in winning the war. As I said, the member for Geraldton, as Premier, did a really remarkable job and I was always proud to sit with and listen to him. The member for Irwin-Moore also said that in his opinion the Army had too much say. I am unashamed when I say that I got into many difficulties while I occupied the position of Minister for Civil Defence because I supported the Army. I am more than surprised to hear a man wearing a returned soldier's badge talking about the Army having too much say, particularly in a war such as that we have been passing through. If the Army did not have all the say it should, had there been political interference or influence in any shape or form, the boys from Australia who pushed back the Japanese on the Kokoda Trail would have a different story to tell.

Mr. Doney: Has the Army given you every satisfaction?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have been in two armies, but neither gave me any satisfaction.

Mr. Doney: I am asking you about this Army.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am telling the hon. member—

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minister had better address the Chair. I ask him to do so.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I tell the hon. member, through you, Sir, that if the Army had, while being involved in a war of this magnitude, been subjected to political interference or influence, we should not be in the position we now are.

Mr. Thorn: Has there not been some in this war?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Not that I know of.

Mr. Doney: Surely you do.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I tell the hon. member, through you, Sir, that he wants to get me into some trouble. The late Prime Minister, who carried the heaviest burden during this war, told me privately time after time—and he made the statement publicly—that he was concerned with choosing the leaders, and that it was the leaders who advised him. It was not for him to advise them. Had it been otherwise, there would have been no victory for Australia. The hon. member has mentioned political influence. I tried a little political influence myself. I heard the member for Mt. Marshall and other members talking about individual cases. I thought I had a terrible case of hardship. Without going into details, I may say that I wrote to the then G.O.C., General Gordon Bennett, and the reply I received was that the Army resented political interference. It was one of the best letters I ever received.

Mr. Doney: The Army resented it, but had to tolerate it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It was one of the best letters I ever received because afterwards when people came to my office and wanted me to do something for their boys in the Army, I produced the letter, which satisfied them it was no use coming to me for help. The letter put me in my place and I deserved to be put in my place. Therefore, it is not much use blaming the Army. The Army is made up of men from the mess orderly up to the most important general and it has done its job. Most people are surprised at the time in which it has done its job. I do not agree with the member for Irwin-Moore.

Mr. Berry: You forgot to tick me off!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am glad to have ticked the hon. member off so happily. He should not find fault with the Army, but rather with the multitude of civil servants who have been suddenly placed in various positions. Many of them, having obtained a little control or responsibility, are likely to run away with themselves.

Mr. Thorn: They are dictators.

Member: You are criticising the Commonwealth Government.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not care whom I am criticising, but I do wish to criticise the member for Mt. Marshall. He is very worried about the results achieved during the war effort. I think the people of Australia, and of Western Australia in particular, deserve all the credit it is possible to give them. I tell the House quite candidly that my association with defence matters, small as it was, astounded me as I learned what the people were prepared to put up with on account of the war. Now that the war is over—

Mr. Thorn: Is it over?

Mr. Berry: How do you know that?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Did not the hon. member say so? I have sufficient faith in the Navy, Army and Air Force to say that the war will be over in a very few weeks.

Mr. Thorn: Thanks very much.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is confidential! Do not tell anybody! The member for Mt. Marshall stamped his foot—

Mr. Thorn: Which one?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not think that is a very nice thing to say. The member for Mt. Marshall hit his desk and spoke in a loud voice. What happened in the last war? There are quite a lot of us who were in the last war and at the end some of us were coming home and some were already home. I want to remind the hon. member, if he has forgotten—he was a very young man and he may easily have forgotten—that at the end of the last war there was an anti-Labour Government in charge in the Commonwealth and five out of six anti-Labour Governments in the States. If things were in a chaotic condition after the last war, I suggest that the hon. member recall who was responsible.

Mr. Leslie: It looks like the same results with a different Government this time.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, it is a different matter. Let me remind the hon. member of something else. The last war was fought 12,000 miles away from Australia. We were not even called upon to supply foodstuffs for a lot of troops in Australia, and we were not called upon to feed a great many people in Britain who were being bombed. When anyone tries to draw an analogy between the two wars, he is talking with his tongue in his cheek. During the last war, 400,000 men enlisted in the Army.

This time there were over 800,000 men and women in the services. There was no shortage of manpower or materials during the last war; there was an unemployment problem. There were tons of material. I will tell the hon. member something else. While there was no actual conscription from a statutory point of view, there was any amount of economic conscription; and he knows it. There is no analogy between the last war and this war, and those who occupied Government benches at the end of the last war had nothing to prevent them, if they so desired, from getting ready for the men coming back. But evidently they had no such desire, because no attempt was made to do anything about it. I am glad this amendment has been moved, because it has given us the opportunity to say that when the time comes, when the time is ripe, when the time is opportune, the hon. member will know just what is to be done and how we are going to do it, and he will know that when men and materials are available the job will be done.

Mr. Thorn: That is the information I have been seeking.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Had the hon. member asked me in the corridor during teatime I could have told him and we could have gone home.

Mr. Thorn: This is the place to tell us.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: When men and materials are available, we will be able to do the job. A good deal of play has been made about South Australia. I have listened to the member for Geraldton, when he was Premier, speaking at the Premiers' Conference, and I have listened to the Premier of South Australia. I do not profess to be a prophet; but for the benefit of the member for Toodyay, I venture to say that our difficulties in Western Australia will be well and truly overcome when the Premier of South Australia—if he is still there—finds himself up to his neck in difficulties, for the simple reason that the Premier of South Australia did not leave a stone unturned to get buildings erected and men working in South Australia. We are doing a lot of growling in Western Australia—sometimes with a good deal of justification probably—concerning the few munition works we have had in Western Australia. But when it comes to the rehabilitation of Australia, I

venture to suggest that Western Australia will be completely rehabilitated and going along happily when most of the other States are struggling.

Mr. Thorn: I am glad to hear that.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Maybe the same thing will happen as happened when we were starved out of the Eastern States and came here hunting gold and found it. We will probably be able to help the Eastern States to rehabilitate themselves. So I feel the member for Toodyay has done us a service. He has given us an opportunity to get in a bit of practice for this little skirmish. I hope no one else makes the mistake of calling his speech a broadside. He is not conceited, but I would not like him to go out with a swelled head, believing he has delivered a broadside so far as the Government is concerned. Without wishing to be nasty about it, I would say it was more of a quib than a broadside.

**MR. McLARTY** (Murray-Wellington—on amendment) [8.55]: I think the amendment says it regrets that the Government is almost totally unprepared to meet the conditions which will arise in regard to repatriation when the war ends. I am not going to say that the Government is almost totally unprepared.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: It is ridiculous!

Mr. McLARTY: I know that preparation has been made in certain directions for many months in regard to certain Government activities that would create employment for returned soldiers. However, I feel that the amendment will do some good. It has already resulted in a debate in this Chamber which has aroused considerable interest, and I have no doubt that interest will be shown in it by the people of this country. I agree with the member for Mt. Marshall that the main object of the amendment is to seek information, and I feel that we are entitled to considerably more information than has been given.

Mr. Leslie: If there is any to give.

Mr. McLARTY: We are entitled to more information than has been given by the Premier and the Minister for Lands. We know perfectly well that if peace should eventuate in the near future, there is sure to be a considerable amount of impatience amongst soldiers awaiting discharge. It will not be possible to keep thousands of soldiers in camp, even though we pay them and say to

them, "We cannot let you out yet because we have not anything for you to do." The Minister for Lands, who has had considerable experience of camp life, knows that men become very restless when they have not anything to do, and also become restless when they are waiting to be told what they have to do. So it is necessary that we should be able to give them information as early as possible. I have not stood up here in a critical spirit or in an attempt to embarrass the Government in any way.

I feel that if one cannot say something constructive on this matter, it is better to say nothing at all. So I am going to try to offer some suggestions to the Government which, if acted on, will probably be helpful. I would ask the Premier this question: What has the Government done in regard to seeking information from private employers and private enterprise generally as to the number of men they will be able to absorb as soon as we have peace and the men are available? I believe that if private enterprise receives the encouragement which it should receive, it will give employment to great numbers of men under good conditions. Local authorities will also be able to employ many men. They will not be able to provide employment for anything like the number of men for whom private enterprise will be able to cater; but nevertheless they have accumulated large sums of money which they have been unable to spend during the war. The member for Mt. Hawthorn, when Minister for Works, provided that this money should be accumulated during wartime and spent during the post-war period. There again the Government should be able to tell us what labour will be required by the local authorities.

The agricultural industry is still short of labour. I suppose the Manpower Department in this State has received thousands of applications from farmers begging for the release of their sons, or for suitable labour. That information should not be difficult to obtain. I hope that if, in the near future, the Minister for Agriculture is asked what amount of labour has been sought by the agricultural industry in this State, and what amount has been supplied, he will be able to give us the figures. A very considerable amount of employment is offering in the agricultural industry. The Minister for Works is one who should be able to give us a great deal of information about the prob-

lems of employment of returned men after this war. In the last session of Parliament he told us about public works that are contemplated and the number of men that his department proposes to employ. The Public Works Department is the largest employer of labour in Western Australia. I repeat again what I said on the Address-in-reply, that the Government's public works policy should be co-ordinated with that of private enterprise. If that is done I feel sure that there will be considerable organisation in regard to employment generally. I do not propose to say much about land settlement at present. I have already expressed my pleasure in the reports that were printed and published by the Rural Reconstruction Commission. I think that, if we follow the advice given by that Commission we will be successful with our land settlement.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Murray-Wellington that land settlement cannot be discussed under this amendment because it is already included in a notice of motion on the notice paper.

Mr. McLARTY: I was just making reference to it and did not intend to discuss the report on land settlement generally. I shall say nothing more about it. A number of young men who are in the Army today could be settled on the land without help from any Government department. Their fathers would be prepared to give them partnerships, or to provide land for them. There again we should seek information as to what number of men can be placed in that category. I feel that sufficient has already been said about housing. We know its importance, and every effort should be made to release skilled labour for housing, brick-making and timber-milling as soon as possible. I particularly draw attention to the need for additional skilled labour required by the State Brickworks at Byford. Again I think we should find out what the men want to do. I understand that the Army authorities have been doing this. They have been trying to take a census of what the men want to do. We will not be successful with any repatriation scheme if we employ the men in some class of work that they do not like.

MR. DONEY (Williams-Narrogin—on amendment) [9.5]: I am certainly not impressed with the efforts put up by the members on the Government side of the House

in rebuttal of the charges raised against them by the member for Toodyay. They have gone to no trouble at all to contest the actual facts and figures submitted by him. They have spoken—and this can be said of each member—in general terms only. That cannot be denied. The Minister for Lands has blamed the Army for the position we are in so far as repatriation operations are concerned.

The Minister for Lands: No!

Mr. DONEY: He stoutly denied the charge coming from this side of the House, but he knows very well that the Army takes second place to the Commonwealth Government, so far as being in charge of this war is concerned.

The Minister for Lands: Rats!

Mr. DONEY: It is of no use saying that because the Minister knows that the contrary is the case. He knows very well that, so far as the disposition of the Forces from the commencement of the war to the present time is concerned, the controlling voice has been that of the Commonwealth Cabinet assisted, I will admit, by contributions from non-elective outside bodies. The Minister for Lands knows that is true.

The Minister for Lands: No.

Mr. DONEY: The Minister made a remark, which is to a large extent correct, that South Australia, since the commencement of the war, pressed for manpower and materials in order that it might get more, perhaps, than its fair share of public works. I do not deny that, and yet I am not wholly in a position to say that what has been said is true. The meaning underlying it all is that because of our easy compliance with instructions from Canberra we expected a bigger reward later from the Commonwealth Government than that for South Australia or any of the other States. Let me answer the Minister in anticipation by saying that here, something like two years ago, when the war was well in its stride and no-one knew just when it would finish, the question of the disposition of certain textile-woollen factories cropped up.

I know from conversations I had at the time with Cabinet members opposite that they anticipated, because of the compliance to which I referred a moment ago, very fair treatment indeed from the Commonwealth Government. There came a time when the distribution took place. What happened then? Some 40 or 41 factories were to be



allocated. How were they divided between the States? The small State of Victoria had 19 given to it, and that State was very insistent upon having its own way, against the wishes of the Commonwealth Government, when it considered that that Government was unfair. New South Wales, a large State in population and territory, got only 17. The Queensland Government, which was equally insistent upon having its own way, was allocated four. South Australia got one. We, who expected half a dozen or near to it, got nothing, and Tasmania has nothing.

The Minister for Lands: Rank ingratitude!

Mr. DONEY: I am just stating facts. I do not care what opinion the Minister holds.

Mr. Watts: The Minister will find it in "Australia at War," published by the Department of Information. It must be correct.

Mr. DONEY: The Government may think that with all its methods it has built up a title to Commonwealth goodwill, but, having regard to what I have just said, I think the Government is likely to be sadly disappointed by and by.

The Minister for Lands: It will not be the first time.

Mr. DONEY: The member for Toodyay did not go to any trouble to deny that this State had done its duty as it saw it. The hon. member made great play on this fact, as did the member for Middle Swan, but the latter left me with the impression that he might vote either for or against this amendment, I have not the remotest idea which.

The Minister for the North-West: He is not responsible for your imbecility.

Mr. DONEY: That may be so. I have forgotten for the moment the point I was on.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Members must not interject.

Mr. DONEY: The very general nature of the Minister's reply did not indicate any very strong exception to the work of the member for Toodyay.

Mr. Watts: He really agrees with every word of it.

The Minister for Lands: I do not take him seriously.

Mr. DONEY: When the Minister for Lands dealt with the Army and other matters I think he made rather heavy work

of it. I say that the principal fault of the Government in regard to the subject-matter of the hon. member's amendment is that right from the start of the war to the present time the Government has given an altogether too easy compliance with the regulations and instructions coming from Canberra, on the mistaken idea that it would thereby be assisting the war effort. A little while ago my colleague, the Leader of the Opposition, and I went to Victoria. We might as well admit that we went there largely for the purpose of ascertaining why it was that the State of Victoria was able to get from the circumstances of the war and from the Commonwealth Government far more for its people than we were able to get here.

The Minister for Lands: I suppose Mr. Ward gave you priorities.

Mr. DONEY: We questioned those responsible and found that when an instruction came from Canberra which did not seem to confer any benefit on the war effort in Victoria, or which might even have been detrimental to the war effort, the Premier or the responsible Minister or department would examine it. They would put to themselves this question: "If this instruction is effected, will it be for the benefit of the State of Victoria?" If they answered "No" to that they had, in order to be fair, to go further and ask themselves, "Will it harm the war effort?"

Members on the other side of the House know, as well as we do, that only about half a dozen out of over 100 regulations from Canberra had any effect on the war effort, either one way or the other, except that the great majority of them clogged the war effort here, as we know to our cost. There is no doubt about that. In such a circumstance the Government of Victoria would intimate to the Commonwealth Government that it was not going to follow out the instruction. There would naturally be a bit of a brawl between the Victorian Government and the Commonwealth Government, but we have to remember—as they did—that if the Government of Victoria would not give effect to those instructions there was no one to do it. So it had only to stand firm, as we on many occasions should have done here, and thereby saved a great deal in the way of material, manpower and so on. This comes close home to the Minis-

ter's department and shows him that though what I am saying is not necessarily correct, it is always likely to be correct. In Victoria they built a hospital, at about the same time as we built our new hospital here—

The Minister for Lands: And the Americans took it over.

Mr. DONEY: They built their hospital at the same time as we built ours, and finished it at about the same time. I do not blame the Minister, though I do blame the Cabinet, for the fact that when the hospital here was finished it had to remain empty, as it is now—

The Minister for Lands: It is not finished now.

Mr. DONEY: When the actual structure was finished it had to remain there without the necessary internal equipment, but when the big hospital in Melbourne was finished the Government was able straight away to secure the equipment and manpower necessary fully to equip that hospital, with the result that something like two years ago they were able to have their proper intake of patients, and since that time that hospital has been doing magnificent work. That indicates that the methods adopted by Mr. Dunstan, with regard to setting aside instructions which had a harmful effect on the manpower and material positions showed a good effect indeed.

The Minister for Lands: You know that the Americans took over the hospital and finished it, but you do not mention that.

Mr. DONEY: It has been said by one member—I think it was the member for Mt. Marshall—that the principal blame lies on the Commonwealth Government. That is so, and we readily admit that. This Government's share of the blame comes in because it has supported the Commonwealth Government in any action it has taken. You know, Mr. Speaker, as well as we do, that in Canberra the Government has concerned itself far too much with matters which might well have been attended to a few years after the war was over. The Commonwealth Government has concerned itself, almost to the exclusion of everything else, with banking, air lines and preparation for the socialisation of many other industries, whereas it should have occupied its time with questions affecting housing, education, soldier settlement and trade.

The Minister for Lands: Why education? You would not give it the right to interfere with education.

Mr. DONEY: We are all interested in securing the social amenities to which we are entitled. Every man, woman and child in this State has a natural right to a fair share of the blessings of civilisation, and we all want those social amenities.

The Minister for Lands: We have not had much of them up to date.

Mr. DONEY: If the Government gave as much attention to trade efforts, additional to those that we have made in the past, by and by it might have some funds on which to draw in order to finance social amenities. People may want a great deal in the way of amenities, but they have to be paid for and cannot be paid for out of taxation for all time. They can be paid for only out of the profits made under the business concerned.

The Minister for Justice: Is that how they got the money for the war?

Mr. DONEY: They got money for the war largely through the compliance with demands of the big insurance companies and banks, and in addition to that, the taxation on the people, but we know that the taxation of the people cannot continue.

The Minister for Lands: Why?

Mr. DONEY: There are half a dozen answers to that.

The Minister for Lands: Let us have one of them.

Mr. DONEY: I might say, regarding the work done by the Premier, when Minister for Lands, with the Rural Reconstruction Commission, that no one on this side of the House would for a moment dream of blaming him for any share in the delay. It is only that on this side of the Continent the Commonwealth Government has so behaved as to delay, perhaps for all time, for all we know, the implementation of the work that the Premier did there.

**MR. HOLMAN** (Forrest—on amendment) [9.20]: I wish to speak on the amendment especially in view of the second paragraph, which reads—

(b) That your Government appears unable to avoid recurring and increasing public inconvenience and loss by ensuring satisfactory working in the Collic coalmines, and the provision of a sufficient supply of coal to enable public utilities to function.

As a matter of fact I thought that portion of the amendment had been forgotten, or that the Opposition thought it not of sufficient importance to stress the point that it had incorporated in the amendment. It was brought to my mind a few moments ago when the member for Williams-Narrogin said that the Commonwealth Government had occupied itself with matters that could have been left for years after the cessation of war, and he mentioned the banking legislation and the socialisation of industry. I point out to the hon. member that the only way in which the Government can make an industry such as coalmining function in the way it should is by socialising it. In no other way could the Government get the Collie field working to ensure the satisfactory results we want. I am not criticising the Collie miners because they have the best record of any coalminers in the Commonwealth. The Government is unable to take any blame in relation to the insufficient production of coal from those mines. The coalminers, through their representatives, have on many occasions spoken of mismanagement on the part of the mineowners as well as lack of planning to ensure sufficient production and development. I suggest that the member for Toodyay might have included the second portion of his amendment with the idea of bargaining to the end that we might accept the first portion. The only way we can ensure the effective working of the mines to satisfy the needs of the public is by socialising them. If we want the same chaos to continue in industry, then all we have to do is to allow the mineowners to carry on as before.

Mr. Thorn: Then you admit that there is chaos in the industry.

Mr. HOLMAN: I am referring to the chaos mentioned by the hon. member. With socialisation, provision could be made for the development of the mines and effective production.

Mr. Thorn: Get Senator Tangney down there again! She will clear it up for you.

Mr. HOLMAN: I do not know whether the object of the hon. member in moving the amendment was to fill in time until the Japanese capitulate, but if so, I shall do my part to help him. I must mention the timber industry of which he spoke. He said that the mills were cutting only heavy timber and should be controlled, and he ad-

vised us to continue regimentation in connection with the timber mills. The hon. member was entirely wrong in saying that the mills are cutting only heavy timber. The position is that the Forests Department has a plan for the cutting of timber, and the fallers are compelled to cut only the trees marked by departmental officials.

Mr. Thorn: That has always been so.

Mr. HOLMAN: Of course it has. That was one of the hon. member's inaccuracies. Now he says the industry should be controlled. He stated that the mills would not cut timber for boxes. That statement was sufficiently answered by the Premier when he replied that the box output for one year of war was more than double any one year of pre-war production. One way of providing means for the absorption of labour during post-war rehabilitation would be by building decent houses for the timber workers. We have been told of the lack of timber for building houses in the metropolitan area and country districts; yet there are men in the timber areas living in worse hovels than anyone should be asked to occupy. That matter has been brought before the House by myself and various members on many occasions. I offer a constructive suggestion that, as one of our post-war reconstruction schemes, we should undertake to provide decent houses for the men procuring timber for homes for other people.

I have heard it said that men will not return to the timber mills after being discharged from the Forces because of the lack of facilities there. I do not blame them. Some of the State mills are said to be deficient in this respect. The railway mill at least provides decent facilities—good homes, electric light, water and even a swimming pool. But conditions on most of the private mills are absolutely shocking, and it is of no use expecting employees to go back to those hovels in order to procure timber for homes for other people. I do not advocate that men should adopt this attitude, but any man has a right to say he will not return to an industry unless he is provided with a decent home to live in. This is not the only reason why many former employees will not return to the mills. Some of the men being discharged from the Army are not in as good a condition physically, and probably because of the hardships suffered in some cases mentally, as they were to

undertake the hard work required of them. This has been found in instances where the deputy controller has secured the release of men from the Forces, and within a couple of weeks it has been ascertained that they could not stand up to the strain, and they have either been returned to the Army or placed in other employment.

The member for Pingelly criticised the Government because South Australia has built more houses than we have. It seems to me that because the war is now practically over we have forgotten the remarks made by most members only 12 months ago. I recall that last year the member for Mt. Marshall, when speaking to the Address-in-reply, mentioned with pride the number of persons in Western Australia who had enlisted as compared with the number who had enlisted in the other States. As a matter of fact, I have a copy of "Hansard" containing his speech with me now. I had something to say on that subject myself, as had other members. But we cannot have jam on both sides of our bread without getting it on our fingers. We could not have such a praiseworthy number of enlistments and at the same time have the men to build the number of houses such as the member for Pingelly mentioned were erected in South Australia. That is the position in a nutshell. The statement of the member for Toodyay that the State and the Commonwealth Governments are almost totally unprepared for the post-war period borders on the ridiculous. The Minister for Works told us last session of the huge public works and schemes that are to be put in hand immediately upon the cessation of hostilities. Many of those works are to be carried out in my own electorate and will provide employment for numerous men. In passing, I hope those men will be given better working and living conditions than those provided for the men and their families on some of the other public works that have been completed.

The manpower authorities have been blamed for the scarcity of workers and for the difficulties which many members have experienced in getting men out of the Fighting Forces. I myself experienced those troubles, but I expected them. In all cases, however, it was the Army that had the final say. The cases with which I was concerned and which were turned down were turned down by the Army. The manpower authori-

ties knew that the men were needed for agricultural pursuits and for the timber mills, as well as for other industries, and recommended their release, but were told by the Army that the men did not come within the category of those available for discharge, or were serving in operational areas or with an operational unit. In those cases the Army had the last say. The Minister for Lands had something to say about the Army. I am not intending to say anything derogatory about the Army but I assert it has the last say. There was one instance in which it did not have the last say; that was an instance mentioned by a Federal New South Wales member, who was severely criticised by the Opposition for his statement. However I will not go into the details now. The member for Murray-Wellington made some constructive remarks. He suggested, without much criticism of the Government, how men could be absorbed in industry. However, I understand the Army authorities have had that matter in hand for some time and have been requesting the men and women concerned to state what avocations they desire to pursue on their discharge from the Services. That is a point on which the Commonwealth Government did probably instruct the Army.

Local governing bodies were also mentioned by the member for Murray-Wellington. These bodies have certain plans in hand. We know how urgently the works in the South-West are required. I know that many farmers are sadly in need of labour and are only too willing to engage men. Our present Premier, who was formerly Minister for Agriculture, has not been slow in the uptake in this matter. We are not satisfied with our present housing position. Personally, I am not satisfied with the housing provided in Donnybrook for the people who are engaged in the work of producing food for the Forces.

Mr. Thorn: You are not satisfied with anything, are you?

Mr. HOLMAN: I am not even satisfied with myself sometimes. I am aware, as the member for Toodyay said, that there has been a scarcity of materials and manpower. Manpower should now be available; and we have sufficient material both in our Government and the Commonwealth Government to provide the necessary brains to ensure that both manpower and material

will be available to carry out our post-war rehabilitation plans. I shall not vote for the amendment and I make my stand perfectly clear for the sake of the member for Williams-Narrogin. I am sorry that the member for Irwin-Moore is not present, because he was not too clear as to whether this was a motion of censure or not.

Mr. Thorn: We are not too clear as to your attitude. I think you are a bit with us.

Mr. HOLMAN: The member for Mt. Marshall made it perfectly clear that it was a motion of censure, but he considered it was too weak to go through, not only because of substance but also because of numbers.

Mr. Thorn: That is right—numbers!

Mr. HOLMAN: Now that the cessation of hostilities is very close, I wish to say that I have sufficient faith in this Government and in the Commonwealth Government to carry out the plans which have been placed before us on many occasions. I know they will do their best for the members of the Services, both men and women.

#### *Point of Order.*

Mr. North: Mr. Speaker, I ask your guidance on a point of order in relation to this debate. It is whether the subjects of this amendment are debarred from debate in the main motion when the amendment is disposed of.

Mr. Speaker: Any member who has not spoken to the amendment may do so. Of course, the mover of the amendment has not the right of reply. Any member who has not already spoken to the Address-in-reply may do so. At present, members are confined to the amendment.

Mr. North: In other words, the coal-mining industry can be dealt with on the Address-in-reply after the amendment has been disposed of?

Mr. Speaker: There is nothing to stop the hon. member from discussing that subject on the Address-in-reply.

#### *Debate Resumed.*

MR. PERKINS (York—on amendment) [9.40]: So far, not one of the speeches from the Government side of the House has served to clear up the uncertainty indicated by the amendment. I have no wish to delve into the policies of past Governments nor yet

to suggest what may be the future policy. It is for members of the Government to justify themselves. What we desire to find out, and what the man in the street wants to know, is just what is the Government policy in regard to major points and specifically respecting those mentioned in the amendment. Apart from those phases stated therein, I take it we could mention other Government services and utilities, many of which have been referred to during the course of the Address-in-reply debate. To bring about a satisfactory position respecting any of the activities mentioned, many changes are necessary in the conditions that exist at the moment. With regard to the rehabilitation schemes for the men and women serving in the Fighting Forces and to those set up with the object of providing employment for people now engaged in temporary wartime activities, the first essential is the supply of materials that at present are not available.

The situation might almost be described as chaotic. Even the priority that is given to the War Housing Commission's scheme will not provide the materials requisite to build the houses planned under that arrangement. The lot of the private builder is much worse. With the prospect of an early termination of hostilities, what the man in the street wants to know is just how much better the position will be in the next three or six months. To date we have had no clear indication from either the Commonwealth or the State Government as to how or when any such improvement is to be brought about. That is why members on the Opposition side of the House view the existing position so seriously. Members sitting behind the Government may have information that we do not possess; if that is so, that information should be made available to the people generally in order to allay the prevailing feeling of uncertainty. To improve the materials position, a great improvement in the supply of coal is a first essential. Without coal it is impossible for our key industries to function properly. Government utilities have only restricted supplies and certainly the railways, tramways and power house are not having their full requirements met. Apparently the position is so difficult that it has been found necessary to employ Commonwealth defence trucks in order to get the wheat down from the country districts

to Fremantle for shipment to the Eastern States.

I have no exact knowledge of the difficulties that may exist in connection with the railways at present, but I think members will agree that those difficulties must be severe seeing that the expedient of transporting wheat by road has had to be resorted to. I do not know to what extent that is due to the coal position or to other railway difficulties, but on several occasions we have had various statements indicating that coal is in very short supply. Without an improvement in that direction it will be impossible to increase the supply of cement, which is a basic essential for any expansion of the building and other trades. Without any such increase it will be impossible to secure supplies of galvanised wire in place of the black wire that is available now. That is extremely serious for farmers, and can be a major factor in affecting the volume of employment available in the country districts when hostilities cease. It will be impossible for primary producers to employ additional labour in connection with fencing or catching up with deferred improvements on farms if materials are not available to enable the work to be carried out. This all points to the fact that the position regarding materials is chaotic, and we can see no prospect of immediate improvement. That is why I think it is most desirable that the Government should take Parliament and the people generally into its confidence and say what it is going to do in the matter.

I realise that some of the contributory factors are beyond the jurisdiction of the State Government. Shipping from the Eastern States and the general set-up there are phases that the State Government cannot rectify by any action taken here. But it is quite possible for the Government to make representations to the Commonwealth authorities so that the difficult position that exists in Western Australia may be brought under their notice. If the Government indicate that some action is being taken or the possible result following upon some representations that may have been made in the past, we will have much more confidence in the possibility of some of these matters being cleared up. I stress the point that without an adequate supply of materials, it will be impossible greatly to expand the

employing capacity of the country districts. Another point of difficulty is the uncertainty of private enterprise as to what the Government's plans are with regard to some of the industries in which Governments, both Commonwealth and State, have interfered or have set up some wartime controls.

Some fear exists that those controls may be carried on in peacetime to an extent that will hamper the expansion of those industries or the possibility of industries reverting to their pre-war position. Whether that can be cleared up during a debate on an amendment such as this, I do not know; but at least a forthright statement by the Government as to how these other major points of difficulty are going to be tackled will go a long way to improve that spirit of confidence on the part of all concerned. Such confidence is absolutely necessary if we are going to get even private enterprise back to the stage in which it was immediately before the war. We have had speeches—in particular that of the member for Nelson—pointing out the great number of works which can be proceeded with. I could name a great many others. There will be no lack of work for our people. We can use all the men in the Forces and many more on urgent work in Western Australia both in the way of improvement of Government utilities, and of expansion of ordinary enterprises carried on by private concerns before the war. There need not be any fear that the work will not be available. The only difficulty I see is due to the lack of organisation by Governments and the creation of a feeling of uncertainty in the minds of many of our people as to whether the best use of labour and materials will be achieved.

Mr. W. Hegney: Your Deputy Leader does not think that.

Mr. Thorn: You speak for yourself.

Mr. PERKINS: The reason I rose to speak was to stress the particular difficulty in regard to the supply of materials. Without some statement that there will be a great improvement in the supply of important materials, such as coal and goods which we receive in ships from the Eastern States, timber, bricks for housing, galvanised iron and fencing wire—which also must come from the Eastern States—house fittings, cement and any number of other materials

which do not occur to me at the moment; without a statement that there will be an improvement in the supply of these articles, there is every reason for fear on the part of the man in the street that there will be a state of uncertainty after the war; that the best use of the available labour and materials will not be made; and that it may even be necessary, as some speakers have said, to keep men in the Forces because there has not been any plan worked out to get them back into civil life immediately the war is over. I do not think there is any necessity for holding men in the Services when the war has ended. There is so much work urgently required to be done that we could use the services of those men and the services of many more if we had a plan to work upon; and the first duty of the Government is to see that the various supply services run smoothly, and that the materials required to set men to work are available. I hope some statement can be made by the Government on that matter before the debate closes.

**MR. WATTS** (Katanning—on amendment) [9.55]: I have carefully considered all that has been said on the amendment; and I feel that I cannot in any circumstances cast a silent vote, but must express my support of the tenor of the amendment moved by my colleague. I listened with interest—though I must admit with rather less interest as he drew to a close—to the Premier in reply to what had been said by the member for Toodyay. I must say that on this occasion the Premier did not seem to me to reply to the amendment, although he presented a speech to the House which was obviously intended to be a reply to the allegations made therein. Instead of supplying the House with any information as to the probabilities or the possibilities in regard to the various matters that are raised in the amendment, he contented himself, either actually or in simulation, with some righteous anger and some remarks directed to the alleged lack of co-operation by the Opposition in this House. I am going to put it to the hon. gentleman in the plainest manner possible and without fear of successful contradiction that there is no Opposition anywhere in Australia—and I doubt whether there is any in the British Commonwealth—which during the war per-

iod has made the work of the Government sitting on the Treasury bench as easy as the Opposition in this State has made the work of this Government. I feel that that statement cannot be successfully or truthfully contradicted; but I submit to the hon. gentleman that co-operation does not mean an entire lack of criticism. It does not mean that one should sit meekly by and subscribe to all that is done or not done, or to all that is said or not said by the Government of the day, as the case may be.

Co-operation means that one should take action or make protests or indulge in criticism when one is definitely of the opinion either that that criticism or protest is deserved, or that circumstances have arisen which warrant one's requiring rather more information than is obtainable by any other means. A few days ago I said in this House that the position of members on this side was this: So far as information is concerned, they know, as a general rule, no more than the general public who read the morning paper know, because it is only rarely—and then usually in reply to questions or debates such as this—that they receive any information except that which is afforded to the general public in the columns of the Press. It seems to me that on this occasion we have received no more by bringing the matter, rather forcibly, before this Assembly, because we have not been given any information which could, by any stretch of the imagination, be regarded as a reply to the statements made by the member for Toodyay or to the terms of the amendment moved by him.

A great deal has been said in regard to the manpower position and the activities of the State Government in regard thereto. I do not deny for one moment that representations have been made in the interests of this State by the Government of this State. I do say, however, that the Commonwealth Government has either placed the Government of this State in a most extraordinary position by its refusal to comply with those representations; or alternatively has placed the Government in an extraordinary position by not giving it an opportunity to carry out arrangements which have been made between the State and the Commonwealth. We know that according to Press statements made by the ex-Premier, there was an arrangement between the Commonwealth and the States in regard to housing

for the year ended the 30th June, 1945. Of the total number of houses which were to be approved during that period, 475 were to be erected in Western Australia. Of that number 74 were built and 117 commenced, leaving, as the member for Toodyay said, 264 of the 475 not touched. We can assume only one of two things. The first is that the Commonwealth Government, by declining to make available the necessary manpower and materials to this State—notwithstanding the urgent representations made by the Government of this State—made it impossible for the Government to carry out that building programme of 475 houses, because had there been manpower and materials I presume that the Government of this State would have seen to it, in view of the position of housing here, that 475 houses were either built or in course of construction before the conclusion of the period ended the 30th June, 1945.

The other alternative, of course, is that the State Government made no representations to the Commonwealth Government for the necessary manpower and materials, so that the State Government, in its turn, could carry out the work agreed upon by the States and the Commonwealth. We have had a Ministerial assurance that those representations have been made. I am not in a position to deny that assurance, and I do not wish to do so because I have not reached the state of mind where I find the statements made in this House by the Premier are not to be taken at their face value. So it is apparent to me that the Commonwealth Government has lamentably failed to make provision for the carrying out by this State of the arrangements that were made with the full consent of the Commonwealth and the State Governments for housing in Western Australia up to the 30th June, 1945. It has been said that there had been approvals in this State for something like 900 houses for the year now current. If that is the position—and I believe it is—and the same state of affairs is to exist for another 12 months, then instead of our being 264 houses behind under the arrangement made between the parties to this contract, we shall be more like 464 houses behind. When we realise that the 900 and the 475 houses—making a total of 1,375 houses in two years—will not by any means overtake the lag that exists in Western Australia, we can only view the present

housing position in this State—whether it be the fault of the Commonwealth Government entirely or not—as being in a disastrous condition and one that must be remedied by taking the strongest possible action at the earliest possible moment.

I suggest that that is the gravamen, in this aspect, of the amendment moved by the member for Toodyay. From time to time we have had a quantity of propaganda by radio and in the Press dealing with what is to be done in regard to releases of materials and manpower. As long ago as the end of April there were statements, both over the air and in the Press, that 64,000 men were to be liberated from the Australian Forces in order to return to their civil avocations. As the member for Nedlands said earlier in the evening, in the course of the Address-in-reply debate proper, there had not been, for approximately 12 months anyway, any real reason or need in Western Australia for defence on a scale that prevented a reasonable number of persons being released to take their places in essential industries, such as housing. I agree with that statement. Some three and a half months ago public statements were made that 64,000 men were to be released early in June. In consequence of having seen and heard these statements, and having been inundated with requests for the release of people, or to make representations for their release, I inquired of the Deputy Director General of Manpower what were the full particulars of this proposal. He replied by letter saying that the particulars were not known to him, and he was waiting for further instructions and would communicate with me when he received them.

In July I repeated my inquiry to the Deputy Director General and received, a few days later, a reply saying that the particulars were still not to hand. A few days after that, approximately the third week of July, I received a communication from him telling me that of the 64,000 releases, only 10,000 would be under the jurisdiction of manpower; that the others would be released as prisoners of war, persons who had seen more than five years' service, and so on. Of the 10,000 under the control of manpower, 700 were allocated to Western Australia. Of those 700, I understand that 350 were to be made available to the building and allied trades, 60 to rural industries



and the remainder to a variety of other occupations. The letter was silent on the relationship between the releases and the various types of industry in connection with the remaining 54,000. From time to time we are told of arrangements that have been made and schemes that are supposed to have been definitely laid down, but months afterwards we cannot ascertain what these plans are, what is going to be done or what will be the results of the representations in regard to the State. That has been going on here in regard to both the housing problem and rehabilitation.

Committees have presented reports and White Papers have been laid on the Table of the Federal House showing that 300,000 houses are required in the post-war period, and we find that the best work achieved up to date is to approve of the erection of a total of 24,000 houses. Today, as the member for Toodyay read to us, the new Minister for Housing in the Commonwealth Government, Mr. Lazzarini, said, "The time for talking is finished; we must now have action." It is not the first time that statements of that kind have been made, and it does not provide any comfort to me or to members on this side of the House, or on the other side I venture to suggest, or to the people of Australia, to hear these statements because, if there is going to be no more achieved as a result of these statements than has been achieved by the propaganda and statements of all kinds in the past, to which I have referred, then there will not be a great deal of progress made with any housing or rehabilitation scheme, or anything else. So I submit that there is ample justification for our bringing forward in the most public manner that we can, at this stage, the necessities and requirements of the position as we see them. We would be lacking in our duty if we did not do just that.

Exception was taken by the Premier to the fact that we have just discovered that there is likely to be an early end of hostilities. I am not like the member for Irwin-Moore. A month, a fortnight, or even a week ago I was prepared to believe that our enemy in the Pacific was so strong that he would be able to hold out for many months to come. I was prepared, because I did not wish to criticise before there was need, to wait a few more weeks to see the results of some of these plannings and investigations that

have been taking place so consistently for the last three or four years. But now it is quite obvious that the termination of hostilities with the enemy in the Pacific is almost upon us. The time has come, therefore, when the strongest representations must be made to the authorities for early action to be taken to implement the plans that have been discussed, in order that there may not be a state of affairs existing, when hostilities do cease, that will reflect no credit upon Governments or upon Oppositions that have failed to bring their points of view before the Governments. If we were certain that there were many weary months to go during which these plans could be brought nearer fruition, and their particulars made public, it would be all right, but we find ourselves faced, apparently, with the early cessation of hostilities, and it becomes our duty, therefore, to bring about, as rapidly as we can, a state of affairs where there will be action and not words, as Mr. Lazzarini said. I say, therefore, that this is the time—in view of all the circumstances—to bring this matter before this House, as we have done.

I will turn for a moment to the question of rehabilitation. I drew attention in this House, a week ago, to the fact that, in order to have erected as few as 3,500 or 4,000 houses a year, in Western Australia, in the first five years after the war, there must be not less than 4,000 more persons engaged in the building industry than there were before the war, if the statistics prepared by the secretary of the Industry Expansion Commission are to be relied on, as I believe they are. Where would those men come from? They could not come from the Eastern States, or from Europe, in view of the circumstances that exist. They are not available as trained men and artisans in Western Australia. They have, therefore, to be trained, if there is to be a speedy increase in the number of houses which are to be built in this State. But I find from inquiries in the Post-War Reconstruction Department in this State—attention was drawn to this by the member for Toodyay—that out of 660 persons who are receiving vocational training, either wholly or part-time, there are only 46 who are receiving any tuition in the carpentering trade. Of those, 34 are full-time, out of 86 full-time students, and 12 are part-time, out of 574 students.

So far as we know those are the only people—beyond possibly some apprentices, who will be few in number in the circumstances—who are being trained in that particular industry. What comfort do we derive from that? It means that instead of there being 4,500 more persons available, within 12 months from now, for the erection of houses in the post-war period, there will be only 30 or 40. There may be three or four times that number, but in the net result they will be totally inadequate, so we cannot allow this state of affairs to remain unexamined and without some protest raised in regard to it. It has already been pointed out that there will be considerable difficulty in inducing those who are in the Armed Forces to remain in camp, after the cessation of hostilities, unless they can be given some active work to do. They certainly will not be content to remain there as a relief from unemployment, and it seems to me that the difficulty of dealing with them is going to be forced upon us very quickly. It was quite apparent, from all the statements that have been made by Federal Ministers, that there would be a progressive demobilisation, on the assumption that the war would last for another 12 months, but if it lasts for another 12 weeks or days, and this demobilisation takes place quickly, the difficulties will be many times greater. We have, therefore, to face up to the position and point out to the people and the Government of this State, and to the Commonwealth Government—mainly through the medium of the State Government—that action must be taken in this regard, or we shall be gravely lacking in our duty at this stage in the nation's history.

Reference was made by the Premier to the member for Toodyay desiring to carry on business as usual. He pointed out that the war effort of Australia and of Western Australia had been magnificent. No-one denies it. No-one expected business to be as usual during the time when hostilities were being waged in full force, but we know that the activities of our Armed Forces have been limited, partly by legislation and partly by decisions that have been made since the legislation was passed. We know perfectly well that there are great numbers of the Forces in Australia—there have been for some months past—who are by no means fully employed, and who have apparently lost all hope of being drafted to any actual theatre

of war, and in consequence there was framed during the last few months. for quicker and greater releases of men than have been made or seem likely to be made, the proposal which I have been discussing, but we have always been prepared actively to concern ourselves in these matters to which I am now referring.

We have never hesitated, as members on this side of the House, to offer our services if they could be—as we thought they might be—of some assistance. We would by that means have accepted some share of the responsibility, which from some aspects might have been ill-advised, but we would on the other hand have obtained some share of the information which we now get, as a general rule, from articles in the Press, or by sketchy replies to questions from Ministers of the Crown. It is not three years ago that from this seat I proposed that there should be a Minister for Post-war Reconstruction set up in this State, and that members from both sides of the House should be drafted to committees to assist in planning for post-war reconstruction, as far as this State was concerned, under the supervision of that Minister. I did not find that the Premier, who at the time was Deputy Premier and Minister for Lands, was prepared to agree to that motion or to anything like it. I found then, as the records of "Hansard" will show, that he opposed the motion at that time, or damned it with such faint praise that, so far as he was concerned, it would have failed to pass this House in any form whatever. I will say, to the credit of the Minister for Works and Industrial Development, that on that occasion he did see some merit in the proposal, and did obtain from this side of the House two members to sit upon a committee which he created. As to how that committee has functioned I have not the least idea. I know that the member who was appointed from this side of the House—the former member for Greenough, Mr. Patrick—was not replaced when he lost his seat and left this House in consequence.

The Minister for Works: The committee's work was finalised.

Mr. WATTS: I said that Mr. Patrick was not replaced. I state that as a fact. That is the only time when any attempt whatever has been made by the Government to accept the services of any member from the Opposition benches, notwithstanding

that from this seat I moved, in 1942, shortly after I occupied this seat for the first time, that such a committee should be set up, and that such members should be asked to serve upon it and assist in making these plans for the improvement of the position in the post-war period, in conjunction with the Minister for Post-War Reconstruction, so I refute in their entirety all accusations that may be made, against this side of the House, that we have failed to give reasonable assistance in this direction. Consonant with our duty as an Opposition we have comported ourselves in a manner which I believe compares more than favourably, during the war period, with that of any Opposition in Australia or elsewhere in the British Commonwealth, and we reflect on the fact that the offers we made for co-operation were, in the main, not acceptable to the Government of the day.

I wish now to refer only to the matter of the coal shortages, because I think that question has not been dealt with in a satisfactory manner by the Premier. Nobody denies that there have been difficulties in coal production elsewhere than in Western Australia. I do want to be fair in this matter. The Minister told us this afternoon that there was no shortage of coal responsible for the most unhappy state of affairs that existed yesterday. We find that at seven o'clock last night the town of Midland Junction was in pitch darkness. East Fremantle, I believe, was in little better state. The Perth railway station was completely blacked out at 7 p.m. Trams were not running from 7 to 10.30 p.m., from 2 to 4, and from 10 to sometime in the morning. Public inconvenience was considerable; public loss in the way of revenue must also have been considerable. We have been assured that there was a breakdown in the coal crushing plant at the power house at East Perth. I am not going to deny that for a moment; I am not in a position to do so, and least of all do I desire to do it in view of the answer given by the Premier this afternoon. If there was a breakdown in the crushing plant, ten to one it was due to a shortage of the right class of coal. I will tell members why I say so. In "The West Australian" of the 10th July there appeared a statement by Mr. R. C. Wilson, chairman of the W.A. Coal Committee and ex-State mining engineer, estimating that 1,500 million tons of

coal remained in that portion of the Collie field which had been explored to some extent.

The Minister for Lands: Should not that be "exploited"?

Mr. WATTS: The report says "explored". It continued—

The largest consumers of Collie coal, he said, were the Government railways and the East Perth power station. The approximate amount ordered monthly by the two utilities was 31,407 tons and 15,385 tons, respectively. The average monthly deliveries were 27,872 tons and 13,169 tons, showing respective shortages of 3,535 tons and 1,766 tons.

The approximate quantity of Collie coal allocated to private consumers was 6,500 tons, while the actual requirements were considerably in excess of this amount, applications being received for an additional 1,000 tons a month. In addition, there were many prospective users, who, knowing the position, did not apply for coal but used a substitute fuel.

No coal was made available to those who could use wood or a substitute fuel. The total monthly shortage was approximately 6,300 tons.

Another statement in "The West Australian" of the 30th June, was as follows:—

"For many months the weekly shortage of coal from Collie has been over 1,500 tons, and as a result large quantities of Newcastle coal have had to be used which is not in the interests of the State," said the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Railways (Mr. P. C. Raynor) before the Coal Inquiry Board today. He stressed the need for immediate increased production to meet the needs of the Railway Department and the East Perth Power House.

The board suspended its general inquiry to deal with this question in conference with representatives of Amalgamated Collieries of W.A., Ltd., the Miners' Union, the Mines Department and the Railway Department. Immediate increased production at the Cardiff colliery received particular attention.

The mining of the top coal in the Cardiff seam and the extraction of the pillars as a means of increasing output were discussed earlier in the year. This work was opposed by the union. Because the top coal was of inferior quality, locomotive engineers objected to using it.

Mr. Raynor emphasised that the East Perth Power House was designed to use pulverised Collie coal. Consumption was increasing, and because insufficient small coal was available, large coal had to be crushed for power house use.

The conference was told that the Cardiff top coal, after crushing, was suitable for use in the power house. If it were mined for this purpose, the present shortage would be alleviated to some extent.

Representatives of the miners agreed to recommend strongly to the Cardiff lodge that the mining of the tops and the extraction of the pillars should be undertaken to increase production provided that the whole of the Cardiff coal was supplied to the East Perth Power House.

This power house is designed for the use of small coal. If small coal is not available, the crushing machine has to be used to break up the coal, and obviously it has been necessary to use large coal. Consequently, the crushing machine has had to be employed more than normally, and I have no doubt that that is the reason for the break-down. There is no question that in the net result a shortage of the proper class of coal was responsible for the break-down at the power house yesterday with the resultant inconvenience to the public, loss to the State and other things that transpired.

What guarantee have we that this state of affairs will not happen again tomorrow or the day after? Is it to be allowed to go on or can there be given to us information that will disclose that it will not occur again, that some remedy has been found for it, that the industries and people of the city are to be allowed to carry on their avocations in a reasonable and convenient manner as they have a right to expect, or is it to be a matter that if the crushing machine breaks down again tomorrow, it will be all right? That is the question we want answered and we have not had the answer. All that we have had is to be accused of non-co-operation, which I have dealt with, and to be told that we want business as usual. If there is any sound reason why we cannot have business as usual, we do not want it, but we cannot expect a city and suburban area of 250,000 inhabitants to find itself for hours without sufficient transport or light, no means of cooking or heating in many places in winter months, because there cannot be found some way of solving this problem. Those are the reasons why this amendment has been moved.

Mr. Wilson: The reason for the coal shortage is that the fields have not been developed.

Mr. WATTS: I am not criticising Collie at all. The reasons why we moved this amendment are that we want the information and we have not been given it. To my mind the reply of the Premier, while excellent in

words, was poor in substance. I feel that I have done my duty by ventilating the matter. I have made it plain why the question was brought forward; I have explained what we were entitled to receive and what we got instead, and I rest content on that.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS** (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam—on amendment) [10.27]: The first question one asks in regard to the amendment is why, if it is to be regarded as being so important and so urgent, it was not moved by the Leader of the Opposition himself.

Mr. Watts: I told you that last week there was no sign of the war ending; nor had we had any break-down in the East Perth Power House.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** Neither of those reasons is of sufficient substance to convince me that an amendment of this description, if it were warranted, should not have been moved by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Doney: I suppose that we on this side of the House are allowed to decide that.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** The measure of the importance of the amendment can be gauged fairly accurately by the failure of the amendment to win any worthwhile support from members of the Liberal Party and the Independent members who sit on the Opposition side of the House. If the amendment were half as important and half as justified as members of the Country and Democratic League would have us believe, then it would have received fairly solid support from other members on the Opposition side.

Mr. Watts: What about dealing with the substance of the amendment instead of being like your predecessor?

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** I propose to do that to the discomfiture, I imagine, of the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Thorn: You flatter yourself.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** No, I correctly assess the qualities and abilities, particularly of the member for Toodyay.

Mr. Thorn: We have no doubt about you, anyhow.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** The member for Toodyay had a good deal to say about the report and recommendations of the State Advisory Committee on Housing.

He quoted from the report and dealt especially with that portion which suggested that an effort should be made to have at grass when hostilities cease so many millions of bricks.

Mr. Watts: Fifty millions.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Make it one thousand millions if the hon. member likes.

Mr. Watts: That was the report of the committee headed by Mr. Davidson, one of your officers.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The number does not matter; it can be five million, fifty million, or one hundred million. It is quite easy for the members of any committee to investigate a question or problem and arrive at certain conclusions. It is comparatively easy for them to say that this or that should be done or something else should be done; but if the practical difficulties in the way of doing what is suggested are such as to prevent what has been suggested being done, then all of the suggestions and proposals and recommendations put down on paper are not worth the paper they are put on for practical purposes.

Mr. Thorn: That applies to all the reports from the Commonwealth.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It applies to many questions which are dealt with only on paper.

Mr. Watts: That is where they have all been dealt with so far.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Obviously it is, because so far that is the only place where they could be dealt with. Some of the members on the Opposition side seem to have overlooked entirely the essential requirement to give life to all of the proposals and plans which have been developed.

Mr. Watts: What is the use of the Commonwealth authorising the building of 475 houses if the manpower and material are not available to erect them?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The proposals and plans are authorised in the hope that circumstances will be such from time to time as to enable them to be carried out completely, or, if not completely, to a very large extent.

Mr. Watts: This was in the full light of an investigation of all the facts.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is entitled to be heard.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The main need for all those things is men.

Mr. Leslie: And the will.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know what the member for Mt. Marshall is talking about. It is certain, however, that the main need in this, as in every other State, in order to produce bricks, tiles and all of the other materials required for housing and for other undertakings, is men. That is the absolute and over-riding requirement. What is the use of condemning any Government or any authority for not building more houses, more schools, more hospitals and other buildings, when the men required to build them are not available?

Mr. Watts: Will they be available in six months or 12 months?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I should say that when hostilities cease with Japan, and they seem likely to cease at any hour, from that time onwards the men will gradually become available for a time, and after that, will be available in great numbers.

Mr. Doney: How did New Zealand manage to get the men she did?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not concerned with New Zealand.

Mr. Doney: No, but it is comparable.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know that it is and neither does the member for Williams-Narrogin. The fact is—and it appears to be forgotten in this debate—that Australia has been engaged in a war for survival.

Mr. Watts: So has New Zealand.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. The Government of Australia, rightly in my view, decided in this war for survival that the country was entitled to the maximum war effort possible. Does any member of the Opposition side who supports this amendment disagree with that policy as put into operation by the Commonwealth Government?

Mr. Doney: We do not disagree, but the same thing applies in New Zealand, and New Zealand got the men.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask members to listen to the Minister. Members wanted him to make a statement.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: So it becomes clear that the members on the Opposition side who support this amendment

agree with the policy of the Commonwealth Government in maintaining a 100 per cent. war effort. They agreed with it. They supported it. They praised it. Now, however, because the war is practically at an end, they criticise a situation largely brought about because of Australia's 100 per cent. war effort. I therefore suggest that their criticism is not justified. They cannot during wartime support a policy of 100 per cent. war effort and then, in the last hours of the war criticise the situation brought about because of the continuance of that policy over a period of five years. I put it to every member on the Opposition side that they ought to look at this question from that angle, because it is the right and logical angle from which to regard it. The State Government did not have the right to decide, nor did it want that right, how many men should go into the Australian Army, or how many men should go into the Australian Navy or the Australian Air Force. That responsibility was placed upon the shoulders of the Commonwealth Government. We, as individuals, might think, without a full knowledge of the situation, that too many men were drafted into each of the Services.

Mr. Doney: Do you not think they were?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They might have been, but I would say here tonight that I would rather have had too many men drafted into the Services than too few.

The Minister for Lands: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We must not forget so soon that in this war we are struggling against one of the most desperate nations on earth, Japan. We must not forget that Japan was set upon conquering Australia and making the people of Australia her slaves for whatever purpose she had in mind.

Mr. Doney: That was evidently a secondary endeavour, since Japan turned north towards Malaya.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Mr. Speaker, we know why the Japanese turned north and we know why they did other things, but the fact remains that we were within an ace of being captured and conquered by the Japanese. Therefore, if the Commonwealth Government and the heads of the Fighting Forces drafted too many men into the Services, that was a mistake justifiable in the circumstances which

existed. It is quite easy now, on the eve of victory, to consider that only half the men were really needed and that everything would have gone just as well with them. But back in 1941, and particularly in 1942, when most of us were worried about what might happen the next day or the next hour, we did not raise any complaints about the number of men being taken into the Fighting Services.

Mr. Watts: We are thinking of 1945.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: But we cannot think of 1945 by shutting our minds completely to the requirements of the portion of this year already gone and to the complete years from 1939 onwards. If we do, we get an entirely wrong understanding of the situation. In fact, the admission just made by the Leader of the Opposition indicates that the amendment was moved without any consideration of the real causes of the situation about which Opposition members now complain. And so I say to members opposite that the great need of the present situation respecting the building of houses, schools and hospitals, in the provision of water and power schemes and the making available of more labour on farms and, in fact, in connection with every conceivable activity that could be mentioned, is men—and men are not yet available. If, after six months or 12 months of peace, the members of the Opposition had come forward with an amendment of this description and had been able to prove at that time that the Government had made little or no progress in the field of post-war reconstruction, despite the fact that plenty of men were available, they would have had a very strong case against the Government.

Mr. Watts: I will remind you about that after the lapse of 12 months.

The Minister for Lands: And many times before that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: To come forward at this stage when the manpower situation is more acute than at any other stage of the war—

Mr. Doney: You do not seriously mean that! Japan ceased to be a menace 12 months ago.

The Minister for Lands: Ceased to be a menace! What is wrong with the hon. member?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: To do what I have indicated is most inappropriate and unfair.

Mr. Watts: As a matter of fact, it happens to be quite 12 months since the late Prime Minister, Mr. Curtin, said that that was so.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: But he did not say that would stop the war.

Mr. Watts: No, but he did make the statement.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I can imagine the Leader of the Opposition in the last week of an election campaign merely because someone told him his party was sure to win, sitting back and going quiet. On the contrary, he would exert all the pressure possible so as to ensure victory—and that is what has been done in the present war, with the object of gaining a quicker conclusion than would otherwise have been possible. I was disgusted to hear the member for Toodyay declare that many men in workshops and factories were sitting down doing nothing.

Mr. Thorn: I referred to workshops. They sat down all yesterday.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I hope the hon. member is not in reverse gear now.

Mr. Thorn: No, you will never find me doing that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: He made a general statement, but the interpretation of the statement is that for weeks, months or perhaps years, men who had gone from the brickmaking industry into shops and factories had been sitting down and doing nothing. I think the member for Toodyay or any other member who may make similar statements in future would do better if the names of the men who were said to have been sitting down and doing nothing were mentioned publicly.

Mr. Thorn: Well, I will do that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That should be made known so that men who were slandered would have an opportunity, individually and collectively, to contradict publicly the statements of the member for Toodyay.

Mr. Thorn: I will tell you something about the annexe when I have an opportunity, and will say something about your influence to keep them there.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I hope that if the hon. member makes any such statement in future with regard to any factory, workshop or any group of men, he will at least have the decency, if I may put it that way, to mention the names of the men against whom he makes the charges. During the debate, complaints were made that the Government has not at any stage indicated to the House or the public anything to disclose the Government's plans for post-war reconstruction in Western Australia.

Mr. Doney: I do not think that was said.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was said, and I took a note of it at the time.

Mr. Thorn: Anyhow, it is pretty right, and you are certainly on the right track.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It only goes to show that there are some members of this House—fortunately only a few—who take their Parliamentary duties very casually indeed. During the last session of Parliament it was my privilege to explain to the House in detail the post-war reconstruction proposals of the State Government for the first two years immediately after the cessation of hostilities. I then explained to members that those proposals were estimated to cost, in all, approximately £13,000,000, and we expect to provide full-time employment for two years for at least 8,000 men. For the benefit of members of the Opposition—there are, I suppose, only one or two of them in the category—who do not take as much interest in the proceedings of Parliament as they should, I can tell them they will find, if they care to look, in last year's "Hansard," on pages 1820 to 1825 inclusive, the explanation to which I refer. It is therefore quite incorrect and unfair for members to say that no exposition of the Government's programme has ever been made public, because in fact it has been stated on more than one occasion in this House and outside.

The list of works included is comprehensive. Not only does it cover all portions of the State but it deals with a great variety of undertakings ranging from water supply and power schemes to the carrying out of a great many other varied works, including the establishment of secondary industries in various parts of the State. I impress upon the House that the great need not only of the Government but of private

industries as well, is men. Without the necessary manpower to do what is contemplated, works programmes cannot be undertaken. Some members seem to think that as soon as the servicemen are demobilised, we shall have an unmanageable problem of unemployment. I do not think that will be the situation at all. It may well be that in the early months it will be difficult to place some men. I think it will be. Any member who imagines we can take hold of all the servicemen just as we could take so many pieces of wood, stick them in the ground and leave them as everything will be all right, is making a great mistake. These men are human beings. Some of them have gone through dreadful experiences. Unfortunately, many of them, for some years after the war, will be problem cases with regard to employment and probably with respect to other matters as well.

As to the general question of providing employment in this State for our demobilised servicemen, I do not anticipate that there will be any real problem of unemployment for very many years to come. Members can look where they will and consider what industries they may like, and they will find that there is a dreadful shortage of manpower. Listening to the debate today, one would have thought that the only direction in which there is that shortage is in connection with the building of houses. I am sure members representing country electorates know just how severe is the shortage of manpower in rural industries. Members representing metropolitan constituencies know how acute the shortage is in other directions. The mining industry is to revive after the war terminates. In Western Australia I believe we shall find that there will be at least a number of jobs equal to the body of men seeking work. It might even be that we will have more jobs for some years after the war than we will have men to do them. I am not a bit afraid of the general problem of unemployment after the war.

The only feature that worries me to any considerable extent is the feature I mentioned a few moments ago; that is, the few cases for whom it will be very difficult to provide suitable employment. But the Government and private industry together will have to do the best they can in that direction, and I am sure that both will do so. So this amendment is badly founded:

firstly because it is brought forward at a most inappropriate and unfair time; and secondly because the great need of the moment is men to do the things which this amendment declares have not been done and should be done. We can place men in employment as soon as they become available; but we as a Government are not setting out to place every demobilised serviceman in employment. We feel that these men will be best placed in producing actual wealth wherever that is possible; but for the surplus of men available outside of wealth-producing industries the Government will provide employment in regard to the development of public facilities and the public resources of the State. I sincerely hope and believe that this amendment, because it is ill-founded and inappropriate to the present situation, will be defeated.

Amendment put and negatived.

On motion by Mr. Seward, debate adjourned.

### ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascayne): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 4.30 p.m. tomorrow, unless the Prime Minister of Australia officially declares before 10 a.m. Perth time tomorrow that peace has been made with Japan, in which event the House stands adjourned till 4.30 p.m. on Tuesday next.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 10.53 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

*Tuesday, 21st August, 1945.*

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

### MOTIONS—THE WAR.

*Cessation of Hostilities and Tribute to the Services.*

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [4.33]: I would like, with the permission of the House, to move two