

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There will be nothing to prevent those bodies from determining how the money is to be disposed of. If they wish it to be sent to the Camp Comforts Fund, there will be nothing to prevent such a course, even under the proposal that will be sent out very shortly. I do not wish to go into the matter in detail here at the moment. I have no wish to anticipate, but I ask that the matter be considered apart from parochial ideas. In many instances such ideas are impracticable. We are putting forth a national effort, an Australia-wide effort. When the comforts are distributed oversea, no question will arise as to whether the soldier comes from Western Australia, South Australia or New South Wales. The comforts will be distributed irrespective of the State the soldiers come from. That applies to Perth also. Soldiers coming to Perth are not asked whether they come from New South Wales or from Northam; they are all entitled to the advantage of the facilities provided for them in Perth. The same story can be told of all these organisations. The distributing organisations have been considering this point for some time. They have evolved a scheme, which is commonly called the central fund. A constitution has been drafted and will be sent to every organisation that has received authority from the War Funds Council. In addition, it will be sent to every local authority in the State, together with a letter explaining the proposal. A meeting will then be convened, at which all these bodies can be represented, to determine what shall be done in view of the circumstances I have outlined. That is the position at the moment. I should say that the constitution will be distributed within a week. I assure hon. members, however, that if we are to have the most efficient method of dealing with these moneys then there is necessity for a co-ordination scheme so far as the distributing bodies are concerned, in just the same way as there is necessity in country districts for collecting organisations. All who have had experience of patriotic funds must agree that the principle behind the scheme is perfectly sound. It is something which should be supported by all those interested.

I appreciate very much the attentive hearing which members have given me on this occasion. I am aware I have not touched

upon numerous matters which have been raised, but have no doubt I shall have the opportunity of doing so later when I have been able to secure the information required by hon. members.

Question put and passed; the Address adopted.

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

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [8.52]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, the 27th August.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 8.52 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 20th August, 1940.

	PAGE
Question: Fremantle Municipal Tramways and Electric Lighting Board	322
Personal explanation, Mr. Holman and Address-in-reply	323
Address-in-reply, tenth day	323

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

QUESTION—FREMANTLE MUNICIPAL TRAMWAYS AND ELECTRIC LIGHTING BOARD.

Mr. TONKIN asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Did the Fremantle Municipal Tramways and Electric Lighting Board request any variation of the terms of the agreement made with the Government on the 28th January, 1916, in informing the Government that it wished to exercise its right to a renewal of the agreement in accordance with the provisions of clause 23?

2, Did the board at any time prior to the date on which it notified the Government of its wish to renew the agreement make any request for a variation of any of the terms? 3, Did the Government or the Commissioner for Railways at any time prior to approving of a renewal of the agreement suggest to the board that any of the provisions of the agreement ought to be varied? 4, Will the provisions of the renewed agreement be identical with those of the existing agreement?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, No. 2, In 1922 and again in 1936 the board asked for and was granted a reduction from .85d. to .8d. to enable it to supply an industrial undertaking with power at a cheaper rate. 3, In 1923, following on earlier negotiations respecting supply to Peppermint Grove district, it was agreed that the department would purchase the Cottesloe undertaking from the Cottesloe municipality and supply to consumers at Cottesloe, Cottesloe Beach and Peppermint Grove direct, and in return the Government agreed to pay Fremantle Electric Lighting Board .255d. per unit for all such current supplied with a maximum payment of £1,200 per annum to 28th January, 1941. In 1933, in response to a request from the Fremantle Road Board for cheaper current for the growers at Spearwood, negotiations were entered into by the Government with the Fremantle board for the Government to take over the supply to Spearwood. The Fremantle board refused to agree to the proposal. 4, Yes, with variations as per answers to questions 2 and 3.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. Holman and Address-in-reply.

Mr. HOLMAN: I desire to make a personal explanation. In the course of my remarks on the Address-in-reply on Thursday, as reported on page 291 of "Hansard" No. 4, I had occasion to compare the rates paid to families on sustenance, and internees and their dependants, and said in reply to an interjection that I would prefer to have the internees working "for" the relief men. Evidently that made it appear that the relief men would be the employers, and "Hansard" substituted "with" for the word "for". Unfortunately neither word expresses the meaning I intended to convey.

To remove any ambiguity may I be permitted to state that what I meant was that I would prefer to have the internees working for the benefit of the relief men; in other words, that the internees should be made to carry out undertakings which, in other circumstances—mainly on the score of finance—would not be put in hand, undertakings such as I cited on Thursday, the old Bunbury coast road. The carrying out of that work would permit of the throwing open of surrounding lands, which could be taken up by relief workers, if they so desired.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Tenth Day.

Debate resumed from the 15th August.

MR. CROSS (Canning) [4.37]: So many things have happened since I last addressed the House that I feel somewhat at a loss to know what subject to refer to first. I have been brought fairly close to the tragedy caused by the aeroplane disaster near Canberra that resulted in such loss to Australia. This was mainly through the death of Flight-Lieut. Hitchcock, who was a close neighbour for a number of years. I had known him from a lad and had known his father. In fact, the father, the late Bobby Hitchcock, was a man with whom I spent much time, and I regretted his passing exceedingly. I greatly grieve at the loss, not only of Flight-Lieut. Hitchcock, but also of the eminent men involved in the disaster.

Several references have been made to the subject of defence notably by the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Tonkin), particularly the need for making adequate preparations for the defence of Australia, but evidently the hon. member is well behind the times. I am one of those people who, in common with the leaders in Germany and following the opinions expressed in the book by Captain Weimer, think that the day of the rifle has almost passed, because it has been discovered that fewer men and more machine guns make a battalion ten times as effective as it formerly was. I certainly am of the opinion that the best way to prevent war and invasion is to be prepared. In the last State election campaign I said I would advocate a standing army for this country, because I believed that we were living in a fool's paradise. In Australia we should have a stand-

ing army recruited from the young men to form a line of defence. I think that if we had five or six battalions in Western Australia, and three or four divisions in Australia as a whole, and men were enlisted in that army for, say, 20 years, the occupation being treated as a profession and the men being taught trades as is the case in England, there would be a solution of the question of our young men who cannot find jobs. Further, I stated that in my opinion it was suicidal not to adopt this course. I was advised not to recommend such a scheme, because the people would not listen to it. My belief, however is that after the present war the people will listen, and that in future Australia will be prepared. We ought to have permanent preparations for war; regular defences are essential in such preparations, and constitute the best guard against an enemy. Nations in one respect are much like private individuals. If a man is capable of fighting, is a good boxer or wrestler, nobody ever picks on him. On the other hand, the man who is unable to fight is liable to have a quarrel forced on him. That is the case with nations as well.

I was interested in a remark made by the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) a few days ago, and I shall be interested to hear him speak on the Address-in-reply. May I inform you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that in my opinion the member for Murchison made a most, shall I say, facetious or else shall I say foolish, remark. He stated that there were only 55 millions of money in Australia. The hon. member also led me to infer that he did not grasp the difference between money, soluble credit, and solid capital. He did not appear to understand that in the ramifications of the financial structure of nations, three forms of finance are utilised. One of them is currency, the next is soluble capital known as credit, and the third solid capital, which may be classed as land, machinery and buildings. The member for Murchison evidently did not know that bankers and financiers have discovered that in order to utilise the solid capital and use it as soluble capital known as credit requires only about 55 or 60 millions of currency in the nation. Therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I propose to say a few words for the benefit of the member for Murchison, because on two or three occasions I have heard him make forecasts and set out what should be done.

Mr. Sampson: It is a pity you did not understand the member for Murchison.

Mr. CROSS: It is evident that the hon. member interjecting does not understand. If he listens carefully to me, he will understand, I hope, just as well as the member for Murchison will understand.

Mr. Sampson: This is a great opportunity.

Mr. CROSS: While I have opened my remarks in somewhat of a facetious vein, the subject is really most serious. I will take courage and do now what I did some 25 years ago, when I made a prophecy. I shall take some note of what has been a process in history; for what has happened before will, I believe, happen again. I wish to point out to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that not only in the British Empire but throughout the world a natural process is taking place constantly, and almost unnoticed. While enormous sums of money are borrowed for purposes of war and purposes of peace, the world finds a way of dealing with the financial problem when the time arrives. The truth is that a natural process is taking place now and has been taking place for centuries, in that the purchasing power of money is gradually but constantly depreciating. As to the cause of that process, I recently heard some remarks by the member for Subiaco (Mrs. Cardell-Oliver). I questioned her as to what was the cause of inflation. The hon. member was careful not to answer, possibly because she could not. I will inform you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that in my opinion inflation and depreciation of the purchasing value of money are caused by one definite factor—the growth of public debts. As a nation's debt increases, so the purchasing value of its money decreases, and for this reason: when a nation borrows money, it must increase taxation. Then workers generally and people on the bread-line—who it must be borne in mind can barely exist on the amounts they receive—demand and insist upon higher payments for their services, and obtain those higher payments. Let me give an illustration. Before the last war Great Britain owed roughly £400,000,000. The highest amount of revenue Great Britain ever received prior to 1914 was received in 1913, the amount, a record, being £214,000,000. By 1918, however, the public debt had grown to

£7,920,000,000, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer was exacting from the people, by means of direct and indirect taxation, over £1,000,000,000 per annum. Now the English agricultural worker in 1914, prior to the last war, was receiving 15s. per week. That was the standard wage. In 1921, when he was paying vastly increased taxation, his wage had risen to a standard of 31s. Incidentally, that amount has gradually increased, until today the standard wage for an agricultural labourer in Britain is 45s. I ask, if Great Britain raised another £10,000,000,000 of debt, as probably she will do in this war, how would the workers receiving present wages pay the necessary taxation and live?

I wish to point out that another process takes place, and will state a simple sum by way of showing exactly what I mean. Suppose a man earns £3 a week and his income is divided into 10 equal parts, if the Government takes one-tenth for taxation, it will receive 6s. But if the man earns £5 a week, even though the cost of living rose only in proportion, the Government's one-tenth would amount to 10s. And that is the process which has been taking place. It has taken place in Great Britain and Australia continuously. It will continue, for the simple reason that it is the natural process and cannot be controlled, except by the growth of the public debt. The crux of the matter—and in this I agree with the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall)—is the interest burden. In my opinion, when the war is over steps will have to be taken to ensure that financiers do not charge more than a fair rate of interest for the money which they will make available as soluble capital to the people. The rates of interest paid by the people of Australia during the past 20 years have been higher than those paid in Great Britain. Quite a large portion of the last British war debt was financed at less than 2 per cent.; Australian rates, however, have been considerably higher. Finance is really nothing more nor less than an intricate system of bookkeeping. I believe that when the war is over control of finance will have to be taken by the people and conducted for the benefit of the people. Interest rates will have to be lower. This is essential, because when we emerge from the war we must be in a position to compete

with other nations who also will emerge from the war. The mountain of debt and the interest bill control the cost at which we can manufacture goods. We must be able to manufacture goods at such a cost as to enable us to compete with the foreigner in his own market. Our nation must give some attention to this post-war problem, and must do so now.

Mr. Doney: You should give that information to the Minister for Industrial Development.

Mr. CROSS: Probably he would understand it better than does the hon. member. I desire to touch on a matter that is of vital concern to the people of Australia. We have had this session so far very few speeches on party lines and therefore I am sorry to raise this point.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Don't.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. CROSS: If a blunder has been perpetrated which affects the nation, then no matter which party perpetrated it I consider my duty is to draw attention to it, even if it has been committed by this side of the House. I refer to the bungle over petrol rationing in Australia. When our history comes to be written, this blunder will be denounced as the greatest that has ever been perpetrated by Australia. I propose to give hon. members some information in regard to this industry and to indicate to what extent rationing will affect it and the people engaged in it. I will show that the reasons advanced by Mr. Menzies when he first called a conference to deal with petrol rationing do not exist. In 1939, 830,000 motor vehicles were licensed in the various States of Australia, and of this number approximately 150,000 were commercial vehicles necessitating the employment of paid drivers. The total of direct and indirect taxation collected by the Commonwealth and the States amounted to over £120,000,000 last year. The 150,000 drivers of commercial vehicles were paid about £27,000,000 in wages. We import into Australia each year £145,000,000 worth of merchandise, of which only £8,000,000 is for petrol. I shall give a list of some of Australia's imports from foreign countries during the three months,

March to June, 1940. In that period we imported—

	£
Foodstuffs to the value of ..	1,379,000
Spirituous and alcoholic liquors ..	345,000
Textiles	5,279,000
Imported jewellery, time-pieces—watches and clocks —and fancy goods ..	349,000
Tobacco and preparations ..	604,000
Films for cinematographs ..	134,000
Wearing apparel and attire ..	548,000
A total of	<u>£8,638,000</u>

These articles were selected by me at random. I ask, are some of these items more important than petrol? During the same period we imported silk, artificial silk, lace and velvet to the value of £1,222,000, and sausage skins to the value of over £100,000.

The Minister for Mines: Whatever for?

Mr. CROSS: It is plain. As a matter of fact, we exported sausage skins to the same value. It is claimed that the skins we get from America give a better flavour to the sausages. Strange to say, we exported a similar quantity.

The Minister for Lands: I think that is the only nutritive part of some sausages.

Mr. CROSS: Many of those requirements we could produce ourselves. In the 12 months ended June, 1940, we imported piece-goods, such as lace for attire, to the value of £200,000, and artificial silk to the value of £1,048,000. We ought to have produced the whole lot of it here. We also imported fancy goods and toys to the value of £227,000, and that at a time when a war is in progress and shipping space is rationed.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Those goods might have been supplied according to a contract entered into before the war.

Mr. CROSS: Most of these contracts have been entered into since the war began.

Hon. C. G. Latham: How do you know?

Mr. CROSS: I will refer directly to some of the contracts that have been entered into since the war. The hon. member knows—if he knows anything at all—that the British Government issues a license for the export of goods from Great Britain, the licenses being for a period of three months. The next period for which licenses will be granted will be from the 1st September to the 30th November. Unless a man

has a permit, he cannot export. In the quarter ending in a few days' time the export of quite a number of goods has not been possible.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That is only in the last few months. You are referring to 12 months ago.

Mr. CROSS: The figures I am quoting relate to the three months ended the 30th June of the present year, when the war had been in progress for nine months. I believe that Australia can supply most of its own textiles, and if it cannot it should not import them in times like these.

Petrol is the life-blood of industry and in attempting to ration the supplies the Commonwealth has made a tremendous blunder. Let us examine some of the reasons for the proposed rationing, as given by the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. Watts: I would not waste the time if I were you.

Mr. CROSS: I am not wasting time. The first and most important reason given for the imposition of rationing was the conservation of dollar exchange. In pursuance of that idea, the Prime Minister caused an announcement to be made. If hon. members will consult the files of the "West Australian" of the 12th April, they will find on page 18, column six, the following—and I want hon. members to listen closely to this:

Petrol imports. Conference to be called. Reducing non-sterling expenditure. Canberra, April 11th. Almost immediate action by the Federal Government to bring about a substantial reduction of non-sterling expenditure on non-essential petrol imports was foreshadowed today when the Prime Minister, Mr. Menzies, announced that the Economic Cabinet had decided to call a conference of all persons interested in the importation, distribution and use of petrol.

Later on the article continued—

The Government would invite the industry to submit a report on methods of achieving the objective of conserving exchange while at the same time minimising to the utmost interference with the essential services, commercial and industrial operations and private motoring.

That was in April. In the "West Australian" of the 2nd August, on the main cable page, appeared the following:—

U.S. Aviation Petrol. Embargo on export. Washington, July 31. President Roosevelt today imposed an embargo on the export of United States aviation petrol outside the western hemisphere.

Lower down in the same column was an article headed "The British Position. Serious Results Discounted." The message was from London, and dated August 1st, and stated in part—

A petroleum expert, Dr. Oskar Tokayer, said yesterday that British stocks were very high and the quantity of aviation petrol at present being consumed was comparatively small. Stocks were available for many months. All Britain's requirements could easily be obtained from the Dutch West Indies, which were now a British sphere of influence. A refinery for high-grade petrol was also being constructed in the Dutch East Indies. There supplies could be paid for in sterling, causing less strain on the Treasury than payments in dollars.

At the bottom of the column appeared the following:—

Australia not Affected. Melbourne, August 1st. "As almost all aviation petrol for Australia comes from the Dutch East Indies, the ban imposed by the United States on the export of such petrol to foreign countries will have no effect on Australian imports." This statement was made by Mr. V. Smith, general manager of the Shell Co. of Australia, Ltd., today.

In 1937 and 1938, 65 per cent. of Australia's petrol was imported from the Dutch East Indies, and most of it comes from there to-day. While Holland may have been on dollar exchange in April—I do not know whether or not it was—to-day nearly the whole of Australian requirements come from the Dutch East Indies. The manager of the Shell Oil Co. informed me personally that all the Shell oil comes from a British company there and is paid for in sterling. That disposes of the first of Mr. Menzies's arguments, namely that the rationing of petrol is to be imposed in order to conserve dollar exchange.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You know that sterling is not circulated in Sumatra.

Mr CROSS: We are getting petrol to-day from the Dutch East Indies. What happened when the hon. member was there and what is happening to-day are two entirely different things because the position was changed when Holland entered the war as an ally of Great Britain. Sumatra to-day is working on a sterling basis.

The same reply can be made to Mr. Menzies's second excuse for the rationing of petrol. In answer to a question, he said that rationing was necessary in order to ensure supplies of this commodity being

sent from Australia to Great Britain for the defence of the Middle East. Britain obtains all its supplies from Persia through Irak and Palestine; our supplies come from the Dutch East Indies. Mr. Menzies had another argument. He said that Britain could not make tankers available. Incidentally no British tankers are required. Norwegian and American tankers carry oil and petrol from the Dutch East Indies to Australia. The duty of the Federal Government is not to ration petrol and close down the greatest industry in Australia and one which is the life-blood of the continent but to adopt rationing in other directions and endeavour to create industries that will put Australia on the map for all time. That is all I have to say about that matter.

Mr. Watts: Quite enough, too!

Mr. CROSS: But it does not exhaust all I have to say on the subject as a whole.

The Minister for Lands: Trolley buses do not use petrol.

Mr CROSS: Oh no! Speaking about petrol rationing and the bungling that has occurred in that connection reminds me that we need to be careful that we do not similarly bungle matters in this State. If petrol is rationed a greater increased load will be thrown—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Will the hon. member kindly resume his seat? I wish to draw the attention of hon. members to Standing Order 148 which reads as follows—

No member shall converse aloud or interrupt or make any noise or disturbance whilst any member is orderly debating, etc.

I wish to inform the House that I have observed and heard quite a lot of conversation taking place and respectfully suggest that such behaviour when an hon. member is orderly debating is highly disorderly. I hope hon. members will give some attention to the conduct of the business of this Chamber and will permit speakers to address the House without interruption.

Mr. CROSS: The State Government should take steps to ensure that the people will not be inconvenienced any more than is necessary as a result of the bungling that has occurred. Instead of rationing petrol the Federal Government should encourage people to buy large quantities and

store them. As a matter of fact, I believe there are millions of gallons stored in 40-gallon drums and four-gallon tins all over Australia. A few months ago I made some inquiries into this matter, and a garage proprietor in my electorate told me how many drums of petrol he had delivered to people for storage. I was astounded to learn that in quite a small area 18,000 gallons had been stored.

Mr. Hughes: They will have to account for that when rationing is introduced.

Mr. CROSS: I think they will. In all seriousness, I assert that the Federal Government instead of rationing would have done better if it had encouraged people to buy and store petrol, because our large storage facilities in this State at the port are very vulnerable. If an enemy destroyed the tanks at Fremantle half the stocks in Western Australia would be gone. In the event of petrol supplies being suddenly reduced in some way, the presence of small quantities in store all over the State would be exceedingly beneficial. With regard to new storage facilities, we should adopt the German method. In a book I read before the war started, it was stated that in one place in Germany an underground tank was constructed capable of holding 5,000,000 gallons of supergrade petrol. Any new storage plants that are installed, particularly if they are near the coast or are accessible to an enemy, should be placed underground. If petrol rationing is proceeded with, it will have a disastrous effect upon passenger transport facilities, particularly in the greater metropolitan area. Already many people have rationed themselves because of the price of petrol. That commodity has increased in cost from 1s. 9d. per gallon for super-grade to 2s. 4d. in Perth, as a result of the war. Of that amount 1s. 2d. represents taxation. Because of the increase in price most people are using less petrol. Garages and companies state that they are selling considerably less petrol than heretofore. Because of this state of affairs a tremendous strain will be thrown upon Government transport facilities. People look to those facilities to get them to work and take them home again. I have already written to the Minister concerned on this subject, and he says the Government can cope with every situation. I do not believe that is so. On the

same day that one gets a reply of that description one hears that a person has just missed a tram from South Perth at five minutes past eight a.m., and has had to wait until half past eight before he can board another. That is no good. When petrol is rationed many cars will go off the road, because they have only been licensed for half the year. Fully 33 per cent. more people will then have to travel by trams, trains and buses in the metropolitan area. Quick transport is a vital necessity.

The Premier: People cannot have every convenience in war time. Some of them forget there is a war, and they want a bus to come within two yards of where they are living.

Mr. CROSS: Some people have to walk two miles. The Government should be prepared to take reasonable steps to cope with the situation. I intend to put forward a proposal. The Stirling-highway trolley bus service cannot to-day cope with the traffic. To cater for people living near the city, it is proposed to make a roundabout turn somewhere at Loch-street, one of the most dangerous corners in the metropolitan area. People in the Swanbourne area will then have still fewer transport facilities. I contend that is tinkering with the problem, not coping with it.

The Premier: Those people live only half a mile from the railway station.

Mr. CROSS: They get tired of travelling by train. When they miss one train they have to wait half an hour for another.

The Premier: They get a very good service.

Mr. CROSS: The Government should take steps to procure four new trolley buses at once for this service. Then there is the South Perth service. No one can deny that it is the worst service in the State. All will agree that something should be done there. Two years ago the Premier admitted that something would soon have to be done; I do not know how soon it will be done.

Mr. Watts: Evidently not soon enough.

Mr. CROSS: The Government may say it cannot afford the money. If it cannot afford to buy 10 new trolley buses for the South Perth service, surely it could afford £30,000 for 10 Diesel engined six-cylinder buses, which would give all the service that is required. I have been told that such

buses are not procurable. I propose to read a letter that was sent to me by Leylands Vehicles, Ltd., confirming a coded cablegram. This letter will be of interest to members. Officers in the service have told me that neither trolley buses nor Diesel engine buses are available. I will, however, prove to the House that that is not so. I took the trouble to obtain first-hand information from the Leyland motor company in Great Britain. Several cables passed between us. They cost a pound or two, but I have obtained the necessary information.

Mr. Thorn: I bet you did not pay for the cables.

Mr. CROSS: That is all the hon. member knows. Of course he did not pay for them.

Mr. Thorn: Certainly not.

Mr. CROSS: The cables I sent cost me £7 19s. At present because of the acute position in Great Britain the Imperial Government is rationing exports, particularly anything in the nature of steel. That has been going on for nine months. Every three months permission is given to manufacturers to export certain commodities. During the current three months the Government did not permit trolley bus chassis, Diesel engine chassis, or anything of that nature to be exported. I do know what the position will be for the September-November quarter, and I know that the Leyland motor company in Great Britain is in possession of a few chassis that have been partly manufactured. The Melbourne Transport Board is also acquainted with that fact, and is considering the question of importing a few buses while it can lest conditions become even worse. The letter to which I referred indicates that if an order is placed quickly, trolley bus and Diesel engine bus chassis will be available.

Mr. Hughes: If it is not placed quickly, we shall miss the bus.

Mr. CROSS: There is likely to be a shortage before the war is over, and we might as well get in early. These buses are available to-day at about £2,700 each, but after the war they will probably cost £4,000. The letter from the Leyland Vehicles Limited is dated the 13th August, 1940, and is as follows:—

In reply to your recent inquiries we are happy to advise that cable news from our English principals in the last few days indicates a considerably more favourable position than

has obtained for the past few months. We are now instructed that we may accept orders for three-axle chassis suitable for trolley buses, or alternatively six-cylinder Diesel passenger chassis on a delivery basis which, considering all circumstances, can only be regarded as highly satisfactory.

These chassis are about 2 ft. longer than are the biggest Metro buses on the road, and carry a few more passengers. They are also more powerful than the present buses, and probably more suited to Perth traffic.

It is evident from our correspondence that British exporters are not themselves certain at any time just what they can promise, and their plans are continually varied by expansion or restriction of the steel quota allotted to them. You will recall that some months ago we were disturbed by a public statement of yours which implied that trolley buses were not available, and we immediately informed you and the public to the contrary.

That was when I knew from information received that trolley buses were not available.

Shortly after this we found to our dismay that all expected and promised deliveries were cancelled by withdrawal of the June-September civilian steel quota in England, and we had to pass this information on to you when you inquired again a couple of months ago.

Bearing these facts in mind we must in justice to you recommend a certain amount of reserve in accepting delivery dates now quoted as in any way final. Developments in England in the next few months may either accelerate, delay, or even totally prohibit shipment. Naturally you are well acquainted with what is happening and probably better than ourselves are in the position to gauge the effect on industry, but no quotation can be given by any responsible supplier without first making clear the possibilities.

However, we must, as always, continue to observe the brighter side and hope that our latest information to the effect that orders for Diesels can be accepted on an expected delivery of four to five months is the beginning of better news to come. The information in the preceding paragraph has already been conveyed to you personally and this letter may be regarded as confirmation of our interview with you.

You will be interested to learn that our good news now received by telegram from our Sydney headquarters covers deliveries of all types of our products, trolley buses, Diesel chassis, both passenger and goods range, and also covers the matter of replacement parts—so vital a factor for users of transport in this country. With many thanks for your valued inquiry, we are, yours faithfully, Leyland Vehicles, Ltd.

I know the position the Leyland Motor Company was in. The works are in the North of England, and there are two big munition

factories on each side. The works are well protected by anti-aircraft guns, but nevertheless they have suffered from two bombing raids. The firm, however, is not doing badly. At present it has several chassis partly completed. The right thing for the State Government to do, so that the people may have adequate transport facilities, is to place an order quickly, if it intends to go on with the business. Early delivery may then be made and the South Perth and the Stirling-high-way traffic properly catered for. I have had a lot to say about this matter in the past, and have now put forward a proposal which could be carried out. I have also afforded proof that the Government is in the position to procure the necessary chassis and thus to deliver the goods. If it fails in this respect, the Government will get a rough passage from me.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member must not threaten.

Mr. CROSS: The two matters to which I have referred affect everyone. The Commissioner of Railways should give earnest consideration to passenger transport facilities in the metropolitan area. If he does not cater for the service, private owners will do so. The Commissioner should do this work or leave it to other people. South Perth is catered for mainly by a State-owned transport service which, generally speaking, is cheaper than are privately-owned means of transport. I want the Government to do the job properly, for at the present it is only adopting half measures. Though we are at war, South Perth is developing faster than is any other suburb, and its problems are entitled to consideration. So far as possible, those of our people who are unemployed should be given useful work to do. There is much to be done. Some ten years ago the Causeway was widened a little. It is the main approach to the city over the river. If we were ever invaded we should be in a ridiculous position, for with the Causeway blown away we would have to wade across the river, because the present bridge would not last 10 minutes.

Hon. C. G. Latham: There are other bridges.

Mr. CROSS: They would not stand up for long. It is time a substantial bridge was built across the river. I regard it as most necessary. One other phase should be referred to. As the war has continued, the cost of living has risen and the basic wage

has been increased. In my opinion, the Federal Government should give some consideration to augmenting the pensions paid to old folk who do not receive any increase on account of the basic wage. Some provision should be made so that pensions would rise proportionately as the basic wage was increased with the rise in the cost of living. That should apply to all old-age pensioners.

Mr. Holman: And to soldiers' wives as well.

Mr. CROSS: Yes, because the rising cost of living affects them also. I would ask members to contemplate the sorry spectacle of old-age pensioners trying to carry on in face of the increased cost of commodities. Their money remains the same, and they are expected to buy with 20s. what everyone knows costs 25s. to secure. The same consideration should be extended in respect of our State institutions.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Why not rectify that first, seeing that we have some control over that phase?

Mr. CROSS: I know that, but I mention the Federal phase first. Most certainly the State should extend similar consideration, not only to those in our institutions but to those who, unfortunately, are brought within the scope of the Child Welfare Department. Automatic increases should be provided. Let members think of the position of a woman who has four or five children to look after. While protection has been afforded against increases in rent, we know that once a house becomes empty the rent is bumped up by a shilling or eighteen pence, but no one seems to take an interest in that aspect.

Mr. Holman: You would take an interest in the matter if you happened to buy a house.

Mr. CROSS: Probably so, but I am dealing with this matter in a serious vein. The Government should give consideration to these matters because what I have alluded to indicates merely the beginning of the depreciation of the value of money. As the war continues, the cost of living will not remain at the figure obtaining today. We have prided ourselves in looking after the more unfortunate section of our people, and in fairness to them we should make certain that they do not suffer in these times. I hope that the beginning of our next session

will see the end of the present war. If it should not be so, I am quite satisfied that the British Empire will carry on and continue the struggle until ultimately victory is ours. I trust that the day of victory will speedily dawn.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. H. Millington—Mount Hawthorn) [5.34]: Because one of my departments has been severely criticised—

The Premier: Surely not severely criticised!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I find it necessary to reply to some statements made regarding unemployment. The brevity of the Speech delivered by His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor has been stressed by various members. Actually that was intended as a compliment to members, and, to indicate that the confidence in them was not misplaced, I must point out that almost every subject under the sun has been discussed during the debate. The ingenuity and imagination of members has proved equal to the occasion, and they have clothed His Excellency's Speech, even throwing a few flowers about, with its customary importance. There has been much criticism, but the Speech, generally speaking, has been responsible for a debate that has ranged over widely divergent subjects. We have had speeches that dealt with finance, some high finance and some more theoretical.

Hon. C. G. Latham: With a few more still to come.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Some members have become lyrical on this occasion. Some speeches have been interspersed with poems, some of which were appropriate while others were more in the nature of a dirge. What useful purpose that served must be left to the imagination. Unemployment is always a theme for prolific debate and has been dealt with this session in the customary manner. Then members dealt with agriculture, but my colleague, the Minister for Lands, delivered a verbal broadside that traversed most of the complaints made under that heading. Matters relating to industrial development, education and, in fact, a host of other subjects, received due attention. Thus if the Lieut.-Governor's Speech was brief, and if the complaint could be lodged

that many matters that should have been mentioned were omitted, the fact remains that the debate on the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply has proved this session to be just as varied and as voluminous as on previous occasions. In the circumstances, we may say that the 1940 Speech may be regarded as a model for all future occasions.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Not if it is to entail longer speeches subsequently.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: At any rate, the Speech has amply served its purpose. On previous occasions the criticism of His Excellency's Speech has generally been that it was too long, but now when the statement is made that the Speech was too brief, the utterance has served its purpose just the same, and no one has been incommoded.

Mr. Thorn: At any rate, this time we did not have to stand up so long in the Council Chamber.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. To deal first with the criticism of the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald), that gentleman, in his position as Leader of the National Party, has earned a reputation for fairness. On this occasion, in view of the criticism he offered and so that the whole position might be verified amply, I asked the departmental officials to supply information in respect of each point raised by that gentleman, particularly when he dealt with the unemployment problem. Here is the position: Dealing first with the employment and sustenance position of men as at the beginning of the war—that is to say, as at the 2nd September, 1939, or nearly a year ago—the married men in receipt of sustenance numbered 883, while the single men totalled 172, or an aggregate of 1,055 in receipt of sustenance. Now let me contrast the sustenance position as at the 10th August of this year. The records show that 562 married men were in receipt of sustenance as at that date, and 158 single men, or a total of 720. Next, there is the question of relief work. At the beginning of the war, 4,996 married men were on relief work, and 729 single men, or a total of 5,725. These, together with those in receipt of sustenance, gave a total of 6,780 men in receipt of sustenance or relief work as at the 2nd September, 1939. During the course of his remarks

the member for West Perth expressed the opinion that the Department of Labour had reached a stalemate. This is the position to-day: Those on relief work as at the 10th August last comprised 4,367 married men, and 604 single men, or a total of 4,971. Thus the total number in receipt of sustenance or on relief work was 5,691. That shows that there are now 1,089 fewer unemployed men than there were 12 months ago when the war began. The new married men receiving sustenance since the beginning of the war must be taken into consideration. These total 271 for the metropolitan area, and 154 from the country, making a total of 425 married men who have become a charge upon the Government since the beginning of the war, and who were never on relief or sustenance work before. So that seeing we have 1,089 fewer in receipt of sustenance or relief work and have gathered in 425 married men since, it means that although during the year we lost about 1,500 men, we have had to increase assistance to, roughly, 500 men. Those men have been forced to secure Government relief because they were dismissed from private employment. They have become a charge upon the Government since the beginning of the war.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That number will be increased when the work at the Canning Weir finishes.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No.

Hon. C. G. Latham: A lot of men are employed there, and they have no reserves at all.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There are about 250 there, but work will be found for them.

The Premier: Yes, that is so.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Of course, there is no such thing as a new job in view; the men are simply transferred to another job as work cuts out. At any rate, these men will be provided for. The next figures I shall quote show that during the first four months of the year there were 87 new married men's cases in the metropolitan area, which came on the Government for relief, and 40 married men from the country, a total of 127. For the four months ended the 31st July, new married cases were:—From the metropolitan area, 99; and the country 64, a total of 163.

Mr. Hughes: Were those increases due to a reduction in building operations?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Not particularly, although the building industry has slackened off. What I want to deal with is the complaint that whereas the number of men in receipt of relief work and of sustenance has decreased, the Government assistance has not decreased as it should. Let me give members some particulars and for the purpose of comparison, I shall quote figures to indicate the number of men who have been engaged in the fighting forces from the beginning of the war to the present time—

Enlistments and Trainees, etc., in Camp.		
A.I.F. (embarked)	1,937
A.I.F. (in camps)	5,003
10th Garrison	628
R.A.A.F.	2,370
Navy	937
Trainees (fluctuating)	954
Others (home services for duration of war)	2,044
		<hr/> 13,923 <hr/>

An examination of those figures discloses that nearly 14,000 men have been taken from industry in Western Australia. Although the unemployment position has been eased to some extent, that such a comparatively large number of men have already lost private employment and been forced to secure sustenance from the Government, is a matter of grave concern. Members may say that the Government has not dismissed many from the State service. That is quite true, for by far the larger number of these men came from private employment so that nearly 500 additional men have had to receive relief work or sustenance. The member for West Perth's statement respecting the rates of sustenance, which is important, was that prior to 1929 the granting of unemployment relief, when necessary, was confined to the winter months. He said that the rate of sustenance was the same as that offering today, namely, 7s. per unit, and that continuous relief throughout the year had been in operation since 1929. I point out to the hon. member that the basic declaration in that year was £4 7s. and not £3 8s. per week as he inferred. Here are the hon. member's exact words—

In 1933 the basic wage in the metropolitan area was £3 8s. a week; today it is £4 5s. 4d. Apart from some increase which was made for prosperous conditions a year or two ago, it

may be taken by and large that the increase in the basic wage is due to the increase in the cost of living. Since 1933 the cost of living, as reflected by the basic wage, has risen 25 per cent. The result is that the 7s. of 1933 is worth only 5s. 6d. today in purchasing power. In other words, people who were receiving 7s. sustenance in those days now have, in terms of purchasing power, not merely a maintenance of that amount but a steady reduction in the means of livelihood.

The hon. member made a comparison by saying that the 7s. in 1933 would today be worth 5s. 6d. The actual position is that in 1929, when 7s. was the ruling rate—7s. per unit per week—the basic wage was £4 7s. It certainly diminished to £3 8s. and has fluctuated ever since; so that while the basic wage was £4 7s. and the payment was 7s., today the basic wage is £4 5s. and the payment is still 7s. On the same measurement used in 1929 the basic wage today would be £4 per week. An additional 5s. was imposed, the hon. member said, by the Arbitration Court, really superimposed on the cost of living figures, as they were up to that date. So that the actual £4 7s. in 1929 would equal £4 today taken on the same cost of living figures, which would mean that instead of 7s. in 1929 being worth only 5s. 6d. today, taking the cost of living based on 7s. in 1929 it would be worth 7s. 6d. today. So much for that. It has never been contended by this Government that 7s. provides a rate on which a man can reasonably be expected to subsist. In the particularly bad years, when a National Government was in power and the depression was at its worst, I believe that in one year, speaking from memory, an amount of no less than £700,000 was paid in sustenance only. This Government has not followed that line of action. Therefore 7s., about which we hear so much, is not a recognised rate or the average wage received by relief workers. A conservative estimate—and these figures have been presented to me by the department—is that between £160 and £170 per annum is paid to relief workers, an entirely different thing from the statement made that those on sustenance have to exist on a rate of 7s. per unit. To this amount must be added the ration allowance the men receive while out of work. So we have the married man on sustenance averaging considerably more, and that is what counts—the average they receive from the department throughout the year. Many men earn more than the

amount I have stated while others earn less. Comparisons have also been made in respect of the rate received from the Child Welfare Department. It is true that those rates vary. The information I have is that as far back as 1911 the rate of sustenance to women upon whom children were dependent was 2s. 6d. Since that time it has been raised and it has fluctuated between 7s. and 9s. per unit. Recently, for those who received sustenance from the Child Welfare Department, dependent entirely upon what they received for their living from that department—those who have no other means of support for themselves and their families—the rate was raised, and the widow now receives 15s. per week and 9s. for her dependants. But if we take what she receives on an average throughout the year, it is very much less than would be received by the average worker under the sustenance scheme. Thus those two matters, although they might be said to compare, really are not comparable.

Criticism was levelled at the Government because of the rates received by internees. The Commonwealth Government asked the State Government what rates we paid to widows and orphans who were dependent entirely upon sustenance for their existence. The Commonwealth was given the rates and in the cases where those dependent on internees had no other means of subsistence, the Commonwealth adopted those figures as the standard.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: What do the internees receive?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: An amount similar to that paid by the Child Welfare Department for those entirely dependent upon that department.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: That is 9s.?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The widows or grass widows receive 15s. plus 9s. per child.

Mr. J. Hegney: That is paid on behalf of the Commonwealth Government?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, the Commonwealth adopted the standard of the State Child Welfare Department; that is, where the people entirely depend on that payment throughout the year. Reckoning that up we find that what the widow and three children would get throughout the year would not amount to as much as the sum received by those on sustenance. Married men

with large families are employed practically throughout the year, and married men with say, three children would also very likely be employed practically throughout the year, while those with less responsibility, it is true, have a stand-down period.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Widows with children get 9s.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: A widow receives 15s.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Those I know receive 9s.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I should like to make some reference to the position of "C" class men. I know of no more desperate cases than those men who are declared medically unfit, but I think it must be said of my colleague who is in charge of the unemployment department that he is a most sympathetic man and treats these cases accordingly. He informs me that at the present time there are 329 "C" class men. Of that number 255 are employed on works specially designed for them. All things considered, the scheme has proved to be an unqualified success. The men are engaged on clearing operations, fencing, etc., and the results to date in every way justify the scheme. These men are paid the basic wage and work under industrial agreements, and it is probably the only scheme of its kind in operation in any part of the Commonwealth or New Zealand. It must be remembered that if this work was not made available, the "C" class men would have to put up with a miserable existence on sustenance or under the Child Welfare Department. The point is that many of the "C" class men have three opportunities. They are employed in the Forests Department, although they cannot possibly earn all the money that they receive. In many instances where considerate treatment has been displayed, these men have been enabled by the work that has been given them to improve in health. In some cases their improvement in that direction has been really wonderful. I do not like the idea of giving details of such cases, but I have been supplied with information regarding two instances which I might relate to the House. These "C" men had been certified as such by a doctor over a course of years. Their state of health improved so much that lately they volunteered for service and were passed by a military doctor. I think it is

splendid to be able to give such men the chance to get back their strength and vigour by being given the opportunity to perform a certain class of work. I do not intend to institute a comparison between what took place in 1932 and what is taking place today. I know that some of my friends opposite will probably say that the position is entirely different today compared with what it was when their party was in power and when, as I have already said, a sum of no less than £700,000 was spent in one year on sustenance only. At that time, too, payment was not entirely in cash, sustenance workers were given cash orders. Fortunately, we have been able to get away from that; the position is entirely different to-day because the men are working for a recognised rate and as the department shows they are able to earn £160 or £170 a year. It is not what they get in one week, it is what they average in the year, and that is why I say the department has not reached a stalemate, not by any means. The figures I have quoted show that that can more truthfully be said of private employers in this State, because 13,000 men have been drawn from employment for military purposes and of that number we have got rid of only 1,500, while the comparatively large number have been dismissed from private employment. Not only have there been the enlistments from private employment, but we are getting some of the private employees also. Consequently a stalemate occurs there.

The member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald) made a statement with which I wish to deal not only for his benefit but also for that of other members. He said—

A man came into my office last week. He said he was on sustenance and had three children. According to his story, which I have no means of testing—I am not on the committee which I suggest might be formed to help the Minister for Labour; if I were such stories could be properly tested—this man had had 16 weeks and two days' employment on relief work during the last 12 months.

If the hon. member only knew it, that statement answers itself. If a man came to me and told me he was married and had three children dependent upon him—and I presume a wife also—and that he had had work for only 16 weeks out of the 52, I would say that that man was entitled not to 16 weeks' work but to nearly three times as much. The hon. member, instead of test-

ing the statement—and no one would be in a better position to test any story told him than would be the hon. member—comes here and uses it for publicity purposes. Other members of this House would have immediately sent that man to the Employment Department to ascertain why a married man, if able and willing to work, should receive only 16 weeks' work in the year.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: There are plenty of cases like that. I can bring them to this House.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member should not bring them to this House. Why have we set up a Department of Employment? Where does the hon. member think these tales are tested? They could not be tested in the office of the member for West Perth. That is not the place to test them. One would be surprised at some of the stories that are told as compared with the records on the departmental files.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: I have taken men to Marquis-street and to the Child Welfare Department.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: How did the hon. member get on?

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Quite well; the officials were always quite fair.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the member for West Perth took this man to the Department of Employment, provided he could discover him now, there would be no need to go to the Minister. If this man is prepared to work, instead of getting 16 weeks out of 52, I will guarantee that he gets at least double that time.

Mr. Hughes: That is a curious thing. After a member of Parliament represents the case, something can be done for a man which could not be done before. That is my experience.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This sustenance worker went to the wrong man; he should have gone to the department.

Mr. Hughes: A man cannot get redress, but when he goes to a member and the member rings up, the man gets redress.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I should say that the Honorary Minister (Hon. E. H. Gray) is just as sympathetic to the unemployed as is any member of this House. The policy of the Government is quite definite. A man with this number of dependants would be almost on full-time if he was prepared to work. I am positive

there is something wrong with this case, and that if it was tested as it should be, not by bringing it to this House but by referring it to the department, redress could be obtained.

Mr. Hughes: But he cannot get redress until he goes to a member of Parliament.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for East Perth has already contributed to this debate.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Only at the department can the facts be verified. Members cannot test a story. Men from my district come to see me, and when I hear their records from the file, I hardly recognise some of them as referring to the same cases.

Mr. Doney: Do you think that the member for West Perth has not taken that case to the department?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member said, "According to the story, which I have no means of testing." I am saying that he had the means of testing it. Had the man been sent to the Department of Employment, his case could have been tested. There might be a reason for his not having had more than 16 weeks' work out of the 52 weeks. That man might not be prepared to go into the country, or he might not be prepared to work. I know men who refuse to take work in the country. The Leader of the Opposition mentioned that the work available in the metropolitan area is diminishing. At one time we had 2,000 men employed under the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Department, and in a few weeks that number will be reduced to 200 or 300. This means that a lot of the men have had to take work in the country. My advice to members is that when men come to them in this way, they should not try to test the stories but should send the men to the department. Then, if the men can get no redress, members will have a case to submit, but until they do that, I am not prepared to agree that there are many such cases. At any rate, the department is the place to send them. The member for West Perth also said that the Department of Employment should be galvanised into action a great deal. The way to galvanise it into action is to send those men who complain to the right quarter and not use their cases for advertising purposes.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Your party did a fair share of that at one time.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Of what?

Hon. C. G. Latham: Advertising this sort of thing.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Oh, no.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Yes; I will refer to your speeches when we deal with the Estimates.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: But we used to state our case to the department. That is the place to get redress.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I will tell you a couple of stories.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for West Perth also said that the Government was becoming complaisant? What a statement to make! Would a Labour Government become complaisant while surrounded by a team like this to keep it up to scratch? In the days long ago, the National Government became so complaisant that the Labour Government came into office. Because the Nationalists were so complaisant, the Country Party came into existence. The National Party could not be made to move, and so the country members decided to act independently.

Mr. Doney: What brought the other Labour Parties into existence?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Now we find the National Party, which certainly represents an important section of the community, reduced to a very few members. The National Party might be complaisant, but we certainly are not. It is because we are not complaisant that we are occupying the benches on this side of the House. It is because the National Party is complaisant that its members are sitting on the cross-benches.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: We are not going to continue here.

The Minister for Mines: You will be there for a long time.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Another matter mentioned was the attitude of the Government to industry. Unfortunately the Minister controlling industry is not here, but a great deal of advertising has been done because a bolt factory has been closed down. I was speaking to a man who is an outstanding member of the Chamber of Manufactures—he has organised a business of his own—and he was much annoyed at the pro-

minence given to this matter. It is remarkable that well-wishers should advertise failures so much and be delighted when they can point to a failure. The other night I attended, with the member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. McLarty), an exhibition organised at Harvey by the department, and on that occasion information about our industries was supplied. I asked the secretary of the department, Mr. Macartney, to send me a copy, and it included some very interesting information. This is the sort of information we should publish to boost Western Australian manufactures—

That some progress is being made in manufacturing industries in Western Australia is shown by the latest returns issued by the Chief Inspector of Factories.

The only information some members seem to have is that a small factory employing 30 people was closed down. These figures should be a comfort to members after that small failure.

At the 31st December there were 2,912 factories in operation in this State, an increase of 252 since 1935.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Yes, but you have to remember that we amended the law.

Mr. Abbott: Averaging how many employees?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: How restless members are becoming! They seem to be quite annoyed.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I wish the Minister would address the Chair.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Members were very perturbed about the closing down of the bolt factory.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! If members do not keep order, I shall take action.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I can answer the question of the member for North Perth (Mr. Abbott). Those factories employed 29,134 hands, an increase over the same period of 5,421. That is some consolation. I might ask the Minister for Mines how many men are employed in our great mining industry, and perhaps I would be safe in saying it would be about half that number. Still, our manufactures are important. The wages paid for the 12 months ended the 30th June, 1939, amounted to £4,922,858, and the material used in our factories was worth £8,690,927. In the course of manufacture, value added to this raw material was

£8,775,586. I wish members would take note of the value added in the course of manufacture; the value of the raw material practically doubled. That is important to Western Australia. I think, too, that quite an interesting story could be told of the original owner of the bolt factory. Before McPhersons took it over, I understand he was doing very well, supported by the State Government in conformity with its policy. The Government lent him a sum of, I think, £900, which he repaid, and after he got the industry into good going order, McPhersons came along and bought it. Because the factory later on was closed by McPhersons, the State Government cannot be blamed.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I was endeavouring to show what had been done—not that we are at all satisfied with it, of course—though it is just as well to remind ourselves that we have had some successes as well as one or two failures. I suggest also it must be remembered that in any country, even the most industrialised country in the world, there are only certain things that can be manufactured profitably. I do not know how far we think we can go in Western Australia. True, in respect of some industries and manufacturing establishments the Eastern States hold an advantage over this State; yet possibly in respect of others we hold the advantage. We are under the handicap of having started later than the Eastern States, but there are nevertheless many things which are already being manufactured here and the local production of which could be extended. I suggest that there is a field in which we can increase the production of our factories.

Hon. C. G. Latham: But can you tell us of any increases that can be effected? I do not know of any.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The department has a surprising amount of knowledge at its disposal. In confectionery Western Australia supplies only 30 per cent. of our requirements. We can manufacture first-class confectionery for export to the Eastern States, but only 30 per cent. of Western Australia's requirements in the form of confectionery is manufactured here.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: We send a lot of confectionery East and get other confectionery in. That is common to all such articles.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The fact is highly discouraging. I thought that in confectionery at least there was a gap which might be filled. I still think there is. Of pickles and sauces we manufacture only 32 per cent. of our requirements.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Immediately you start to manufacture them, you have the competition of special dumping from the Eastern States. You know Rayner's experience. I want to avoid a repetition of that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Let us see what we can do without establishing new industries requiring large capital expenditure, and special skill which may not be available. Of our requirements in the way of cheese we manufacture 31 per cent. Does a field for extension exist there?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Yes, if you can get the milk.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is a matter for the member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. McLarty). Of hats and caps local manufacture supplies 37 per cent. I do not know so much about that line. However, we can manufacture it. Of jams and manufactures used here, we manufacture only 20 per cent. In respect of this manufacture the State is at a disadvantage, as we do not produce the berries and cannot furnish the varieties that Tasmania offers. Still, it is not for us to fold our arms and say, "We can do nothing." Tobacco is a highly popular article of consumption, and we manufacture 10 per cent. of Western Australia's requirements. We have been told on feast days, holidays and high days that Manjimup tobacco is as good as, and in fact superior to, any tobacco grown in Australia. It took us a long time to get the quality. I remember that when I was in the Agricultural Department it was explained by an expert from the United States that what we had to do was to produce light tobacco; but he stated our soil was suitable for that, and we have done it.

Mr. Sampson: There is most unfair opposition to local products; and that is the trouble.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is a gap of 90 per cent. in that quarter. Of paints and varnishes locally required we produce locally 7 per cent., and of textiles and textile goods 6 per cent. Now I come to something that will interest the Leader of the Opposition. During the year under review Western Australia imported bacon and ham to the value of £74,000. Can the hon. member suggest a remedy for that leak? If wheat was made available at the right place, I suggest we could soon obtain a remedy.

Hon. C. G. Latham: At the expense of the wheatgrower.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Very little at the expense of the wheatgrower. We pay the right price in Western Australia for all the produce we use. We pay more than the production cost of the wheat that we mill. We pay more than production cost for butter, and also for dried fruits and other things.

Hon. C. G. Latham: And why should you not?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member interjected, "At the expense of the wheatgrower."

Hon. C. G. Latham: You said the price was right. Otherwise I should not have interjected.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, the price was right.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It is exactly the same price as is paid over East.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I still say that there is a gap in that direction which can be filled. Dried milk imports for the year were valued at £114,000. Jams and jellies, £115,000. Tobacco and cigarettes, £896,000.

Mr. Cross: A lot of that comes from America.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Butter, £165,000. Cheese, £84,000. And this catalogue could be extended over the whole range of our secondary industries. The instances given, however, suffice to show the effect of what is taking place. We have been asked what we are doing to foster industries. When the Premier asked the Leader of the National Party (Mr. McDonald) whether he considered that the State should engage in these industries, he replied in the negative. So it seems that though the

Government is called upon to foster industries, immediately we suggest that the Government should start in those industries, objection is raised. That is all right, of course; it is the hon. member's view of the question. But what, then, are we to do? Are we to persuade private industry to do these things, and in what manner are we to assist private industry? Seemingly we are not allowed to conduct industries, but only allowed to act as a nurse. In that respect we have had some rather disastrous experiences.

Hon. C. G. Latham: In conducting industries.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No; in fostering them. Our worst experiences have been in endeavouring to foster private industry. Take the Agricultural Bank. That institution was started on perfectly right lines. That is to say, money was advanced for work that had been done. If it cost 22s. 6d. per acre to clear land, the advance was £1. But in the disastrous 1914 period, we broke away from that principle—the sound principle on which the Bank was founded. I think—and in this I believe the Leader of the Opposition will agree with me—that the breaking-away was unfortunate. Ever since, the Bank has been in trouble.

Member: But it has been doing good work.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I recollect the late General Manager of the Agricultural Bank, a brother of the member for Murray Wellington, on one occasion telling me that there were clients of the institution, good old clients, all of whose wheat was grown at a cost of about 10s. per bushel. That is where Western Australia got to after the disastrous Industries Assistance Board was established. The difficulty was that in some cases we were assisting men who were not competent farmers, and in other cases were suffering because of the type of their land, and in still other cases were handicapped by lack of rainfall. However, in spite of all those considerations, there was a demand that those farmers should be kept going.

Hon. C. G. Latham: They produced £106,000,000 worth of wheat.

The Premier: But not at a cost of 10s. per bushel.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is not profitable to the Bank if £100 worth of wheat is grown and the cost of growing it

is three times as much as that. The volume of wheat is all right, but all the time the Bank has been going back. There seems to be an impression that the Agricultural Bank is Enemy No. 1 of the primary producer; but the Bank is merely a distributing agent, and if the creditors are not paid the State has to find the money. I was speaking to my colleague only this evening, and I understand that it now takes £250,000 annually to pay interest on the Agricultural Bank's accumulated losses. That is where we have got to. That money has to be found. So I suggest that instead of complaining about the Agricultural Bank and its methods, we should acknowledge that we have proved in Western Australia that farming cannot be conducted profitably with money at such rates. Whatever may be said, the rates that are being paid—I know not whose fault it is—are such that farmers cannot possibly be carried on while paying them.

Hon. C. G. Latham: About that quarter of a million, what does it contribute to the national income? Take that into consideration.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I suggest the Leader of the Opposition ask the Treasurer why he cannot balance his Budget.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Without that interest the Treasurer would be in a worse plight.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The account for the quarter of a million is presented with sickening regularity every year, and has to be found from heavier taxation or by the newer method of borrowing money to pay interest. From the aspect of interest we are at a disadvantage in Western Australia, but it has to be borne in mind that Western Australia is one of a number of States in the Federation. Recently I saw a most interesting article dealing with the United States of America. I think there are 48 States in the Union. The article points out that some of those States are very poor indeed, but that they are helped by the wealthy States, which hardly know what to do with their money. Those wealthy States have been responsible for putting in big irrigation schemes in the poorer States. It seems to me that if Western Australia is to be developed, since Western Australia is at a disadvantage in many ways and the

whole of the States must be developed—and not only for defence purposes—the Eastern States to a greater extent than to-day will have to come to Western Australia's assistance. Industries will have to be established in Western Australia as a matter of policy. I should say that if the Federal Government is genuinely in favour of decentralisation and developing the whole of Australia it would be disposed to do this. But, as has been pointed out, it is almost a certainty that that does not interest a company like the Broken Hill Proprietary, which is centred in New South Wales, where it has coal supplies available and ports alongside its works. I do not know what influence can be brought to bear on such companies, but it seems to me that Western Australia's only hope is to induce companies, well established in Australia—companies which Australia has treated well—to open branches in Western Australia; and we should devise ways and means of inducing them to do so. It has been asked, what has the Government done? I say the Government has, through the Department of Industry, done its utmost. I spoke to Mr. Smith—the Mr. Smith who owned a horse, if members can identify him by that—when he visited us a few days ago. I saw that he considered this State was at a disadvantage. I said to him, "We do this: we give genuine support to any manufactured products of Western Australia. It is our policy. It is the Government's policy to give preference to the extent of a 10 per cent. advantage on all tenders by local firms. We do it with regard to wire-netting. If we receive both Western Australian and Eastern States' tenders, we give our local tenderers that advantage." I am not disguising the fact that the Western Australian worker has an advantage as far as the wage rate is concerned. We need not hide that. As a matter of fact, it is something for which we fought and are rather proud of. It is something for which we take full responsibility. I put this to Mr. Smith: Now that industry has become mechanised to such a great extent the wage factor becomes less. At Port Kembla, New South Wales, the great ironworks have coal right alongside them and are next door to a port. It is true the ore has to be shipped there, yet those works can compete with the world. I

should say that the skilled workman there receives probably the same rate of wages as do the workmen in the United States of America. So that what was a disadvantage to Australia in times past has to that extent disappeared. By adopting modern methods Australia, although a high-wage country, has the chance of manufacturing its own requirements. The Broken Hill Proprietary can now compete with the world and it is exporting steel to the Old Country.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It is not only the question of wages; workers' compensation plays a big part.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The company has to bear all industrial charges and yet it can compete with the world. I am told that its plant is equal to any plant in the world.

Mr. Abbott: What about losses on account of industrial disputes in Western Australia?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is not a country in the world that is free from industrial disputes.

Mr. Abbott: Some have more than others.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member may as well tell me that Mr. Cameron must not disagree with Mr. Menzies. This kind of trouble occurs everywhere. Cameron cannot agree with Menzies and goes on strike. He says, "I will leave if you do not agree with me," so Menzies has to climb down.

Mr. Doney: You are exaggerating.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, it is a fact. When I was in the Eastern States Mr. Cameron said, "If a certain appointment is made I will pull out, and pull out all the party." He said that if Mr. Theodore was appointed he would pull out. It is not a figure of speech. Since then Mr. Cameron has threatened to go on strike three times, yet he is a member of a party opposed to strikes. It is not so long ago since the agricultural industry was threatened with a strike and members opposite were afraid to leave town and face the farmers.

Hon. C. G. Latham: What is that?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is a fact.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Nothing of the sort.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member will kindly resume his seat for a moment. I have been endeavouring on two

or three occasions to preserve the dignity of this Chamber. It is considered to be highly disorderly for hon. members to interject and carry on private conversations to the disturbance of the member who is addressing the Chair. Members must accept this as the final warning I will give this evening. If they do not uphold the dignity of this Chamber while a member is debating in an orderly way, I will take action under the authority vested in me as Deputy Speaker and have them removed from the precincts of the Chamber. The Minister may proceed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In deference to your ruling, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I shall not again touch on any subject that calls for interruption. A suggestion has been made that the State, as a State, cannot compete successfully with private enterprise. I shall give an instance where the State can do so successfully. If it will please hon. members opposite, I will admit that the implement works at Fremantle were a failure. Neither the Government nor private enterprise could hope to succeed with a secondhand plant and indifferent management in manufacturing half-a-dozen different kinds of implements made by export firms. So, if it will suit hon. members opposite, I freely confess that that was not the way to establish an industry. But to show what can be done by this State in the way of carrying on an industry economically, I shall refer to the Canning Dam, which was constructed by the Department of Works and Water Supplies. When 40 years ago the weir at Mundaring was constructed wages were 8s. per day and commodities commensurately cheaper than today. The Canning Dam has been constructed under modern methods, the wages paid being nearly double those paid 40 years ago. All commodities required were considerably higher in price, yet, per yard of construction, the cost was about the same. There we have the advantage of modern methods of industry. In our mining fields, where modern methods have been adopted, we can compete with the world as far as costs are concerned. The Australian can do that successfully. If, however, we make up our mind that we cannot do so, or alternatively that Government control is no good, we will certainly remain as we are, behind the times. We are asked, "What are you doing to stimulate industry?" First of all, an objection is raised to the State

entering into competition in industry. When we try to foster primary production or secondary industry, we find great difficulty in discerning how far we shall assist, and what assistance is essential. Have we reached the stage when we shall have to form committees of advice? In dealing with that particular matter—it has not yet been considered by the Premier or by the Government—we should devise some means by which those who give the advice shall carry some responsibility. I have had much advice in my time; and if advice is given now the adviser should carry some of the load. He should take some responsibility and stake his reputation upon his advice. But I am afraid that advice will not be of much use.

Other matters were mentioned which were interesting. The question of education arose. Someone mentioned the "half-educated." I immediately became interested. Consider what we have inherited. I once heard Sir Hal Colebatch say that we have the advantage of all the inherited wealth of lore of all the ages. When I think of the diversity of knowledge that is required today in industry, in science and in the educational field, I should feel flattered if I thought I could measure up to the half-educated. There are those who say that the university graduate patronises the man who has not had the advantage of a university training; but much depends on the knowledge required in any given direction. I know university graduates who would be ignorant men on a farm; they would be useless. I have known of university graduates who went to work on a station as jackeroos; it took them five years or more to qualify in order to take part in the management of the station. Therefore, as I say, it depends upon the knowledge that is required. A university graduate might even go to our Midland Junction workshops, but would prove comparatively useless there, except to lecture the lads during dinner hour. Australia has now reached a stage when it realises more than ever the necessity for mechanical knowledge. We may possess all the technical knowledge of those who can draw plans and direct work, but unless we have skilled mechanics our position will be useless and hopeless. We shall be like a flock of sheep. People must not be superior and patronising. Those who have had the advantage of a university education

can talk just as much utter nonsense as those who have not received so liberal an education and who may be working in our mines or on our timber mills. No one is more objectionable than an intellectual prig. It is certainly no disgrace that people who have had to start work at 10 years of age have, in open competition, gained a distinct advantage over those whose parents were able to give them a university education. The half-educated need not apologise to those who consider themselves superior in the educational world.

What else was mentioned? I have dealt with everything except one small matter and I propose to deal with it now. I have been a member of this Chamber for 16 years and before then had six years' experience in another place—in plain language, the Legislative Council. During that time I have noted the behaviour of members one to another. During this debate something has happened in this Chamber that has not happened before in my parliamentary experience. It is this: the member for Subiaco (Mrs. Cardell-Oliver)—I think I have been forbearing, as I have not mentioned her name before—has committed an unpardonable offence; that is, she has produced in this Chamber an anonymous letter. What do men anywhere do with anonymous letters, not only in Parliament, but in business or in any organisation? Members all know what is done with anonymous letters. This letter, which was read, is a scurrilous one. First of all it defames the Commonwealth Government. It also defames this Government and the party to which I belong, because of certain words used in it. According to the member for Subiaco the letter was unsigned.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Signed by the Communist Party, I said.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: You said it was unsigned.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: I said it was signed by the Communist Party.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am taking the official report, which reads as follows—

The Minister for Mines: Who signed that document?

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: It is unsigned.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: While Mr. Holman was speaking, I said it was signed by the Communist Party.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member may not refer to another hon. member by name.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Of all weapons the anonymous document is the worst, but an anonymous document is really a weapon at all; it is a tool, though it certainly did no harm to members on this side of the House. It states—

We must build the trade unions and Labour party organisations and rid them of those leaders who have sold out to Capital.

This is one of the stereotyped Communist documents. I heard Dr. O'Day speak when I was in Melbourne. I like to see and hear what is going on when I visit capital cities, in order to keep myself up to date. So I went to the Yarra Bank and heard Dr. O'Day make a speech exactly along the lines of this letter. I have heard reference from the other side of the House to "a well-governed country." The speech I heard was made in a State governed by the Country Party. The police were present and a statement was made by Dr. O'Day on all fours with this letter.

Mr. Thorn: Who is Dr. O'Day?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Dr. O'Day announced that he would be a Communist candidate standing against the Labour candidate at the by-election which was then pending. A collection was taken up for him in order that he might do so. The Labour Party has absolutely banned the Communists. A Communist opposed our good old colleague, the member for Boulder (Hon. P. Collier). That is the sort of man Communists oppose. A communist also stood against the Labour candidate in South Fremantle. Always the guns of the Communists are turned upon Labour. We have done our utmost to dissociate ourselves in every way from the Communist Party, and this is the result. "I blame the Government," says the member for Subiaco, "because it" (this letter) "has passed into every house letterbox." She blames the Government because an unsigned Communist document is placed in every letterbox, and she repeats her statement. "The superiority of these fellows," she exclaims in effect, "I will put them in their place." The hon. member has the politics of exactly 40 years ago. These were the very things said about Labour at that time. The Labour movement would

break up the home. It was opposed to religious beliefs. But all that has been outlived, and now people who really understand politics and believe in decent dealings between members of different parties, do not use that sort of argument. This unsigned document cannot be called a weapon; it is the most despicable and contemptible tool that could be used. It is generally associated with blackmail, and its use has been introduced into this Chamber. As one of those who desire that we shall deal decently with one another as men do on the whole, I take exception to its introduction here. I have never previously objected to anything the hon. member has said, but I do take exception to this, and I hope that the practice will not be repeated in this House. I offer my protest, although the reading of the document did not do this party any harm. Such weapons and tools are harmful more to the users than to those whom it is sought to injure. Whether this document is actually anonymous, or whether it was signed by some nitwit, no responsibility will be taken by this party for any Communist doctrine.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Do you let a room of the Trades Hall to the Communist Party?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: A Communist lady called on me the other night and asked me where the hon. member was.

Mr. Needham: She had a long talk with the hon. member.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Of course she did; she was one of your party.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No; she is one of the hon. member's tools.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: She is one of your party. Answer my question!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Oh, the smug complacency and the superiority of those who use such tools as this! In all my experience of trade and workshop, and of both Houses I have never known men to use such a despicable tool as an anonymous letter, and I make my protest against such a letter having been used in this Chamber. In doing so I crave your indulgence, Mr. Deputy Speaker. May such a happening never occur again! May those who come here behave themselves as men.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: What about Mr. Raphael's letter.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Let those who come here behave towards each other as men. Some of us were reared in somewhat humble circumstances, but we were told from our infancy that we had to respect women; that is, those who were entitled to respect.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish to say there are no women in this House.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member can raise a point of order, but she may not debate the matter.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: The point is that the Minister—

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member may not accuse; she may only raise a point of order.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: The point of order is that in this House I am not a woman.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is not a point of order. The Minister may proceed.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is not a point of order but merely a point.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: It is a smarting point.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: As a youngster I was taught to respect women; that is to say, those who were entitled to respect. I was taught to ignore those who were not, and to treat them with contempt. I see no reason to alter the teaching of my boyhood days. It is marvellous to me that those who preach and screech have no idea of decent dealing when they come amongst men. What would be the position if there were 49 women in this Chamber and one man? I should like to hear that one man call the 49 women hypocrites and refer to them as ninecompoops and come along the next day with a dictionary so that the poor uneducated creatures might understand the meaning of the word. Oh, these superior people! These people who are elevated and who look up to themselves as a moral aristocracy!

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Mr. Deputy Speaker, may I make an explanation? May I say that—

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member may not interrupt a speaker when he is addressing the Chair. Will the hon. member kindly resume her seat unless she has a point of order to raise.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: The point of order is that the Minister is not speaking the truth.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Will the Minister resume his seat? I wish to warn the member for Subiaco that the Standing Orders provide that a member may raise a point of order but may not, under that pretext, make any utterance reflecting upon any speech or statement made by another hon. member. I hope the hon. member will refrain from doing so.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have gone as far as I intended to go. I hope I have not gone too far, but I trust also that I have made it plain that if people want to be treated with respect they must treat us with respect.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I understand the Minister is speaking in a general way.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Members on this side of the House belong to the working class. I do not care whether they have come from workshops or offices. The fact remains that they have demanded that they should be spoken to with respect by the boss. That is why we are where we are today. We insisted upon upholding the dignity of our manhood, and we will not allow anybody to demean us or to put us in the position in which the hon. member attempted to place us. Whatever has to be done, let it be done in a straightforward manner. Whatever I sign I am responsible for, and what I say I am responsible for. We shall have reached a sorry pass if we come to the stage when, in order to secure effective criticism, the use of anonymous documents is necessary. There is a law of the land—and we hear much about the law of the land—against unsigned publications. During election time such documents as this will have to be signed. Nitwits who sign documents of this kind and have no respect for the law may continue to indulge in this practice and drop such productions in house letter-boxes, but we are not going to allow the responsibility for such happenings to be laid at the door of this Government or that of the Labour Party. It is no use being in politics unless one can defend oneself, and when the occasion arises to offer such defence, we shall do so. There are men who are half-educated, men who are uneducated, but they still have the pride of manhood and do not intend to accept insults from people who think themselves superior.

MR. DONEY (Williams-Narrogin) [8.12]:
Mr. Speaker—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Deputy Speaker is in the Chair.

Member: You had better be careful.

Mr. DONEY: Yes. Under "Marshall" law it is essential that members should be careful. I was about to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I have no unfriendly reactions towards the Minister who has just resumed his seat. He has certainly been outspoken in regard to many personal matters, but I have always found the lady member who was principally concerned in the concluding portion of his speech very well able to answer for herself.

The Minister pointed out that he had been in this House and another place for 22 years. I have had fairly close personal contact with him for the greater portion of that time, and I have always found him a most acceptable colleague indeed. Much of what he said demands comment, for there was in it ample room for difference of opinion. I would have liked to reply tonight to many of his statements, but it would be wiser to defer my remarks in order to give a little more consideration to his speech. On the points to which I am referring, therefore, I shall defer speaking until the Estimates are discussed.

The speech of the Minister for Lands last week was one of considerable value to those of us interested in marketing problems. It enabled us to view those problems from a number of entirely new angles, created by war conditions. The Minister made the point that Australia could do its duty by the Empire in the matter of food and other supplies only at the risk of seriously impairing its post-war position. The explanation is that today we are called upon to produce certain war commodities which after the war will not be required in their present form. At the end of the war it will be necessary as a consequence to change our production plans at a very critical period. I am wholly at one with the Minister in that view. It is entirely inescapable. There is one thing that perhaps the Minister did not mention, namely, that in respect of the handicaps he alluded to we shall be on a par with competitor countries inside and outside Europe. He suggested it was impossible yet to start a plan for post-war reconstruction, for the

reason that future conditions are as yet a wholly unknown quantity. To some extent I disagree with that view. There are certain post-war phases that we can foresee. I will give one as an example. We shall have to deal with the repatriation of soldiers. Inevitably that problem must arise. Further, we must not repeat the errors of the last war and endeavour to turn soldiers into wheat farmers. To avoid that means that we shall need to seek other and more profitable occupations for them. I suggest that the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research might temporarily forego its more scientific aims, and constitute itself a purely industrial body whose duty it would be to seek out new and more profitable fields of endeavour, not only for returned soldiers, but for the adult population of Australia generally. We might carry that point a little further. A committee was brought into being by the Minister for Industrial Development. Despite the part the Minister himself has played and the hard work engaged in, I think that committee has failed to expand factory development. It could, therefore, be converted into a Western Australian committee along the lines that I suggest for the C.S.I.R. in the Federal sphere. The Minister somewhat disappointed me in that he showed a marked intolerance of criticism. He expressed himself as having a grievance against the Primary Producers' Association, because a body of farmers attached to that association asked him whether or not he had a wheat policy. I can see nothing improper in such a question. Instead of being affronted, the Minister could have regarded those men as members not of a semi-political body but as half a dozen people, good honest farmers, representing thousands of other farmers from the marginal areas and other parts of the State who, many of them have experienced ten years of penury and mental suffering.

The Minister for Lands: You remember they said they had made approaches to the State and Federal Governments without result.

Mr. DONEY: I do not recall that. I am basing my remarks wholly on the report of the Minister's speech in "Hansard." That point did not arise. When these men called upon the Minister, he might well have told them either that he had such a policy or, if he had not, that he had not such a policy. He might have explained that the unusual

conditions through which we are passing made a wheat policy impracticable. Judging from the Minister's remarks, I should say his attitude towards those men was not particularly friendly, and I regret that that should have been so.

The Minister for Lands: Our relations were very cordial.

Mr. DONEY: The Minister's speech did not give members on this side of the House that impression. He dealt also in a rather caustic way with the remarks of the member for Avon (Mr. Boyle). That was because on the occasion when the hon. member was submitting a case for indigent farmers, he did not mention that there were farmers whose operations had been successful. I cannot understand why the hon. member should have stressed that point. There are good farmers on good land in, say, the 15-inch to 40-inch rainfall; men who have been paying no interest and who have passed the pioneering stage. We all know there are such men, and naturally we expect a proportion of them to succeed from year to year; but why should the Minister require emphasis laid upon that point? The Minister and members on the cross benches should rather base their calculations upon what is happening to the average farmer on average land, where the rainfall ranges from 10 to 14 inches, and who are still in the pioneering stage. They represent the type for whom special help is solicited. The poor man on poor land and the good man on poor land have long since fallen by the wayside. The trier, however, remains. I suggest that the Government and members generally should stand solidly and enthusiastically behind the trier. I mention the trier especially for the benefit of the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe (Mr. F. C. L. Smith). On the Address-in-reply, that hon. member said the policy of getting rid of inefficient farmers was a good one. Does he think that this State is loaded with inefficient farmers? Would he regard a man who had managed to weather the storm for the last ten years as an inefficient farmer? I should imagine that such a farmer would be considered well above the average. Does he realise that lessening the number of farmers lessens the food supplies of the Empire? If this war is prolonged for any lengthy period—that seems likely to

be the case, for it appears that Hitler will not give in readily, and we will never give in at all—the matter of food supplies will assume an importance comparable with, say, man-power and munitions. The hon. member said he knew of certain retired farmers at Nedlands. He also said he knew of a farmer living there who had sold 2,500 acres at £3 5s. an acre. There is nothing startling about that. He submitted that statement to the House as though once and for all it squashed the argument that farming does not pay. His remarks, however, did not have that effect. The point is, when was that particular farm sold and when did the man in question retire? I do not know whether the hon. member has that information.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: He retired last year.

Mr. DONEY: Then there is a little more point in the statement made by the hon. member. In almost every instance farmers who lived within the 15 to 40-inch rainfall were not called upon to pay interest, and for many years of their occupancy had passed beyond the pioneering stage.

I now wish to comment on a phase of the war in which we are engaged, namely, home defence. To Australia that is a matter of real importance. Apart from our obligations in England, the Middle East, etc., no other question by comparison is more than of tenth-rate importance. The member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Tonkin) recognised that when he passed some timely strictures upon the Government, I could not fathom why he also brought in the R.S.L. He said that the Government and the R.S.L. should be censured for their neglect to make the best use of those who were voluntarily offering their services for home defence, that is the defence of the town in which they live. Apart from the wholly unwarranted attack upon the R.S.L., I think the House generally applauded the hon. member's sentiments. There seemed to be only one dissentient voice, that of the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe, who said he did not believe in unofficial armies. He implied too, that any attempt to regiment the adult population of Australia, that is as an auxiliary of the main army, giving each the part best suited to him, was impracticable. I regret that he should have expressed such an opinion.

It may be said that 95 per cent. of the people in this State are extremely anxious to destroy an inertia that is complained of in certain directions. The hon. member will realise that such an expression as he used will intensify that inertia, and I regret that he should have so spoken. Every man is, of course, entitled to his own opinion. As a rule I listen with more agreement than disagreement to the hon. member's remarks, but I could not agree with those particular ones. If by any ill chance we are forced to stage a war within our boundaries, I am sure he will change his opinion in two minutes. The member for Forrest (Mr. Holman) also made reference to the subject dealt with by the member for North-East Fremantle. Those members castigated the Defence Department for an alleged paucity of effort in regard to the construction of tanks, planes and armaments generally. The member for North-East Fremantle made the mistake of imagining that because he knows little or nothing about what is being done in this matter, little or nothing is being done. I wonder whether the hon. member would like the defence authorities to make periodical announcements publicly indicating the figures and what had been achieved. Does he realise that what might be published for our information and benefit by the same token would be published for the information of the whole world, including our enemies? That prompts me to say that the less lay criticism we have regarding these matters, the better will it be for all. The hon. member was on safer ground when he turned to the question of the attempt in many centres of this State to form home defence corps. They are essentially local units, all our own, in regard to which the hon. member is free to make any reasonable criticism, because the home defence force is free from rigid and exacting oversight that is exercised, and quite properly so, with regard to our first line defences. No man—I am not, of course, referring to the hon. member in this respect—should belittle the importance of that particular unit. As a matter of fact, its importance, as we noted from reports in yesterday's paper, has been recognised by the defence authorities, and it is now placed on that basis we long hoped and expected it would be. As a fact, events may

very easily so shape themselves that the unit will speedily develop into a highly valuable arm of our defence scheme. For that matter, that is the position even at this moment. Even to-day the question of defending our shores, our streets, our families and our homes is most urgent. No one, I am sure, will dispute that nothing so touches us upon the raw as a threat to the welfare of our women and children. Obviously every member of this House feels precisely that way about it. To-day every man and every woman, too, we might also say, feels the urge to arms. "Every man a fighter and every woman a worker" might well be our aim. As a matter of fact, that objective might quite easily be assured of speedy accomplishment if we were to bend ourselves to the task in the spirit suggested by the member for North-East Fremantle in his speech. To-day, of course, we can proceed with our local defence problems in a steady and orderly fashion. To-morrow all may be confusion. To-day is ours, but who knows with whom we are likely to share to-morrow? What I submit in respect of this problem is that the Government, to a large degree, appears to be unmoved by it. Of course, I judge merely by appearances. Perhaps if the Government were to tell us what it is doing, a more inspiring picture would be painted than we have had presented to us. It appears to me, and to many other members who have spoken, that the Government is not displaying nearly as much interest in this question as it should. Merely to answer that the Constitution imposes upon the Federal Government and not upon us the responsibility for defence is not sufficient. That would be all right in normal times, but does not appeal to us to-day.

To me there is something very inspiring indeed, something inherently grand, in the spectacle of our people answering that inner appeal to arise in their own defence. The urge to handle a rifle is a very proper and admirable thing. After all, it brings with it a sense of confidence and of strength to be familiar with the rifle, to be able to handle it and know the feel of it; to swing it about and know how to twist it from the grasp of an enemy; to know the countless tricks, nasty but useful, which are associated with the efficient use of that weapon. Even a little training is good; more is, of course, a great deal better. The Government cannot really

afford to withhold its support from a movement of this description. I know there are many superior folk who are prone to smile at physical training, and at drill as well. I do not know whether there are any of those people in this Chamber. Perhaps there are not; but there are some who even now seem not to realise the stark practicality of this business of defence. While I regard very highly the view expressed by the member for North-East Fremantle as to voluntary home-defence units, I regret, as I have already indicated, his exceedingly unfair attack upon the men who comprise the Returned Soldiers' League. I do not say that his was a deliberate attempt to misrepresent the R.S.L.; I do not think it was. I prefer to put his utterance down to an error of judgment. May I explain that I would not bother to deny the accuracy or propriety of the hon. member's accusations, were it not for the fact that he represents some thousands of people of this State and speaks to them through the columns of "Hansard." That fact is, of course, inclined to give to his statements an authenticity that, on this occasion, they were certainly not entitled to.

Mr. Tonkin: Do you really think that?

Mr. DONEY: The hon. member showed me the letter upon which he based the conclusions that he imparted to the House in his speech, and in a minute I shall make reference to that communication and give my opinion regarding it. Anyhow, referring to the voluntary defence movement, the member for North-East Fremantle said—

The returned soldiers do not want this movement.

That statement is totally at variance with the facts, and I cannot help thinking that the hon. member could not have been serious when he made it.

Mr. Tonkin: I meant the local executive of the R.S.L.

Mr. DONEY: I have quoted the hon. member's exact words. That is all I can go by. The hon. member cannot reconstruct his speech at this stage. In the version of his speech reported in "Hansard," which, I take it, the hon. member himself checked, he said that the returned soldiers did not want this movement. He further said—

We have approached the returned soldiers and asked them to cloak the ordinary citizen with their authority so that the ordinary citi-

zen may be trained and prepared to defend his heritage, but the returned soldiers say, "We do not want to play with you; we want to look after ourselves."

There is a tinge of childishness about that. I was not particularly keen on referring to it, but I have been prompted to do so in order to indicate the rather unfortunate attitude the hon. member adopted towards the fine body of men who comprise the R.S.L. The hon. member further said—

The executive denied its authority to the home defence movement.

The facts as I understand them are these: The R.S.L. members are heart and soul with the voluntary home defence movement. In point of fact, they may be said to be the heart and soul of the movement, in regard to which they have acted with good sense and certainly deserve the gratitude of every patriot. There is also this point: The R.S.L. is not entitled to grant authority to any voluntary unit for training purposes.

Mr. Tonkin: You are begging the question; they were asked to co-operate.

Mr. DONEY: There is no point whatever in the hon. member's interjection. We know he told us that he had submitted a request to the executive of the League. In any case, if the Federal defence authorities, upon a request being made to them, declined to give that authority, surely it is patent to the hon. member that an entirely subsidiary body like the R.S.L. could not possibly give such authority.

Mr. Tonkin: They were never asked to; they were asked to co-operate with others in putting a case before the Minister for the Army, and they declined to co-operate.

Mr. DONEY: Then their attitude was, to say the least of it, very unfriendly. In contradistinction from what the hon. member understood, so far as I appreciate the position, returned soldiers throughout the State offered to help in the formation and training of these units wherever any attempt was made to bring them into being.

Mr. Tonkin: I offered no criticism whatever of the rank and file.

Mr. DONEY: No? I have quoted the hon. member's words, and he said that the returned soldiers did not want the movement. I am prepared to admit that the hon. member did not mean that and that actually he was referring to the executive of the R.S.L.

Mr. Tonkin: That is so; I make the necessary correction now.

Mr. DONEY: I am pleased to have that. In the light of the explanation I have made and of the facts I have quoted, I hope the hon. member will be prepared to make a similar correction with regard to the executive of that body.

Mr. Tonkin: Now I suppose you will say that the R.S.L. fell over themselves in an endeavour to help us.

Mr. DONEY: The hon. member has shown me a letter upon which he based the views he expressed the other night. In one line of that communication there was certainly some evidence to indicate a lack of cordiality, nothing more. He would be a very thin-skinned individual indeed who could take exception to that letter or read into it, as the hon. member did, enough to give him any justification whatever for the unfortunate deductions he drew. I would not bring this matter up now, but for the fact that returned soldiers who have been adversely criticised asked me to explain the actual position.

Mr. Tonkin: You are apparently disappointed about it.

Mr. DONEY: I do not want again to read what the hon. member said about that phase. That is all I have to say. I am glad to know I have made some little impression upon the hon. member with regard to statements he made about a highly desirable body of men

MR. THORN (Toodyay) [8.45]: With other speakers I express my regret regarding the serious conflict in which our Empire is engaged overseas. I do feel, however, that we are a united Empire and that in consequence there is no doubt about our ultimate victory.

Mr. Tonkin: The member for Subiaco does not believe that.

Mr. THORN: I have no doubt about it whatsoever. The united efforts of the State Parliaments throughout the Commonwealth to render assistance to the Federal authorities in the part they are endeavouring to play in the conflict will, I am sure, materially affect the outcome. We all sympathise with the Mother Country, and are fully seized with the importance of the problems with which she is faced. But Great Britain has been through trying times before, and will emerge victorious once

more. The necessity imposed upon the different nations allied with us to sue for peace was most unfortunate. Particularly does that apply to the French Government. If, however, the French Government had been united as are the Governments of the British Empire, and if the members of the French Government had not always been wrangling amongst themselves and forgetting the real objective of the nation, they would have been in an entirely different position to-day from that in which we find them, playing a game of cut-throat amongst themselves. What has taken place in France is in a small way occurring within the British Empire. Fairly regularly we can read in our daily paper unsigned letters criticising Parliament and members of Parliament. Such unsigned letters, against which the Minister for Works protested so strongly a little while ago, could quite easily be the work of fifth columnists. People sending these letters to the Press have not the manliness or decency to sign them. The Minister said that he and his party were always prepared to stick up for their rights, and I consider it is time that all members of Parliament should do likewise. We should not be afraid to answer people who are ashamed to sign their names and who are so bitterly engaged in criticising Parliamentarians. We are all anxious to do the very best that we can for our Empire. To serve our constituents to the best of our ability was the object we had in view when we entered Parliament. In the week-end paper I read an account of an interview that some person associated with the paper had with a member of Parliament. The latter was asked how he found Parliament, and his answer was that he was bored. If that member cannot find sufficient to do in a troublesome time like this in looking after the welfare of his constituents and trying to serve his country in general, he should get out of Parliament. Parliament is no place for him. When he says Parliament is boring he is not sincere. Members of this House should be prepared to stand up for their rights and for the democratic system that we enjoy to-day, instead of indulging in cheap and "tripey" publicity of that kind.

Several suggestions have been made in this Chamber regarding economies that could be effected. I do not wish to be critical, but there are certain economies I

consider could be effectively made. One is in the running of departmental cars. We appear to have more departmental cars to-day than we have ever had, and the position is getting out of control. Why should we at a time of great trouble, when economy is so necessary, allow departments to purchase expensive cars and run them at a considerable cost to the Government? There is another direction in which economy could be exercised. There has been much discussion about the rationing of petrol. The public could be asked to play its part in voluntarily reducing the consumption of petrol.

Mr. Cross: We are already doing that.

Mr. THORN: To a certain extent. But I would refer the hon. member to a race meeting that was held at Helena Vale on Saturday. I would not debar any man from enjoying his sport, and I do not think that one could have a better outing than travelling through beautiful open country to Helena Vale to attend a race meeting. The point that exercises my mind, however, is this: The Government is prepared to provide rail transport conveying passengers to the very gate of the racecourse. The fare is cheap and the travelling comfortable. In spite of that, however, at least 500 cars went from Fremantle and Perth to that race meeting, and thousands of gallons of petrol were thereby consumed. That is a direction in which there could be considerable saving. Travelling by train, taxpayers could support the railway system to the maintenance of which they are all contributing.

Another matter of great concern is the position of the farmers. It is most unfortunate that when the Empire is involved in such a tremendous struggle we should be visited by drought conditions, which are fairly general throughout the Commonwealth. The situation is assuming a very serious aspect in this State, and it seems to me—though my friends sitting opposite will be accusing us more than ever of squealing and complaining about the condition of the farmers—

The Minister for Mines: We would not do that.

Mr. THORN: I feel that members opposite will do all that they possibly can to render the farmers assistance. It seems to me that considerable assistance will be required unless something happens in the near

future to relieve the situation. I do not want to see any economies effected regarding employment if they can possibly be avoided. I feel that this is a time when we should keep everyone in employment. Our aim should be to keep people happy and contented. Surely to goodness we have enough trouble without having large numbers of unemployed on our hands! At the same time it will be necessary for the Government to give further serious consideration to the farming industry.

I was greatly interested in the speech delivered by the Minister for Lands the other evening. He gave us a resume of what has happened and an indication of what we can expect in the future. I am pleased that the dried fruit industry has been successful in shipping its full quota overseas. We have been very fortunate in that respect. Dried fruit is not a perishable commodity; it is carried as general cargo, and the position for that industry was not so serious as that which faces the exporters of apples and pears. Some muddling occurred at the beginning of the season. We were told we were to ship our dried fruit by certain boats, but when they arrived, we found they were already full and could not lift our shipments. After we had appealed to the authorities in the Eastern States, we were given permission to ship by other boats that called, and so we got our dried fruit away.

The Premier: That committee gave great consideration to this State.

Mr. THORN: Yes; that is proved by the fact that the whole of our quota was shipped.

The Premier: But it applies to commodities other than yours.

Mr. THORN: That is so. The Minister for Lands told us that it was necessary for the British Government at times to purchase cargoes that were required but were not produced within the Empire. I feel somewhat concerned regarding the action of the British Government, because it purchased the Grecian and Turkish crops of dried fruit before it purchased the Australian crop. That action placed us at a disadvantage. I think the time has come when the British Government will have to consider giving Australia preference in that market. We have a small preference in the matter of duty, but that is of no use to us, particularly when we remember that dried fruit in Turkey and

Greece is produced by very cheap labour and under conditions that could not operate here. Now that France has collapsed, I can see further trouble looming, as the Grecian Government always sold its low-grade and surplus dried fruit to France for distillation purposes. If care is not taken, that fruit will be packed for marketing in England. Therefore I think it about time the Home Government appreciated the fact that Australia represents an important part of the British Empire and that Australian dried fruit should be purchased first of all and in preference to the Grecian and Turkish crops.

Our growers of fresh grapes for export succeeded in shipping most of their fruit this year, but they will be faced with problems in the forthcoming season, just as will the shippers of apples and pears. The bulk of the export grapes are sent to Singapore and the islands of the north, and probably grape growers will not be hit so hard as will the growers of apples and pears.

Last session this House agreed to an amendment of the plant diseases legislation. I think that the measure was rushed through Parliament and that we did not have time to consider every aspect of it. In application, it has worked out unfairly and, I think, differently from what Parliament desired. I have 150 open letters addressed to members of Parliament, and every one is signed by an individual grower. I should like to read the view taken by orchardists because I think it is fair. This Parliament claims to be democratic, and the application of the amendment certainly has not been democratic. The letter reads—

Open letter to all members of Parliament
Dear Sirs, It is my desire to draw your attention to the imposition and injustice, particularly to the smaller grower, of the Plant Diseases (Registration Fees) Bill which was passed during the last session of Parliament. While I fully agree that it is necessary for steps to be taken to control and if possible eradicate the fruit fly and other orchard pests, and am therefore willing to contribute towards the cost, provided this is fixed on a reasonable basis, I am definitely of opinion that the scale of fees as fixed is nothing more than a tax on the smaller orchardist, from whom the bulk of the revenue will be collected.

Why, I ask you, should an orchardist with 100 acres of vines or fruit trees have to pay a registration fee which amounts to only 6d. per acre, while the orchardist with 10 acres pays at the rate of 2s. 6d. per acre?

That comes of fixing a maximum of £2 10s.

Is not every acre of the large orchard or vineyard just as subject to attack by fruit fly? Does it not take as long to inspect the 100-acre orchard as the smaller property of 10 acres? I ask you, do you really think this is fair?

Why again should a nurseryman with thousands of vines or fruit trees planted in less than an acre block only pay a registration fee of 1s. while, when the trees are planted in the orchard or vineyard, although they will not bear fruit for three years or more, the orchardist is called upon to pay registration fees at the rate of 2s. 6d. per acre? Why could not these trees or vines be exempted until bearing?

Still again, currants and sultanias are not subject to attack by fruit fly. In fact, a currant is not large enough to house a decent-sized maggot. Yet an orchardist only having these varieties planted has to pay tax.

Still again—but what is the good? The whole Act is badly drafted, and has evidently been drawn up by people not conversant with our industry. It is therefore necessary that the Act be redrafted so as to provide for all orchardists having to contribute on a reasonable basis, with exemption for those with orchards the trees or vines of which are less than three years old, or planted with varieties not subject to attack by fly.

In my opinion a registration fee of 1s. per acre, irrespective of acreage, would be fair to both small and large growers.

Requesting that you do your utmost to bring this about. Yours faithfully, (sgd.) J. Goldspink, Millendon, Swan.

Mr. Holman: Why does not the writer join his own organisation, which asked for this?

Mr. THORN: I bring this matter under the notice of the House in the hope that the Minister will give it serious consideration and if possible bring down an amendment to provide for a flat rate of 1s. The dissatisfaction now evident would then disappear.

The Minister for Lands: That would have to operate from July, 1941.

Mr. THORN: That is all the Minister could do. More satisfaction would then be evident in the industry, because the growers themselves have come to an agreement on the point. They more or less decided they would have to be taxed. The present system is not altogether fair when we consider the position in the light of everything that has happened. In the case of other primary industries the Agricultural Department provides inspectors to police the diseases that arise, and those men are paid out of revenue. In the case under review, the growers are being asked to pay a tax so that the

orchards and vineyards may be inspected with a view to the eradication of pests.

The Minister for Lands: The Fruit Fly Advisory Committee has made a more drastic recommendation.

Mr. THORN: Yes. I know there is a Fruit Fly Committee consisting of growers.

Mr. Sampson: It is an advisory committee.

Mr. THORN: Those growers advise the department with regard to diseases found in orchards and vineyards. I also know that the committee made certain recommendations. During the passing of the amending legislation through the House reference was made to the fixing of a maximum payment of £5. The amount was then reduced to £2 10s. Other amendments were made that have caused the Act to operate harshly in the case of small growers, the man with 100 acres, for instance, having to pay 6d. per acre.

The Minister for Lands: It was a much better Bill than it was an Act.

Mr. THORN: The request is a fair one. I have given it full consideration. The least the Minister can do is to have the Act amended to provide for a flat rate of 1s. per acre.

Another request has come to me from my electorate. Although the subject is one I am not keen to deal with, I am prepared to bring it forward. I refer to a matter that was mentioned the other night by the member for Forrest (Mr. Holman), namely, Jehovah's Witnesses. I have here a copy of the "Sunday Times" of the 28th July last. From that paper it appears that the returned soldiers of Wooroloo protested against Jehovah's Witnesses going into the district and making a nuisance of themselves. When the visitors did not desire to listen to the returned soldiers protest, they played records and disturbed the whole district on Sunday morning or afternoon. There appears to be a good deal of evidence to show that these people are not loyal. One of them visited me on Sunday morning a few weeks ago. He walked into my place and handed me some literature. I knew who he was and said, "No thank you; I do not want that. I know my own mind on this subject and do not want your advice." He said, "You would be enlightened if you read this literature, brother." I replied, "I do not fall for that.

I do not want anything to do with it. I have my own religion, and that is my business and not that of anyone else. Do you mind if I ask you a question," He said, "I should be delighted." I then said, "Do you stand for the Union Jack and the British Empire?" He replied, "We stand for all countries." I said, "You have lived under the protection of the Union Jack and the British Empire practically all your life. Do you not stand for them. Would you not do something for them?" He said, "We stand for the whole world," and added "God will decide the final issue." I have also a long letter from Wooroloo containing a protest, and pointing out that several of these people are employed in the Sanatorium by the Government.

Mr. Holman: Not only in the Sanatorium.

The Minister for Mines: What are they doing there?

Mr. THORN: They are in employment there, either as labourers or at work on the woodstack or in some other direction.

Mr. Holman: And in Government offices, too.

Mr. THORN: I was asked to bring this matter before the House and have done so. It is not my desire to interfere with the religion of any body of people, but the least they can do is to be loyal to the Empire and the flag under which we are sheltered. In a time like this we should not allow people to unsettle others. They should not be permitted to say to a mother that she is mad to allow her son to enlist and be slaughtered. It is time such people were dealt with. The matter has been brought to the notice of the Department of Information on several occasions, but is not seriously viewed from that quarter. A person coming from the Northam Camp and giving a few soldiers a lift recently made use of disloyal statements, and was dealt with and imprisoned. Very little time elapsed before he was taken in hand, but these other people who are unsettling and upsetting others at a time like the present are allowed to go scot free.

Mr. Withers: And to shelter behind the Holy Book.

Mr. THORN: It is a miserable practice.

Mr. Holman: One man coated his poisonous pill with sugar and the other came out in the open.

Mr. THORN: The Commonwealth Government is at present spending about £60,000 in the construction of an internment camp in the Harvey district. That is a wilful waste of money. I would do with the internees what was done in the last war, make them work. I would not permit them to live idle lives and be fed at the expense of the country, but would put them on to building the east-west road from Kalgoorlie to Port Augusta. That would be work of real value to the country and be some recompense for the upkeep of these people. It would help in the defence of the Commonwealth.

Mr. Styants: You would not suggest that if you had relatives in Germany, for there would immediately be retaliation.

Mr. THORN: That is all we ever did behind the lines in Germany, those who were prisoners of war. The prisoners were obliged to build roads under gun fire. That is where we fail. We think we shall upset Germany and that there will be retaliation. Germany is retaliating all the while. No quarter is given behind the lines there.

Mr. Sampson: You want to make them work. Do not be cruel.

Mr. THORN: That would not be cruelty. They could build the road that is so necessary for the defence of the country. I was going to say that if I were a dictator that is where I would put them. I will conclude now by again saying that there is not the slightest doubt about the successful issue of this present war, because we are a determined and a united people.

MR. WARNER (Mt. Marshall) [9.16]: I shall not take up much time on this debate, since the subjects that have been raised by the various speakers are numerous and highly varied, and it would be merely repetition were I to dwell on the majority of the matters to which I had intended to address myself. Most of the questions touched on in the early part of His Excellency's Speech related to the close co-operation desired by all members for the purpose of winning the war. That subject has been dealt with from many angles. Then there have been many references to the activities of the Federal Government towards winning the war. To that important subject I do not desire to refer at length, for the simple reason

that there are many things we do not know but those in authority do know. Like most returned men I am strong on discipline—to obey orders, and not to seek information until later. That fact has led me to be cautious in this matter, though I do desire a little information from others who are in authority, before saying whether in my opinion the Commonwealth Government is efficient enough or not. There are many aspects of the war with which we are not acquainted. At the same time I agree with much of what was said by the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Tonkin). That hon. member's views, I believe, are the views of most members of this Chamber. We would be more satisfied if we had our own rifle and bandolier of ammunition, so that if the time came for us to be called upon there would be nothing in the nature of a stampede in the protection of that country which we all love and would serve. We cannot deal with that phase until we see the outcome of which the member for North-East Fremantle spoke, when those who desire to defend their country will be permitted to train and get into condition to do so. This would not interfere with the military authorities in any way, but it may prove that if times become very serious this will be necessary. If it does nothing else, it will give an opportunity to many of us who are not physically fit because of want of training or exercise to get into condition.

Mr. Sampson: The cause is Anno Domini.

Mr. WARNER: It may not be that altogether. Many of us desire to help our country as much as we can at the present time. It is no use talking about the old soldier having done so much that he need not do any more. My belief is that some of our old soldiers are anxious to get in a lick either on their own behalf or on that of their cobbles from last time. I will agree that notwithstanding the present physical condition of the returned soldiers in this Chamber, and indeed all members of this Chamber, they would be indeed pleased to do all they could if called upon for the defence of their country, provided they were physically and mentally fit to do it.

A subject I must touch on is the great concern I necessarily have for the primary producers in this season. I am convinced that most members on the other side of the

Chamber, as well as some on this side, expect me to do a bit of moaning on behalf of the primary producers.

The Minister for Mines: Why moan?

Mr. WARNER: Because every season that comes along I hope to tell of better prospects for my people, but something happens to prevent me from being able to do so truthfully. The members for Irwin-Moore (Mr. Berry) and Avon (Mr. Boyle) have gone fully into that subject, explaining the position of the farmers; and at this stage I may say too much. Possibly I shall revert to the subject later. It is understood, I think, that this season's rains came very late, and that any late wheats must be sown early and the early wheats sown late this year. Late wheats were sown, and the early wheats shortly afterwards; and the rains only came after that, which meant throwing back the early wheats three weeks and the late wheats anything up to five or six weeks. It necessarily follows that when they germinate, those that do germinate do so together, because of getting rain; and there would have to be a very favourable following season to enable any decent wheat crop to come out of the north-eastern district, and more particularly out of what are termed its marginal areas. Moreover, the late rains which are essential, are unusual; and when we are fortunate enough to get them it means a shortage of green feed when there is need of it for the lambs—when it is required, there is none. Hence there is much concern and anxiety as to the season. I doubt whether in the portion of the north-eastern district represented by me there will be more than 40 or 50 per cent. of lambs to market, and these may prove inferior.

For the same reason I fail to see prospects of anything but scarce hay crops in my electorate, even with good following rains from now on. Further, the shortage of rain means that the hay reserve from last season has all been used up to feed the sheep up to this stage. As no hay can be cut this season, the position threatens to be very bad for those who are carrying sheep.

Because of shortage of rain, moreover, there are only small quantities of water in the catchment areas at Barbalin, Knundagin and Waddouring, which are linked up. Barbalin, which was linked up with the Goldfields Water Scheme two years ago, represents a great asset. These catchments were established mainly for the purpose of en-

abling farmers there to go in for stock and carry sheep. Also for that object, the present Government went to the great expense of joining up Barbalin with the goldfields scheme, as I have just mentioned. My electors were on the verge of ruin then, and were only saved by the fortunate chance of a late rain enabling them to carry stock on wheat instead of having to shift them all out of the district. As regards the catchments, the idea was that during the winter months they would be filled with water sufficient to carry the district over the year, or that sufficient water would be pumped into them from the goldfields scheme. I do not know what arrangements have been made by the Minister for Water Supplies this year for carrying on. From what I can learn, there is only a very small quantity of water in any of those catchments. I would strongly urge the Minister to take particular notice of the position. Up to the present time the rains have not filled the dams on the holdings of those farmers who have dams; and the rock catchments scattered through the district, many of them put down by the present Government during the last five or six years, have little to show in the way of water conservation. Unless a fair supply is put into Barbalin this year, the people there may find themselves in the position of having to ship stock away on account of lack of water. That will be the position if, indeed, stock have not to be moved because of the shortage of feed. The suggestion has been made that the Government is not watching the position. I do not accept that view. I have every reason to believe that the Minister is watching it and will make certain that a sufficient quantity of water is placed in the Barbalin catchment before the rainy season is over. Decidedly there will be intense dissatisfaction with the water supply authorities if that is not done, and so I hope the Minister will note the point.

Many complaints have been received from the marginal areas where the linking up of blocks has been proceeding. The object is to place those settlers on mixed farming propositions instead of allowing them to rely solely upon wheat as in the past. The complaints relate to the valuations fixed by the Agricultural Bank and the Lands Department. The settlers claim that the anchor block is over-capitalised, while the adjoining

linked-up blocks have been so highly valued that the interest payments involved and other requirements will place them in an awkward position. I sincerely trust that when the position is dealt with finally, the farmers will not be so situated that they will face a repetition of the experience in other parts where settlers have not been able to meet their commitments. The capitalisation and interest charges have been so heavy that the burden has been too great and they have merely gone to the wall. I trust that will not be the position after so much money has been spent on the work, particularly that made available by the Commonwealth Government, which can be regarded as so much foreign capital. However, I have received many complaints along the lines I have indicated, and I trust the future will not disclose that the settlers, after being given another start, will be confronted with inevitable failure once more because of the over-capitalisation of their holdings. No doubt the Minister for Lands and the Commissioners of the Agricultural Bank have full information regarding the linking-up process and the valuations involved, and I can only trust that, in the end, the burden upon the settlers concerned will not be too heavy for them to shoulder. Another complaint is that the marginal areas included in the linking-up scheme do not extend far enough. Knowing the district as well as I do, I think there is every justification for that assertion. I think the area covered by the scheme should extend to the No. 1 rabbit proof fence and follow a line east and west to Nungarin and ten miles south of Koorda. The rainfall and the class of country throughout that extended area are similar to those applying to the part included in the scheme at present. In my opinion, the extended portions I have indicated will have to be brought within the scope of the scheme, because wheatgrowing will not be a payable proposition in those parts when the war is concluded. However optimistic we may be regarding wheatgrowing in this State, we must face that fact. Farmers must be encouraged to grow more than wheat as they have been for the past 10 or 12 years in the portion of the wheatbelt to which I refer.

I believe the Government has a hard task ahead. We learn that the Premier has obtained authority for £1,750,000 to help him

tide over the financial year. I am afraid he will find it difficult to carry out his works programme, and he may find it necessary to curtail governmental activities under that heading. During the past three or four months Federal members have been touring the State speaking at win-the-war rallies. They have suggested that we all have a part to play and that there is a job for everyone to do. All should be doing something to help win the war, and that is quite right so far as it goes. But there is another aspect. In my opinion, we must find full-time employment for those who are at present in receipt of sustenance or part-time work. Those men feel the obligation to provide adequately for their wives and families. I hold that the Federal Government should assist the State by providing additional funds so that further assistance may be given to those men, particularly to those not able to take part in the manufacture of munitions. Sufficient money should be available from the Commonwealth to enable the State Government to place all our men in constant work. During the past eight or ten years the Government has done a lot to keep men in work. We have in our midst quite a large body of men who are sustenance workers and a section of them if allowed to have their way will be quite content to remain in that category. Every endeavour should be made to get rid of sustenance workers by providing them with full-time work while the war is in progress. It is the last chance the Government will have to get away from that system, and it will certainly not be easy of accomplishment. The Government that endeavours to grapple with the task will have to face bitter recrimination. Thus the task should not be one solely for the Government. Parliament itself should accept the responsibility. We should all play our part in the movement. We should get all our men back to full-time work by the use of money supplied by the Federal Government. If that is not done now, the objective will never be attained. Many nasty things will be said about the Government that essays the task, and so each member of the House should accept his share of the responsibility. I do not believe any member would attempt to shirk his duty in that respect. If we were successful in gaining our end, those now in receipt of sustenance or part-time work, would in the long run, be in a far

happier position, and there would be happiness in the hearts of members of Parliament who assisted in bringing that task to fruition.

As I stated earlier, I shall now have something further to say on the position of the eastern wheat belt. For many years in succession we unfortunately have suffered drought conditions throughout that area. Last year we had a break; a considerable quantity of wheat has come from what we now term the marginal areas in the north-eastern wheat belt. It would appear as though the drought had broken and that we had every expectation of a succession of good seasons such as we experienced many years ago. Unfortunately this season drought conditions have again prevailed. The Government must do something to keep the settlers there on their holdings by providing them with sufficient funds to pay their working expenses for the present year. That will enable them to put in a crop next year. Those holdings should not be abandoned. Until such time as a linking-up takes place these men must be given assistance. From a national point of view, their properties must be kept in production while the war continues. When the war is ended the farmers must be provided with mixed-farming facilities. At the present time they are engaged solely in wheat growing. I sincerely trust the Minister for Lands will keep closely in touch with the Agricultural Bank and ensure that arrangements are made to keep these settlers on their holdings, so that we shall not have another large body of unemployed men drifting into the metropolitan area after having abandoned their farms. If the Government does not come to their assistance I am sure many will abandon their holdings.

I intended to touch upon the subject of unsigned letters that have been appearing in the Press containing what might be termed gibes at members of Parliament; but the member for Toodyay (Mr. Thorn) has already dealt with the matter and I shall not repeat what he said. At the same time, some interesting articles are appearing in week-end papers. I refer to articles written by Victor Courtney. I do not agree with all that he says, but am fully in accord with the views he expressed in an article that appeared in last week's "Sunday Times." I do not propose to quote the article, as I presume most members have

read it. It deals with the youth position. Those who have read it I think will agree with me that Mr. Courtney has expressed views that are sound and proper. More should be done for our youth. I suggest for the earnest consideration of the Premier that he form some of the experienced men in his department into a committee for the purpose of collating information from all possible sources to enable us to carry out what is proposed in that article. Our boys, as they leave school, should have something better to look forward to than to be engaged for a year or two as a messenger boy in a shop or factory in the metropolitan area and then dismissed. At the present time these boys are joining up, some in the air force, others in the infantry. A year or two ago we would never have thought that we were again rearing our boys to be soldiers. Nor do I think sufficient attention has been given to the fact that there was a dead-end awaiting them had the war not broken out.

Mr. Sampson: They are not allowed to learn a trade.

Mr. WARNER: No. All they are now allowed to learn is to become soldiers. Had employers done their part things might have been different. Many employers have engaged lads and kept them employed in a dead-end job until they attained the age of 19 or 20 years and then dismissed them.

Mr. Sampson: There was no possibility of their being taught a trade.

Mr. WARNER: I have expressed my views on the subject and sincerely trust the Premier will give consideration to my suggestion for the formation of a committee to obtain all information required to evolve a scheme whereby, when the war is over, these lads will have a chance of securing suitable employment. We must also make arrangements for our juveniles to be properly trained, so that when they reach an age at which the employers must pay them an increased wage, the employers will not dismiss them and engage cheaper labour.

Mr. Sampson: The employer is not allowed to teach the youths.

Mr. Holman: Employers are dismissing tradesmen now. Tradesmen are going into relief camps. I met one today.

Mr. WARNER: That is most unfortunate. We must grapple with the problem.

We shall not be able to do what we did at the conclusion of the last war, namely, settle large bodies of men on the land. That at the time was a great help.

Mr. Sampson interjected.

Mr. WARNER: I am asking you to help the Government to evolve a scheme.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. WARNER: Another point on which I must touch concerns the Railway Department. I am quite unable to understand the curtailment that is taking place in the department at the present time. It seems to be general. The department is not replacing men who have joined up or who have left the service of the railways for some other reason. Railway stations are left with no one in charge at all. That may not seem serious to residents of the metropolitan area, but it certainly is serious for country residents living in the vicinity of railway stations. These may have to journey eight or ten miles to the station to collect their mail or to purchase stores and take delivery of merchandise consigned by rail. If the Commissioner of Railways, who I think is responsible for this state of affairs, were to examine the books of some of the railway stations at which it is contended there is not sufficient traffic to warrant the employment of a staff, he would find—if he made a comparison with Perth and such centres as Northam—that the turnover at some of the country sidings is as great as at some of the other country stations where the staffs have been retained. I have in mind one such station. I was one of a deputation that waited on the Minister for Railways, who received us courteously and went so far as to arrange a further deputation with the Commissioner of Railways on the subject. I refer to the Jennacubbin station. The number of stock that comes into and leaves that station is remarkable. One farmer in the vicinity will be sending away 3,000 lambs. At one time only a couple of hundred pigs were consigned from the station, but now the number has reached 2,000 or 3,000. The people of that district are handicapped by not having someone in control of the station. There will be repercussions in many ways. At that siding there is a hotel and a store and the post office is at the store, which is run on co-operative lines. If the station master is removed and the station is left

unattended, the storekeeper will lose custom because people will go either to Northam or to Goomalling. At present they are prepared to travel 10 miles to obtain mail and parcels delivered from the train at a station where there is someone in charge to look after their goods. When watchers are taken away from a siding it is surprising how soon the news becomes known to those who wander over the country picking up goods cheaply by unlawful means. If that particular siding no longer had anyone in charge of it, the store and the post office would close. The amount of money made available to the post office is not sufficient to induce any private house owner to be interested in it. The hotel would also be closed—though some would say that would be a blessing—and the Railway Department would lose in the long run because people would go in to Northam to pick up their goods or else bring them from Perth by car when they went to the city for the week-end. To close down a siding would thus be penny wise and pound foolish. I suggest that the Minister take notice of these facts because that is not the only siding affected.

Mr. Seward: It is happening all over the railway system.

Mr. WARNER: It would appear that when men enlist, the tendency is not to replace them. That is wrong and I sincerely trust something will be done to alter the position. Deputations could be arranged from different districts when the loss of station masters is threatened, but there would be little use in arranging such deputations if the department's mind is made up. Our desire is that the Secretary for Railways or the Commissioner should make full inquiries as to the amount of money that is received at a siding as a result of its being what might be called a protected siding, that is one having somebody in charge. If an inquiry of that kind is not made, the result will be that more sidings will be closed to the detriment not only of the towns, but also of the Railway Department, because an increasing number of motor cars will compete with the railways.

On motion by Mr. J. Hegney, debate adjourned.

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House adjourned at 9.19 p.m.