

of members a realisation of the need for a really definite tackling of a job that is not beyond us if we have courage, and I ask that during this session something will be done about a problem that is still in our midst.

On motion by Hon. H. V. Piesse, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 4.39 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 12th August, 1942.

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

QUESTIONS (4).

SHORTAGE OF BRAN.

Mr. McLARTY asked the Minister for Agriculture: What steps, if any, have been taken by the Department of Agriculture to overcome the shortage of bran in this State?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST (for the Minister for Agriculture) replied: Investigations by departmental officers are now in progress.

RAILWAYS.

Diesel Service to Ongerup.

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Has consideration been given to the request of the Gnowangerup and Tambellup Road Boards for a weekly Diesel electric service to Ongerup? 2, If so, has a decision been made? 3, If so, what is the decision and have the boards concerned been advised? 4, If the decision is against the request, what are the reasons?

The MINISTER replied: 1, Yes. 2, Yes. 3, The request was declined. The Gnowangerup Road Board has been advised and advice is being sent to the Tambellup Road Board. 4, A satisfactory service by Diesel-electric car is not practicable at commen-

surate cost; an improvement is being effected by an alteration in the steam train service on this branch.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT.

Medical Register Committee.

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Industrial Development: What are the names of members of the Medical Register Committee under the Workers' Compensation Act. Of these members—(a) Who are medical practitioners? (b) Who are nominated by the Governor?

The MINISTER replied: 1, The names are: Chairman, Mr. Justice Wolff; Members, Doctors Frank L. Gill and M. Kasner Moss, and Messrs. Wilfred L. Carter and Geoffrey F. Keating. (a) Doctors Frank L. Gill, and M. Kasner Moss. (b) Messrs. Wilfred L. Carter, and Geoffrey F. Keating.

NATIVE ADMINISTRATION ACT.

As to Carrolup Station.

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for the North-West: 1, Are male natives who are sent to Carrolup compelled to work when physically fit for work? 2, What classes of work are available? 3, If work is not compulsory in the cases mentioned, will he explain why?

The MINISTER replied: 1, Yes. 2, General farm work for male natives. Male and female natives are also required to do institutional duties. 3, Work is compulsory for all able-bodied natives.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fifth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. SEWARD (Pingelly) [2.20]: I desire first of all to express my regret at the absence of the Premier, and to voice the hope that he will shortly be restored to health. I am pleased to see the Minister for Works back in his place, and hope that he has fully recovered and will not experience any further illness. When we last met a few months ago we were confronted with a serious position in relation to the war. As a matter of fact, at each successive meeting of this Parliament for the last three years we have been faced with an increasingly serious situation, and it behoves every

man holding a responsible position to ask himself whether he is satisfied with the way the war is proceeding. If he is, he can rest contented. If he is not, obviously his duty is to probe into matters and ascertain whether there is any way by which he can improve the position, or whether he can point to any weaknesses the removal of which would not jeopardise the general position, but which, on the other hand, might materially help it.

There came into my possession a few days ago a copy of a circular which has apparently been sent round the State by a body called The Australia-Russia Relations Committee. I was not unaware of the establishment of such a body. Any association that is formed to promote good feeling between any of the Allies—Russia or any other country—will certainly receive my wholehearted support, for that is one of the best objectives we could have. At the same time, I draw attention to the contents of this circular which is addressed to trade unions, religious and sporting bodies, and all organisations. It is headed, "Open the Second Front Now," and it says—

The Australia-Russia Relations Committee (W.A.) joins in the world-wide call for a second front in Europe now. Notwithstanding the bravery of our men of Tobruk, Crete, Greece, New Guinea, etc., against tremendous odds; notwithstanding the heroism of British troops everywhere; it must be admitted that the Allied land forces (excepting the Russians) have hardly taken a trick!

Why? We just hadn't the tanks, the planes, the guns!

All that we had were the Old Leaders—old men with old school ties and old ideas. Then Germany woke up the Old Men—partially—and the rest of us completely.

Now the time has come for a mass demand for a second front in Europe to win the war now—not in the distant future.

The letter contains the names of various people prominently connected with the organisation. I do not intend to read those names because they are probably well-known, having had enough advertisement already. One thing I particularly notice is that there does not appear to be any military decoration after any of the names, so naturally I ask myself, "What are the qualifications of these people to enable them to come to the conclusion that now is the time to establish a second front in Europe?" What do these people know about the defences created along the European Front since Germany took possession of it? Surely the opening

of a second front is a question of military strategy, and only those highest in command in the Allied Armies can possibly determine such a matter!

The reason why I desire to give some publicity to this circular is that I assume the first thing our opponents within Australia—we have plenty of them—will do will be to cable the effect of the document to the world at large. Let us suppose that in the course of time those in charge of our high military strategy decide that the moment is not opportune to open a second front. The only effect such a document will have will be to create a feeling of discontent among our Allies, and that phase will be exploited to the limit by our enemies. Unfortunately documents of this description are accorded much greater publicity than that to which they are entitled. Fancy its going forth that Australia was demanding a second front, and yet the British High Command would not agree to the demand! That is the impression that will be foisted on people abroad by our enemies.

While I do not pretend to have any great knowledge of military strategy, my experience in the 1914-18 war makes me at least just as qualified as those people who have issued the circular letter, to form an opinion on military matters. In my view such a document should not have been circulated at such a time as this in the progress of the war. Had this body advocated increased support to Russia it would have had my wholehearted support. But for laymen such as those behind the movement, seeing that they have no knowledge of military strategy, to dare tell the British High Command that now is the time for a second front in Europe, seems to me to be sheer impertinence and likely to have an extremely dangerous effect on our war effort. If the suggestion of this body were adopted—I do not for one moment imagine the High Command will take any notice at all of such a communication—it might result in another Dunkirk with all the disastrous effects that implies.

Mr. Stubbs: Fools rush in where angels fear to tread!

Mr. SEWARD: The circular letter was sent to a body with which I am connected in my electorate with a request that support of the movement should be forthcoming. At first I advised that body to throw the communication into the wastepaper basket but on second thoughts I regarded it as of suf-

sufficient importance to warrant my placing its contents before the House, particularly in view of the opinion I have expressed that it is a document that should not be circulated at the present juncture.

Dealing now with the conduct of the war, I shall not discuss that phase as applying outside the boundaries of our own State. A session or two ago we passed the Civil Defence (Emergency Powers) Act, one of the objects of which was to establish the Civil Defence Council, the powers, functions and duties of which included the following:—

To formulate plans and measures for the protection and safety of the civil population of this State during the present state of war.

That was only one of the objectives, but I shall not refer to the remainder. I draw the attention of the House to that particular power vested in the Civil Defence Council. We remember what happened when Germany over-ran France. The French Army's movements were considerably impeded because the roads were blocked with fleeing refugees. When the Civil Defence (Emergency Powers) Act was under consideration in this Chamber I had in mind that the object was to make provision for the protection of the civil population if, unfortunately, Western Australia should be invaded. While we all fervently hope and pray that our country will not be invaded, only a fool would claim that such an attempt could not be made. Our bounden duty is to take measures for the protection of the civil population yet, to the best of my knowledge and belief, nothing whatever has been done in that direction outside the metropolitan area except, perhaps, at some large centres such as Kalgoorlie, Albany and a few main ports along the coast.

Members can easily visualise what could happen here if an attempted landing were made at some point along the coast between Perth and Geraldton or between Perth and Albany. In the latter event the whole of the South-West would immediately be put out of action from the standpoint of the movement of troops because the countryside would be subject to enemy fire. The whole of the Great Southern and the districts lying further inland would have to be available for movements by the Military Forces. It is therefore highly essential that arrangements should be made beforehand for moving the civil population away from those areas together with stores, petrol and so on,

all of which should be taken from the evacuated centres. Nothing has been done along those lines. Some time ago the Minister in charge of Civil Defence appointed country committees to assist the country representative on the Civil Defence Council, and I happen to be a member of that committee. That was done in March. We have had two meetings since then, and one was called on the day Parliament met. When I received my notice, I had to reply saying that on account of the meeting of Parliament I could not attend a committee meeting which had been fixed for 11 a.m. that day. Prior to that an excellent scheme of organisation, to be applied through the road boards, had been placed in my hands and I showed it to quite a number of people; yet nothing eventuated. I placed it before the defence committee with which I am associated, and typed copies were sent out to the members. So far nothing has been done. We have not even discussed the scheme. If we were attacked by the enemy now, Western Australia would be in just as great a muddle of confusion as France was when the Germans over-ran that country. That is the position. We cannot do anything more if the Minister will not take action, and all I can do is to ventilate the matter during the course of this debate. At any rate I know there is a desire to do something in at least one section of the community, but it is powerless to do anything by itself.

In the course of his recent instructive speech, the member for Guildford-Midland narrated to the House details regarding the progress of the manufacture of munitions in Western Australia. I accept the hon. member's account as correctly outlining the position, and I wish to place before members one instance brought under my notice. I think it was early in the present year that an inspection was made of motor garages in the country districts to ascertain whether any could be availed of for the manufacture of munitions. Quite a number of garages were inspected and for one reason or another some were not able to carry out the work desired. In the course of his travels, the inspector visited Pingelly and inspected the local garage. He declared it was suitable for the manufacture of certain types of munitions of war and arrangements were made to enable the man to turn out adjustable Bren-gun carrier pins. After he had

been performing the work for some time I visited the garage to see what he was doing. I asked him how things were going and if he was satisfied. He said that he was all right. I asked him how many pins he was turning out monthly and he told me he was manufacturing 60. I asked him if he could make any more and he replied, "I am working eight hours a day, but the trouble is I have only one lathe. If I could get another lathe, I could treble the output with the assistance of another man." In consequence of what the man told me I wrote to the Minister of Supply and Development at Canberra as follows:—

We have in Pingelly a well-equipped motor-garage, of which Mr. L. Watson is the owner and which impressed officials of the Munitions Department sufficiently to cause them to give the proprietor a contract for making "adjustable pins for Bren-gun carriers." This work has been carried on for the past month or so, the product being some 60 pins per month.

Talking with Mr. Watson recently, he stated that the Inspecting Officer told him that, if necessary, he could put in several additional lathes, as there is plenty of room in the garage to accommodate them. If that is so, why is it not done. Even with the available plant Mr. Watson assured me that with additional men he could easily treble his output. Only two men are working on the work at present, and thus the plant is in operation for only eight hours a day. With more men the whole 24 hours could be worked, and as before stated, at least three times, and probably more, "pins" turned out in the day.

In due course I received a reply to my letter. I do not know why the reply was addressed to the Hon. W. D. Johnson; however, eventually it reached me. It was from the private secretary to the Minister for Supply, and read—

On behalf of the Minister I desire to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 31st March, wherein you advise that there is a well equipped motor garage in Pingelly which is owned by Mr. L. Watson, and has been making adjustable pins for Bren-gun carriers.

This work comes under the control of Mr. Beasley's colleague, the Minister for Munitions, to whom your letter will be forwarded for attention and favour of advice direct to you.

That reply is dated the 21st April. On the 5th June I wrote to the Minister for Munitions as follows:—

On 31st March last I addressed a letter to your colleague, the Hon. Minister for Supply, stating that, with a little assistance, Mr. L. Watson, who is making "adjustable pins for Bren-gun carriers," could easily double his output.

A letter dated 21st April, from the secretary to the Minister for Supply was re-

ceived by me, in which it was stated that my letter had been passed on to you for attention, but no further advice has come to hand.

Talking to Mr. Watson today, he told me he is again held up through lack of steel supplies, thereby compelling him to employ the personnel engaged on the manufacture of the pins on any spare jobs he can find.

I would ask you to inquire into this matter with a view to having sufficient supplies of steel made available, and the increase in plant, as suggested in my letter of 31st March last, carried out.

Following that communication I received this response, dated the 12th June, from the Minister for Munitions to my letter of the 31st March:—

Your letter of the 31st March, 1942, to my colleague, the Minister for Supply and Development, has been handed to me, with reference to your representations on behalf of Mr. L. Watson, who has a garage in Pingelly. On account of the short supply of machine tools, it is not the policy of my department to permit additional equipment to be installed until existing plant is being operated for at least 16 hours a day. Further it would be necessary for Mr. Watson to be working on munitions of a higher priority than adjustable pins for Bren-gun carriers to get extra tools, even if he were working his plant 24 hours a day.

In the first place I did not ask the Minister for additional tools; I asked for an additional lathe so that the tools which the garage proprietor had in his possession could be utilised to the fullest extent. I wrote to the Minister pointing this out. Next I received a letter from him under date the 15th June, stating—

I have your letter of the 5th June further to your representations on behalf of Mr. L. Watson who was in touch with you regarding the manufacture of adjustable pins for Bren-gun carriers.

Inquiries are at present being made concerning the possibility of having Mr. Watson's plant increased, and the matter of supplies of steel is also being looked into. As soon as the necessary inquiries have been completed, I shall communicate with you again.

The result of communications extending from March to July was the sending of an officer to Pingelly to ask Mr. Watson if he could tell him where he could obtain another lathe. If that is the way the war is being conducted, as illustrated by this sending of an officer to Pingelly to ask where another lathe can be obtained, the position of affairs is not satisfactory. Surely it should be recorded in the Munitions Department where all the lathes that are not at war work may be found. Evidently it is a mere waste of

time to write to these officials with a view to speeding up our war effort.

Next I wish to refer to the question of manpower, as to the handling of which the member for Perth expressed himself perfectly satisfied. I am not at all satisfied with it. A case I desire particularly to deal with is that of a young fellow, the son of a farmer. I mentioned this case last session. It has been going on since last March. Briefly, the position is that a man and his wife have a farm near a town in my electorate, and their two sons felt they wanted to do something in the war and accordingly offered their services. One of the sons is now a flight-lieutenant abroad, and the other son is in a different branch of the service. In March last the father was suddenly taken ill; he had to enter hospital and undergo an operation. When that occurred, the mother applied to me to see if I could get the boy out of the Army. In those days it was necessary to apply to the Western Command and, application having been made, the boy was given leave to go to the farm and do the seeding. At the end of the period of leave the father had not recovered, and a doctor's certificate was furnished stating this, and application was made for an extension of the boy's leave. I took the matter up then with the 3rd Corps, the headquarters of which now entered the picture. The mother communicated with headquarters but could get no satisfaction. She asked me if I could help her. She saw the D.A.Q.M.G., who told her he would arrange the leave for her son; that she could go home and rest assured that it would be granted. It was in fact granted, and I received a letter stating that the lad would be given the extension necessary and that inquiries would be made with a view to testing the bona fides of the case; if the facts as stated were found to be correct, he would be transferred to area strength after the usual investigations had been made. That was on the 1st April.

The business dragged on. The leave was granted, and then in June I approached the authorities and sent on a letter from Mrs. Nicholls, the lady in the case, recording the fact that she had explained the conditions to the D.A.Q.M.G. The situation on the farm was still the same, and the services of the son were required. I therefore applied to the D.A.Q.M.G. for further leave, but received no reply. Accordingly I wrote

again, and received an answer stating that a further extension of leave to the 10th August would be granted if the results of another investigation into the case proved satisfactory. That reply is dated the 13th July. I notified Mrs. Nicholls that her son had been granted leave to the 10th August. Instead of my being notified of the position, so that if necessary the matter could be taken up with the manpower officer with a view to obtaining any additional leave necessary, the matter remained in abeyance, apparently. About the middle of May I wrote to the authorities asking what would be done. Further, I interviewed Mr. Stitfold on Thursday last in connection with the subject, and asked that a decision be arrived at before Monday morning. I arrived home on the Saturday, and Mrs. Nicholls then informed me that no further information had been received. The doctor's certificate was to the effect that the father could not do any farm work. Labour being unobtainable, it was therefore essential to have the son at home. Mrs. Nicholls wrote to me asking what she could do. Eventually I rang up the Military Headquarters. They raised the question whether the son was under Area Lines of Communication control or Corps Command. I informed Mrs. Nicholls of the promise which had been given me by the 3rd Corps that her son would be transferred to area strength. The officer had said, "I think the corps commander would deal with the matter." However, I could not get Corps Command, when I subsequently telephoned. It was then 12 o'clock and I simply told Mrs. Nicholls that I could not get Military Headquarters. I said, "All I can advise you to do is to tell the boy to stay on the farm and not go back to camp on Monday morning." I sent the D.A.Q.M.G. a telegram as follows:—

Gordon Nicholls of Marradong re whom I saw you last May, his leave expires Monday, unable get any decision re exemption, have told him remain at home unless otherwise instructed by you.

Those are the facts of the case. I daresay they could be duplicated.

Mr. Cross: The case is not finished yet.

Mr. SEWARD: No. He was due back in camp last Monday morning, but I told him not to return. If we cannot get these matters decided by the authorities, then someone has to do something. This unfortunate woman, in her letter to me, said she had been nearly driven out of her mind for the past

eight months. She had eight cows, and surely those animals should not be left in agony because the boy was not there to milk them. Yet we are told that the manpower position in this State is satisfactory.

Mr. Cross: It is pretty rotten.

Mr. SEWARD: I am not saying anything against Mr. Stitfold as a highly-placed civil servant. As such, I have the utmost confidence in him; he would not be occupying his position as Secretary to the Premier's Department if he were not fully qualified, but I say he knows nothing whatever about farming. If we are to obtain any satisfaction from this manpowering business, it should be placed in the hands of a man who has practical knowledge of farming. Mr. Stitfold has arranged to interview the Military Authorities every Wednesday morning with respect to manpower problems. If that is so, what is going to happen to a man who comes in on Thursday morning? Is his case to stand over till the following Wednesday? I received a reply from Mr. Stitfold on Monday morning, reading as follows:—

With reference to your call at this office, I have to advise that a recommendation has been made to Army for the release of G. Nicholls. I have no doubt this will be responded to by Army in due course.

Good Heavens! The boy had a month's leave. The authorities had a month in which to decide the question, but at the end of that time all we get is a note to the effect that the manpower authority has made a recommendation to the Army, and that the Army will make inquiries. I may state what happened with regard to that. As far back as April the authorities had said that if further inquiries established the bona fides of the case, the boy would be transferred to Army strength. When I rang up his mother about six weeks ago, I asked her, "Has the Army made any inquiries of you?" She replied, "No. The secretary of the road board rang up and told me that the Area Officer at Bunbury had rung him to get particulars of the farm." I had given the authorities everything they wanted to know. He could have got the secretary of the road board to telephone direct to Mr. Stitfold; but, no, it had to go to the Army. The Army writes to Bunbury. Bunbury is 100 miles from the farm and the intervening district is difficult, because there is no communication between Bunbury and Marra-

dong. An area officer is stationed at Narrogin and could easily have made the necessary inquiries. Bunbury rang up the road board, which told the officer what it knew of the case. How the devil can we carry on farming operations with any hope of success in such circumstances? There is at present a shortage of potatoes, and I see by this morning's paper that rice is no longer available. We are rapidly approaching the time when we shall have nothing left upon which to feed our people.

Mr. Watts: Except wheat and rabbits.

Mr. SEWARD: I have particulars of another case. It deals not with general farming, but with shearing. Some little time ago—at the beginning of July, I think, before the proposal to zone shearing was mooted—a young fellow came to me in Pingelly and I mentioned the question of shearing to him. He said, "I am all right. My brother is getting out of the Army to help me." I then asked, "Out of the Army?" He replied, "Yes." "Are you sure?" I asked, "because from the latest advices I have received I understand the Army is not releasing men for shearing." He then showed me a wire and I said, "I advise you to get confirmation." He wrote to his brother. The following week he said to me, "You are right. Leave is refused. Applications were granted, but the Army policy has been changed because the proposed zoning scheme fell through." I immediately wrote to the Deputy Director General of Manpower, on the 18th July, as follows:—

Some time back a young farmer of 2nd Section 55 A.A. Battery, Fremantle, applied for leave to undertake a shearing contract with his brother, but in keeping with military policy then his application was refused. The two brothers have a contract to shear 17,000 sheep, and the one started by himself last Tuesday. It would be quite impossible for him to do the contract single-handed, or even with a man who was a slow shearer, and of course he is getting behind in his plan every day he is left on his own. It is desired therefore to ask that you take up with the military the question of the immediate release of this man on his original application. He is in camp at Karakatta, I understand.

On the 31st July I wrote again to the Deputy Director General of Manpower drawing attention to the fact that I had not received a reply to my letter of the 18th, and asking whether something could not be done to hasten a decision, because at that date—the 31st July—this man was well over 1,000 sheep behind; and 17,000 is a

great number of sheep for two boys to shear, especially in the limited time at their disposal, because the shearing must not be extended too long into the spring, when grass seeds will be in evidence. This man at present has no hope of shearing the 17,000 sheep within the limited period, as his brother is not yet out of camp. The case has to go on to the Army authorities for further investigation and God knows when the brother will get out. That is the position with regard to manpowering. It is all very well to delude ourselves with the idea that everything is all right because some person has been appointed to do something. It is necessary to see that that person has the qualifications required to fill the position. With all due respect to Mr. Stitfold as a civil servant, I maintain that he is totally unfitted for the position of Deputy Director General of Manpower in this State. A practical man, who knows seasonal demands in this State, is required. Men have been released in June for seeding, when seeding should be finished. When we get to the haycutting season, probably the men will be released when the season is finished. Seasonal operations in Western Australia are particularly limited, and that applies to shearing. It is no use having a discussion once a week on these matters. What is required is to have a person in daily attendance. There are enough military officers wandering around the city to attend to matters of this kind.

The Minister for Mines: Too many.

Mr. SEWARD: Yes. I am sick of the amount of time that is being wasted. Young fellows of 24 or 25 years, with two pips, are flying between Perth and Melbourne. As if we had no telephone line or airmail! The military authorities must send an officer by plane to do some tiddly-winking job. That is what most Army officers seem to be occupied with at present. As a matter of fact, in my letter to Mr. Stitfold on Monday morning, I told him I regretted that the Standing Orders did not permit me to move the adjournment of the House, which I undoubtedly would have done yesterday, but that as the Address-in-reply was proceeding I intended to take advantage of it to ventilate this matter fully. I sincerely hope the Premier will take it up and try to arrive at some satisfactory arrangement.

I have another case here where leave had been refused previously. That is all right

if the man is not to be released, and I venture the opinion that in that case the decision was a correct one. Every soldier making application cannot be released. My sole desire is to get a rapid examination of cases in order to prove the bona fides of applicants and then to get an early decision on their merits.

The Minister for Mines: Mr. Stitfold is not a State employee now. He has been seconded to the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. SEWARD: Surely the Commonwealth authorities—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The Minister for Works: He is a State official made available to the Commonwealth authorities.

Mr. SEWARD: Surely the Commonwealth authorities do not say, "I want Jack Smith or Bill Jones or Mr. Stitfold."

The Minister for Mines: They had the courtesy to ask for Mr. Stitfold.

Mr. SEWARD: That is exactly what I thought. Surely the Government of this State is in a position to know the requirements of our industries. The Government could have pointed out to the Commonwealth authorities that Mr. Stitfold was a competent civil servant, but that someone else better qualified to deal with farming matters should be appointed.

The Minister for Mines: If the Commonwealth authorities say, "We prefer Mr. Stitfold" what then?

Mr. SEWARD: Did that happen?

The Minister for Mines: If they said that?

Mr. SEWARD: I ask the Minister, through you, Mr. Speaker, whether that is what happened when the Commonwealth authorities asked for Mr. Stitfold's services? Did the Government say, "No. We consider a more practical man should be appointed to the position and we recommend that you appoint someone else." And yet the Commonwealth insisted on Mr. Stitfold! Is that the position?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. SEWARD: In the absence of a reply, I can only assume that that is not so.

The Minister for Works: Have you a candidate for the job?

Mr. SEWARD: No! If I were asked to find one, I could find one in Perth or in the State who is better qualified to fill the

position, because of his experience of the difficulties of our farming industry.

Members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. SEWARD: I did not catch the remarks. I am not reflecting on Mr. Stitfold as a civil servant.

The Minister for Mines: We know that.

Mr. SEWARD: But he is not sufficiently experienced in farming matters to hold such a position.

Members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Pingelly will address the Chair and not take notice of interjections.

Mr. SEWARD: I was particularly struck the other day by the action taken in connection with the creation of a new job. I notice that the Commonwealth has decided to can vegetables in larger tins, and has therefore found it necessary to despatch a man to America to make inquiries. Have we not in America a man competent to do that work?

Mr. Hughes: We shall have a controller of tin cans.

Mr. SEWARD: Our unfortunate people are being asked to pay more taxes. Of course, when the military authorities get hold of money they spend it like water. It simply flows away. It has no value to them. Australia gets no value from it.

I shall now deal with the farming industry generally. As I indicated to the Minister for Lands when a deputation waited on him a few days ago, the position of that industry is becoming very serious and it behoves someone to take particular notice of it. I am aware that a few days ago the question of post-war reconstruction was raised. I can feel no enthusiasm for post-war reconstruction; if there is to be post-war reconstruction, men should not be encouraged to engage in farming activities. I would have no hesitation whatever in advising any returned soldier not to go on the land until such time as the Government gave him a reasonable guarantee that he would make a fair living for himself and his family and a margin of profit, which everyone else gets. Before we determine what the trouble in the farming industry is, we ought to find out the cause of it. Possibly my remarks this afternoon may refer more particularly to the districts with which I am closely in touch, the Central

Great Southern. I say without fear of contradiction that those districts are going back to an alarming extent and there are reasons for it.

One of the starting points of the retrogression of the farming industry was the fall in prices in 1931-32. The farmers found themselves in the position that they could not meet their obligations, and had to get assistance. Some received assistance from the moneys made available by the Commonwealth Government. Others went to the mortgagees, and while the debt in one case was removed it was added to the amount of a mortgage; so it still remained. It was not reduced much in the subsequent two years, and as a result, certain financial institutions decided to make a close inspection of the valuation of their securities in Western Australia, and appointed a man to do that job. I came to this State from Victoria, and when I came here and saw the fences and such-like I was surprised because it was different from what I had been accustomed to. When I saw the land I was more surprised because, generally speaking, it was lighter than that in the East. I was not here very long before I knew that to do any good in this country a man had to know the capabilities of the soil. That is equally true of the Great Southern district. I do not say that any one person in Western Australia knows the treatments for all the land in the State. I have had highly placed officers of the Agricultural Bank visit certain parts of the Great Southern and comment on the lack of feed, especially in wintertime. Undoubtedly there is a lack of feed in the wintertime, particularly if it is not cultivated.

The particular institution, to which I have referred, appointed a man, and he visited the Great Southern. He had not previously seen it. He was disappointed and made a second inspection. As a result of that second inspection he wrote down the values of some of these improved properties with wire-netted boundary fences, to 10s. an acre improved value. That completely revolutionised the financial institution's security value with the result that some banks are now closing in the Great Southern. In the last few weeks three banks have closed their branches in that district, and that will have a serious effect on it. It has meant that some of the people have already abandoned their farms. That

is one angle on the decline of the farming industry.

Just prior to the depression in 1931 a change was made in the State managership of one of the other banks. The man who was sent here was not only a stranger to this State, but also to Australia. He came from New Zealand. When he had been here a few years he decided that the bank managers who had previously been in charge of their institutions did not know their job, with the result that he went out and told his people that their valuations were too low. He said, "You have to raise your valuations," and he raised them in his own institution or caused his managers to do it, while he also told the other branches they should follow suit. He instructed them to get new business. They got new business all right, and put out a lot of money in this State. In two years' time they were calling that money up with the result that many farmers were forced off their holdings. There is another reason why farms have been abandoned.

Another cause is that many returned soldiers settled on farms at highly capitalised values after the last war. Many of these farms are today abandoned. If one goes through the country now he will find it practically bare of feed. That is because that land has not been turned over in recent years. It has to be turned over periodically to grow grass. In addition to that, we have rabbits. They are now becoming a plague throughout the country, and yet only in the last session the Commonwealth Government in its wisdom imposed an export duty on rabbit skins. It can impose a duty of up to 2s. 6d. a lb. At present it is 1s. 6d. a lb. The result is that now the trappers will not go out and trap, because the price of skins has been reduced from 84d. to 43d.

Mr. J. H. Smith: That applies only to the tops. The average is much less than 43d.

Mr. SEWARD: That is so. When that duty was placed on rabbit skins they had gone up to 120d. in Sydney, and the reason given for the duty was that the military people were paying too much for military hats. This is an important matter to our State because, unless the rabbit pest is stopped, further retrogression will take place in the farming industry.

That is the position of the industry today. Unfortunately the Minister for Lands is not present, but I do appeal to the Government

to take cognisance of what is going on because the economy of this State rests on the farming industry. The goldmining industry is quite a valuable asset, but when it comes to bedrock it is the farming industry on which the State stands. If it goes out or is seriously curtailed, then the economy of the State will be badly interfered with; in fact it is now!

I want to refer briefly to the Railway Department. The first thing I was struck with about the Railways was a "Gazette" notice which came out in June, and to which I will refer in a moment. We are well aware that travelling facilities have to be somewhat curtailed. The military authorities require the use of our railways to a greater extent than previously, and are entitled to it. As a consequence the public must expect some curtailment of travelling facilities. I was rather surprised to see, recently, that the wives of Federal Ministers and Federal members were to be given a high priority. The best example that anyone can give to others in the community is to set an example. The Federal Ministers might have set an example in that respect, by curtailing travelling in that way. However, it is the State's activities with which I am concerned. On the 12th June last a notice withdrawing travelling facilities granted to certain people was published. We all know that various bodies have been given travelling facilities by reason of regulations, but some of these facilities have been withdrawn.

For instance, applicants for land, requiring to attend the Land Board have been granted facilities to enable them to attend. Athletic bodies also receive concessions. Concessions were granted to blind people and their attendants. The concessions to the attendants have been withdrawn. Concessions were also made available to convalescent children and convalescent patients. They have been withdrawn. Other concessions, however, have not been withdrawn. For instance, the Goldfields Water Supply employee and his wife, his sons under 16 years of age and daughters solely dependent on him, have not had their concessions withdrawn. Similarly the tramway employee and his family retain their concessions, as also do members of the Police Force. When facilities are being withdrawn the Government might at least set the example to the public. It should not say, "We will continue these for our employees," and then

tell everybody else that they must do without them, especially the convalescents and blind people.

A few days ago I asked the Minister for Railways a question with regard to the refreshment facilities at Chidlow and Spencer's Brook railway stations. The reply I received was, "The inconvenience mentioned is not unusual at the present time owing to war conditions. The position is being closely watched but capital expenditure on additional facilities cannot be made available at present." Conditions are far from being usual. It is not usual that we should be at war at this time of the year. I certainly know from practical experience that it is most unusual for the railways to have the number of passengers travelling that are doing so at the present time. Conditions are unusual. In fact it is the unusualness of them that prompted me to ask my question and request that additional facilities be granted at these centres. If conditions are not unusual what is the necessity to watch the position? Yet the Minister says it is being watched. Then again he says the department has not the capital expenditure available to make these alterations. Well, take Chidlow station! It has a counter or table about 18 ft. long, both sides, or 36 ft. of counter space altogether. That has to accommodate not less than 150 people under black-out conditions. It is nothing less than a disgraceful scramble. Women and children have no hope of getting to the counter. About ten yards from the signal box is an enclosed space with a roof. What it is for I do not know; probably to house fruit-cases. If a counter were run around that building, and two shelves were attached to the wall of the signal box, it would more than double the counter space available, and the total expenditure would not be more than £10. People would then have a reasonable chance of being served with a cup of tea and something to eat. Yet, at a place where a yearly rental of £1,599 is received for the refreshment rooms, the Railways cannot spend £10.

The Minister for Works: Will you make that £10 a firm offer?

Mr. SEWARD: I am not an authority on it. The roof and supports are there. All that is needed is a counter and shelves. I will go to £15. Out of £1,599 a year, it should not be asking too much to request an expenditure of £15. That is the position

at Chidlow. At Spencer's Brook the conditions are considerably worse, because the counter there is not so large, and it is a junction station. People are coming in from the north and the south at the same time. It is a fairly long run down to the dog-box—it is nothing better than that. Yet when the people get there, they are served with a cup of tea in a paper or cardboard container. The tea is boiling hot and it is impossible to hold it and walk away from the counter to allow other people to be served. To extend that little bit of a dog-box to double its present capacity and so give people a reasonable chance to get a cup of tea, the Minister says would entail capital expenditure which cannot be spared. The whole thing could be done for £50, and the department receives a rental of £450 a year. People cannot be expected to travel on railways under these conditions.

The other night I was on the train and saw people sitting in a railway carriage at Chidlow, and I could not recognise the person sitting opposite because of the wretched light in the compartment. I wish that Mr. Ellis and Mr. Tomlinson could be put into one of these compartments and sent up to Wiluna and back two or three times, and have to fight at Chidlow and Spencer's Brook for something to eat. If they had to suffer these conditions, some consideration would be given to the travelling public. The Minister should not accept this eye-wash which is being put over him—that is all it is, to say they cannot afford £50 out of the £2,000 rental received for these tea-rooms.

I have another matter that I regret having to mention, and that is the question of natives. When the Bill was before the House a few sessions ago, I said that I could not see how it was going to prove successful. I do not know whether my experience is different from that in other centres but, judging by my own centre, the legislation is practically useless. For months past I have been able to go into the streets of Pingelly on any day of the week from Monday morning to Saturday night and find at least six able-bodied young natives ranging from 12 to 22 years of age, and a fair number of girls wandering aimlessly about or leaning against posts. I said to the Deputy Protector, "What are these fellows doing loafing about the place? Cannot they get work?" There is work in quantity all through the

country, and yet these young fellows up to 22 years of age are wandering about the streets doing nothing. The Deputy Protector replied, "There must be someone sick in the hospital." What a reply! A man came to me the other day and said that he had employed natives on charcoal burning but that they stayed for only two or three days and then buzzed off. I sent that information to the Liquid Fuel Board and received a communication from Mr. Bray regarding my statements about the natives at Pingelly. I said to him, "If you do not believe me, go down any day in the week and you will see those young fellows wandering about doing nothing." If we are going to bring up the natives in that way, we might as well leave them alone.

I was particularly struck by an interjection made by the Minister for Social Services in the Commonwealth Parliament, Mr. Holloway. The House was discussing invalid and old-age pensions and Mr. Marwick, in the course of his speech, stated that since the introduction of child endowment, it was almost impossible to get the natives in Western Australia to work. I do not think anybody can dispute the accuracy of that statement. The Minister interjected, "Endowment has been paid in respect of very few children of half-castes who are not inmates of some institution." Did one ever hear such rot! The Deputy Protector in my district came to me and said, "See this girl. She has a cheque for £30. These natives are buying a few dresses for themselves, but the children have nothing warm on them." A man came to me the other night and told me that he had been to the outskirts of Pingelly where the natives were camped and had seen a ring of them tossing pennies. I appeal to the Minister to take this matter up. This sort of thing is degrading to those people. In confirmation of my statements, I have a letter from the secretary of the Pingelly Sub-Branch of the R.S.L. which was sent to the head office. It states—

At the annual meeting of the above sub-branch, concern was expressed at the greatly increased number of natives of military age who are seen daily around the district, and this sub-branch urges that something should be done to utilise their services in some way at the present time, especially as practically all men of military age are being called up.

I appeal to the Minister to take the matter up with a view to seeing that the services

of these men are made available. I do not want to see them placed in an institution; there has been too much of that. There is work to be done on the farms at the present time.

I was surprised to learn this morning that a national security regulation had been issued stipulating that all cream suppliers in the State must send their cream to the nearest factory. Members will recall that during last session I moved for the appointment of a select committee to inquire into the dairying industry with a view to ascertaining what influences were at work under which many cream suppliers were sending their cream to a factory 200 miles distant and past several factories en route. People do not do that sort of thing simply for the sake of doing it. There must be a reason. I pressed for an inquiry into the industry with a view to rectifying that state of affairs. The Minister for Agriculture, however, assured us that everything was right in the industry and advised the House not to agree to the motion. If everything is right in the industry, I want to know what advice the Government of this State tendered to the Commonwealth Government before it promulgated the regulation.

Since I was given that information this morning, on what I thought was good authority, I have made inquiries and have learnt that no such regulation has been issued, although I have been told that tentative inquiries have been made with a view to having something of the kind done. It is about time we called a halt to this continued surrender of power by the State Government. We have a Government in office in this State and we expect it to exercise some of its powers. If the Commonwealth Government is going to tell our farmers that they must send their cream to the nearest factory, irrespective of the fact that they might receive 1d. or 1½d. more for it at another factory, the farmers are entitled to be informed why the State Government has given that advice. If the State Government believes that this step should be taken, why does it not take action? If it thinks that it should not be done, I hope the strongest possible representations will be made to the Commonwealth Government to ensure that it is not done without due inquiry into the matter. Due inquiry has not been made. The Minister for Agriculture assured us that everything

was right in the industry and there was no necessity for an inquiry.

The Minister for Works: Where is that occurring?

Mr. SEWARD: Cream is being sent from the south of the State to Fremantle past a dozen factories. I do not say that farmers should not do this. They get a better price for it at Fremantle.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Because there is no second-grade cream amongst it.

Mr. SEWARD: There should be an inquiry to ascertain why this is being done. Either the people in the south of the State are not paying the proper price or someone else is paying more than the proper price. I hope the Government will see that such a regulation is not issued before due inquiry has been made and the whole of the facts have been properly investigated. It would simply mean that some farmers would be mulcted to the extent of 1d. per lb. or so for their butter-fat.

I cannot conclude my remarks without referring to what I consider was an unfortunate speech delivered by the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe last week. I was more than surprised at it because, when the hon. member speaks, I always pay the greatest attention to his utterances. He does not speak on matters with which he is not conversant. His remarks regarding the differentiation between the ranks in the Army I endorse heartily. There should be no such differentiation. There was not any differentiation during the 1914-1918 war.

The Minister for Mines: What? There were places for officers only.

Mr. SEWARD: I am referring to punishment. The Minister knew it as Bulford. When a member of the Forces in 1914-18 was unfortunate enough to contract venereal disease, he was sent to a special camp and his pay was stopped. I agree with the remarks of the hon. member that there should be no distinctions in this respect. But the hon. member took those responsible for the formation of the vice squad to task because they are endeavouring to clear the State of this disease. There was a most distressing case, a girl of 17, married, and too drunk to get home. We cannot allow that sort of thing to continue. Are we to tolerate anything that has a tendency to reduce the human race to animals or to give unbridled rein to the passions? Returned soldiers do not talk about all the things they saw

while they were away at the other war. I saw things in other countries that I pray will never come to this country, but we do not advertise those things. These unfortunate happenings seem inevitably to follow an army. This can be read right through history. The consequence is that when armies are coming here, those things seem to follow in their train. But the hon. member suggested that the vice squad should not go to the other extreme. I regret his remarks and dissociate myself from them. I do not envy the magistrates their duty. They have a most unenviable task to perform in dealing with these unfortunate people, and I agree that the penalty should not be inflicted on the unfortunate woman alone. The man should be made to pay, too. However, I hope and trust that the magistrates and vice squad will do their utmost to preserve the morality and health of the people in this country, and prevent the contamination that will undoubtedly occur unless wise steps are taken to meet the conditions prevailing in the last few months.

MR. PATRICK (Greenough): We are living in rather difficult times as far as State Parliaments are concerned; in fact, our authority has been so greatly diminished that it seems to me there is very little we can do except in one connection, and that is the war effort. So I take it that the main purpose of this Parliament should be to ensure that we in Western Australia play a maximum part towards the winning of the war. This has been preached in some of the speeches made by members on the Government side. There is also the question of maintaining the morale of every section of the community. When the Minister for Social Services was introducing legislation in the Commonwealth Parliament for the extension of social services he said that one of the main objects was to improve the morale of the people so as to keep it high during the war. This is one of the reasons why I and other members feel so concerned about the position of the farming industry. The member for Pingelly briefly referred to it this afternoon and I propose to mention it as I have done on previous occasions. Undoubtedly this is a matter of very great concern. There was a time when the member for Boulder twitted us to the effect that there were more wheat-growers on his side of the House than there

were on the opposite side. I do not think that state or affairs obtains today.

The Minister for Mines: They have more sense.

Mr. PATRICK: That may be so; I think most of them have got out of the industry.

The Minister for Mines: They were forced out.

Mr. PATRICK: They realised that it was not too promising and got out. Still, those members should still be in a position to give sympathetic consideration to the industry. I believe one or two members on the Government side are still engaged in the industry. One of the facts that the Government and the financial institutions have refused to recognise is the over-capitalisation of the properties. I have pointed this out on numerous occasions. The debt structure on the farming industry was built up during a period of great prosperity. It was built up during a period of ten years from 1921 to 1930, when farmers averaged over 5s. a bushel for their wheat at the siding. In the next two years it averaged 2s. 10½d., and has been at a low price since. On the other hand, costs have enormously increased. Today the farmer is endeavouring to carry on with a debt structure built up on very high prices at a time when prices are at a low level and costs have increased. Today he cannot carry on his industry and maintain a reasonable standard of living. So serious has the position become that farmers are still walking off their holdings. Last session I gave two instances of what I termed "farmers dropping their bundles." Even those who were good farmers and were in a fair position were leaving the land. I received a letter from a farmer in my district rather taking exception to my expression. He is a solid farmer, and his people have been farmers for generations in the Old Country. He is not likely to walk off his property, although members may think so when they hear his letter to me. It is as follows:—

I read with interest your remarks on the farmer "dropping his bundle."

Now have you got the idea correctly? Is it a case of dropping the bundle, or a case of courageously dropping futile effort, to live for yourself and family a few remaining years in complete knowledge that if you do work you will receive a reward, be it ever so small.

Gosh, if only we farmers had the courage to blow up years ago, this State would be a poor old place now; but when the land is in one's blood we like damn fools stick it. He may be

the most ingenious, the most resourceful, the most industrious and enterprising man that ever wore patched dungarees; but all his wisdom, all his foresight, all his energy and toil may be rendered fruitless by a dry season, or a too hot, or too cold season, in which nature takes a delight to chasten we sons of men.

I say will we ever be granted a fair go.

I think your best plan in the House is to adopt a slogan: "Go off the land old men, now your sons have sense enough to leave you."

No Bill I still think your phrase, "dropping the bundle," is wrong.

What about trying mine, "Dropping futile effort for a crumb from the town table."

I read that letter to show what is in the mind of a man who is a solid farmer and who, I know, does not intend to walk off his property. The letter indicates what is in the minds of a number of farmers, and also shows the position in which they find themselves today. If we wish to raise the morale of every section of the community, one of our endeavours should be to raise the morale of this section. This is a time when we might expect them to receive a little more sympathetic treatment. Possibly because there is now a new broom in the Lands Department, notices have within the last few months been issued threatening that, if people do not pay their land rents, their properties will be forfeited.

Mr. Berry: It is more than a threat.

Mr. PATRICK: The Taxation Department has also taken the step of bringing up a number of old land tax claims. There has been no land tax on farming land in Western Australia since 1930, but some enterprising officials have been sending out old land tax notices and threats, when some of those claims are 12 years old. The trouble today is that essential labour for farming work is no longer available. Old men are trying to carry on their properties and meet all these extra obligations. Different members have spoken about the bungling that has taken place in connection with manpower. What strikes me is that, now the mischief has been done, all sorts of orders are being issued that no more men are to be called away from farms. I have here a statement made by the Minister for the Army the other day, when he said—

Military training of men engaged full time in production of the following primary products has been deferred pending thorough examination of the manpower position in all rural industries—meat, wheat, vegetables, including potatoes, wool, dairy produce, pigmeat, sugar, fruit, rice, tobacco, cotton, honey and

eggs. Military training of men who are working principals, bona fide managing their businesses, engaged in the above primary industries and who have been so engaged for at least two years also have been deferred. Military training of personnel registered in a seasonal rural labour register has been similarly deferred while they are engaged fully in the real work of the same primary products.

An order of that kind is too late now. Men have already walked off their farms. It is absurd to talk about manpower for farms if the properties have been abandoned. The difficulty is to get men back to the farms once they have left. Different methods should have been adopted.

The Minister for Mines: The difficulty is to get men out, even when released.

Mr. PATRICK: A report in the Press a month ago showed that the United States has allotted men to each industry. Something like 10,000,000 men have been told they must remain in the farming industry, and so many million other men have been allotted to the manufacture of munitions. In this State, a lot of men have been called up, and efforts are now being made to get them out of the Army. The annoying thing is that many of those who have been called up find there is no work for them in the Army. They are now doing work which is practically of no consequence, whereas they have left work that is undoubtedly essential. The Minister for Mines interjected just now that it is difficult to get men out of the Army.

The Minister for Mines: Some of them do not want to go out.

Mr. PATRICK: If they do want to leave, it is difficult to get them out. The Leader of the Opposition said the other day that the position had improved greatly, and that these cases were being more sympathetically dealt with by Army officials. So far as I can see, a lot of red-tape remains. The day after Parliament was called together, the Minister for the Army, Mr. Forde, issued instructions in connection with the matter as follows:—

In this connection the Director-General had instructed that when rural employees applied for personnel to help in production of the primary products mentioned national service officers would first try to supply the necessary labour from the seasonal register of rural workers maintained in each area.

I do not know where the seasonal register of rural workers is kept.

When the officer was satisfied that an application was valid but was unable thus to supply

labour he would recommend release of a serving soldier only after verification of the actual need of the labour. If the Deputy Manpower Director General in the State concerned could not supply labour from seasonal registers in the other areas he would send the necessary recommendation to the Army.

There is a lot of rigmarole about what happens after the Army receives a recommendation to the effect that personnel will be released subject to the following conditions:—

On receiving such recommendation the Army would release serving personnel subject to these conditions—personnel must have completed 3 months' army training with their unit; they must apply for leave without pay; officers, N.C.O.s. and specialists would not be granted leave; travelling costs would not be a charge against the Army; leave granted could be cancelled at any time and personnel must be able to rejoin units within 24 hours of receipt of recall notice; granting of such leave could be suspended when the military situation so demanded.

It seems to me that the position has not greatly improved. To give an illustration of the difficulties confronting farmers, I have in mind a man who was a returned soldier from the last war. He was certified by doctors as being unable to do hard work. His two sons, aged 18 and 19, were both called up. He went with them to see them examined. The board assured him that if he wanted to get one of his sons out of the Army, no difficulty would be experienced. He was told that the lads could be worked on the roster system, one being out while the other remained in. The father was quite willing that this arrangement should be made, because he wished to have his sons trained. When seeding time arrived, he wanted one of his sons released. He has 1,200 sheep, and had a license to grow 500 acres of wheat. He also had a mile or two of fencing to re-erect because it had been washed away, and he had no labour with which to do the work. Long after seeding time, he was still negotiating with the Army, and I believe the negotiations have extended over a period of three months. How he got on eventually I do not know, but he did not get the boys out during seeding time. The farmer said he did not mind whether he put in the 500 acres of wheat or not, but that he could not do the work himself. As it was, however, he had to meet certain financial obligations, interest, etc., and unless he put in the 500 acres of wheat, he could not finance himself. I do not suppose the finan-

cial institution concerned in his affairs would relax any demand that it might make upon him if he failed to put in his crop. Members will see the impossible position in which farmers are finding themselves.

The Leader of the Opposition referred to the greater sympathy being shown by officials. One cannot induce the officials to realise the urgency of these matters and the urgent necessity for men being released at once if they are to be of any use. In the United Kingdom and in the United States, food production plays a part of first importance in the war, and that is something which local officials should realise. Another matter which provides food for thought is the manner in which the Federal authorities are using the war as a means of destroying the Federal system of government, and the manner in which they are avoiding democratic methods such as are provided in the Constitution, in order to usurp these extra powers. As members, we protested against uniform taxation. We have been told that a time limit has been fixed for this scheme. I recently read some remarks made in a speech by the Minister for Social Services in Adelaide while this legislation was going through. The Minister said—

The Commonwealth Government would be able to grant even greater social benefits in the future now that uniform taxation has been adopted.

He does not seem to think the new proposal will terminate a year after the war, but looks upon it as being absolutely permanent. When the Leader of the Opposition was speaking on that point, the member for Boulder said that coercive measures were used in connection with the Financial Agreement, and that the States could do nothing but accept the proposals of the Commonwealth. If that is so, such methods can be employed for other purposes. They can be used to evade the adoption of the correct procedure when it comes to a question of altering the Commonwealth Constitution. If it was difficult to get something altered, the Federal authorities could say to the State Governments, "If you do not surrender these powers, as State Parliaments can do, we will dock your money." The member for Perth said that in his opinion unification really started from the date of the Financial Agreement. I do not agree. It is absolute nonsense. As a matter of fact the seeds of unification were im-

planted in the Federal Constitution itself and there is no doubt that was why Mr. Deakin made that speech in 1902, only two years after the Constitution was established, in which he said that the State's finances were at the mercy of the Commonwealth.

The seeds of unification were implanted in the Federal Constitution itself largely owing to the action adopted at a meeting of State Premiers. There were three conventions which established the original Constitution and, except in the case of Western Australia, the members attending those conventions were elected by popular vote. In the draft convention which first went to a referendum in Australia the States were to receive 75 per cent. of the customs duties for all time. Under our experience of referendums it is very unlikely that that provision would ever have been removed, but unfortunately New South Wales laid down a stated majority under which that could be carried, and did not secure it. When things were at a deadlock Sir George Reid called a meeting of State Premiers who amended the Constitution as drawn up by the convention. They amended it in two particulars. One was that New South Wales was to have the Federal capital, but the most important was that the States were to have 75 per cent. of the customs duties for 10 years. To my mind that was what finally determined the financial subjection of the States to the Commonwealth. At the end of the ten-year period we were entirely in the hands of the Commonwealth. The clause as it stood read "For a period of ten years or until this Parliament otherwise provides." I think it was the Deakin Government that offered the States 25s. per head of population in place of the 75 per cent. of the customs duties.

Hon. N. Keenan: It was Sir John Forrest.

Mr. PATRICK: It was the Deakin Government. The party with which the member for Perth is associated strongly opposed the 25s. per head for the States. I have quoted the hon. member before and will do so again from memory. He said at the time the inclusion of this provision in the Constitution was opposed that if the 25s. per head found a place in the Constitution, the time might come when the Federal Parliament would not have sufficient funds to be able to carry out what it wanted to carry out. As we know, that proposal went to a referendum and was turned down. As I

have stated, the party with which the hon. member is associated took the platform and strongly opposed the provision being inserted in the Constitution.

The Minister for Mines: They were very young in those days!

Mr. PATRICK: Sir George Pearce was then a shining light of the Labour Party. He came to Western Australia and said, "If you reject this proposal we will bring down a Bill providing for that 25s. per capita for 25 years." However the Fisher Government came into office and introduced the Bill making provision for this payment not for 25 years but for 10 years. At the end of that period the position was the same as if the words "until Parliament otherwise provides" had been included. That was when the acid test was put on the States with regard to their finances. It is no use saying that the Financial Agreement started the move towards unification.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Undoubtedly the 1928 agreement was the foundation of Federal encroachment.

Mr. PATRICK: Nothing of the kind! The power to encroach always existed. It was a clause in the Constitution which was carried on after the period of 10 years during which a payment of 25s. per head was made. The Commonwealth Government has the power not to provide anything at all. It could say, "Take this or you will get nothing."

Mr. Needham: Why was that agreement placed in the Constitution?

Mr. PATRICK: Because at the same time as this bargain was made with the States the Federal authorities also wanted to try to draw up a scheme regarding State debts and in conjunction with the Loan Council attempt to control borrowing in Australia. But apart from that agreement, as the hon. member knows, the Commonwealth Government had absolute control of the purse long before that.

Mr. Needham: Did not the States put their necks in the halter at that time?

Mr. PATRICK: As the member for Boulder said, what alternative did they have? It was that or nothing. He interjected that we were coerced into agreeing. The States have no alternative today any more than they had then. The position is that the Federal authorities may use that power of coercion to endeavour to secure further amendments of the Constitution.

There is no doubt that today Federal members are using war necessities to advance unification, and are ignoring the fact that there has always been a definite trend of opinion in Australia against granting additional powers to the Commonwealth Parliament. Consider the questions that have been submitted to a referendum. On 15 occasions out of 18 the Federal proposals have been rejected.

The Minister for Works: They do not refer matters to the people now but to the Federal High Court.

Mr. PATRICK: They do not need to, because they have the power to coerce the States into giving them whatever they want. Take the questions of trade and commerce without limitation and nationalisation of monopolies, which have been submitted to the people on three occasions! The extraordinary thing is that Western Australia, which is known as a secessionist State, was the only State on the first occasion that voted in favour of the proposals. On the second occasion those in favour were Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia, and on the third occasion, Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia. This State was always in favour of giving away powers, when the matter was put to the vote, though the majority of people in Australia and the majority of the States were against the idea. As recently as 1937 a referendum was held on the matter of control of aviation and marketing control. Even a question like Federal control of aviation was defeated by four States to two and by a majority of 300,000 votes. On that occasion, Western Australia voted against the idea. Although it seemed reasonable to hand over to the Federal authorities the control of aviation, the Federal authorities had to come to the State Parliaments and get them to surrender that power.

The Minister for Works: Which was the right thing to do!

Mr. PATRICK: Yes. Take the question of marketing control! They wanted powers of trade and commerce without limitation. That is pretty wide in scope and covers anything under the sun. The Commonwealth Government later sought power only in regard to marketing. That was why I was rather surprised that members opposite should oppose the proposal, because their party had always wanted absolute control of trade and commerce without limitation.

Despite that, the Labour Party, except in Queensland, opposed the Federal control of marketing. It was defeated by a million votes, and by every State in the Commonwealth. In Queensland, in spite of the fact that both parties went on the platform—both Mr. Forgan Smith's party and the Opposition party—and advocated Federal control, it was defeated by over 100,000 votes. We cannot always tell what the people will do. They do not always follow their leaders. Every day additional powers are being given to the Commonwealth, which is using the excuse of war necessities to seek such powers. The Federal leaders are not exactly following the wishes of the Australian people in regard to marketing. If the present wheat stabilisation and other schemes are to be continued as they should be it will be again necessary for the Commonwealth Government to go to the State Governments and ask them to surrender their powers, because what is being done today is being done only under war conditions and can be continued for only twelve months after the war.

The people are wise in objecting to Federal control, because it is not possible to govern a large place like Australia from Canberra. I was interested in a statement in "The West Australian" a few days ago by an English economist, Sir William Beveridge, in which he said—

National planning does not mean the administration of everything from Whitehall. One essential of a good plan is devolution, regional and industrial.

Yet Great Britain is a small compact country. How much more necessary is such a system in a large place like the Commonwealth of Australia! Under existing party conditions it is possible for one State to rule the Commonwealth. At present New South Wales—the State where unification seems very popular—has the strongest hold. In regard to uniform taxation, the member for Perth said that one party could not criticise the other, because both parties supported it.

Mr. Needham: All parties! I did not say that; I quoted.

Mr. PATRICK: I take it that the hon. member approved. However, that statement is not exactly correct, because in one instance the party supported it 100 per cent. as a party measure, and in the other case it was a non-party question and the

members could vote as they liked. The result was that the proposal was carried by a fairly large majority. If both parties had been free to vote as they liked, it may not have been carried at all.

Mr. Needham: That does not get away from the fact that all parties agreed.

Mr. PATRICK: All parties did not agree. In one instance the whole of the party agreed with it and in another the minority of the party voted for it, and perhaps that minority in the party that supported it may not have been greater than the minority in the Labour Party that opposed it, but had to vote for it.

Mr. Needham: H. K. Watson said that all parties agreed.

Mr. PATRICK: All the Labour members for Queensland in the House of Representatives who were not in the Government opposed the Bill when speaking on it, but voted for it. That affords an indication that if the matter had been dealt with on non-party lines, the result might have been different.

Mr. Needham: The vote is the determining factor.

Mr. PATRICK: Yes, and in one instance it was on a strictly party basis whereas in the other it was on a non-party basis.

The Minister for Works: Fadden gave them wrong ideas.

Mr. PATRICK: I think the Fadden scheme was much better than the one finally agreed upon.

The Minister for Works: It was just as objectionable to the States.

Mr. PATRICK: Not to Victoria.

The Minister for Works: South Australia was the only State that favoured the Fadden scheme.

Mr. PATRICK: That is so, but the Fadden scheme embodied some features that were not quite so objectionable to the lightly-taxed States as the scheme I refer to. This is a New South Wales measure. As a matter of fact, the present Commonwealth Government is ruled from New South Wales under our present party system, because on a block vote at the last Federal election New South Wales was the only State that provided the present Government with a majority. In all other States the Opposition recorded the greatest number of votes. That applied particularly to the Senate election. Labour members from New South Wales, with the assistance

of one or two from other States, can dominate the Labour caucus.

Mr. Needham: But that does not apply in the Federal Parliament.

Mr. PATRICK: They need only dominate the Party that governs the country by exercising their block vote with the addition of one or two members.

The Minister for Works: You know New South Wales has a large proportion of the population of Australia—about 3,000,000 people.

Mr. PATRICK: That is a big factor. Getting away from that subject, I was pleased to see the member for Guildford-Midland come out into the open and make his informative speech on our war activities. To my mind there is no reason for the hush-hush policy of which we have had so much indication during the course of the war.

Mr. Marshall: There is much more said about the war in the House of Commons than elsewhere.

Mr. PATRICK: Yes. In Great Britain and the United States of America criticism of the war effort is indulged in to an extent that if embarked upon here,—

Mr. Marshall: We would be shot.

Mr. PATRICK: The same applies to the Press in those countries. In the United States and Great Britain as well, criticisms of the work of the Navy, Army, and Air Force are freely published in the Press. Even such an ultra-conservative paper as the Edinburgh "Scotsman" said that there was "too much hot air from the Government and not enough action." I regard it as rather a foolish policy for a Federal Minister to visit this State and, as the member for Guildford-Midland said, try to bluff the people, for that sort of thing tends to throw doubt upon all Ministerial statements. We know that Minister's statements were not correct regarding the operations of the munition works in Western Australia, and in those circumstances how can we know whether his assertions regarding activities in other States are not equally inaccurate? It would be better in the national interests for the Commonwealth Government, if it cannot do certain work, to be honest and say so.

As a matter of fact, I regard what has been done in this State as a "token gesture." I take that term from what was done by nations after the 1914-18 war when, as they

could not liquidate their total indebtedness, as an indication that they desired to do so, they paid small amounts that were known as "token payments." As the Commonwealth Government did not intend to do very much here in connection with the manufacture of munitions, it spent some money in erecting buildings and turning out a few lines as a token gesture to delude the people. The time is overdue for Western Australians to speak up for their rights. What will be our position if the war should terminate soon? Our goldmining industry is partially wrecked. Our wheat production is severely restricted. As a compensating factor we have no permanent secondary industries established in our midst. Members can realise how seriously we shall be situated after the war is over, and what added responsibilities the Government will have to face with our primary production so restricted and no permanent secondary industries to aid in the solution of our difficulties. Let members consider the position of goldmining! I agree with what the member for Perth said when he asserted that he did not consider there was any necessity for the Commonwealth Government to take action against the industry. Yet another member—I want to know why he did so—thanked the Commonwealth Government for assisting the industry, an industry that has been partially wrecked.

Mr. Doney: Who was that?

Mr. PATRICK: That was the member for Bunbury during the course of the present debate. Why should these cranks be allowed to exploit their theories at our expense? The Minister responsible now says that if gold were of any value after the war he would leave the industry in a position to carry on. If it is of no value why should he even do that? I noticed from a report in the Press recently that the Minister intended going a long way further than he actually did. Mr. Hogan, the Minister for Mines in Victoria, said that the original intention was to close down the goldmining industry completely.

The Minister for Mines: That was the original intention.

Mr. PATRICK: The expert advisers of the Commonwealth Government met a month or two ago and decided that, with the labour available, it would be possible to shear only two-thirds of the sheep in Australia and therefore it would not be necessary to

shear the other third! Reverting to the position of the goldmining industry I was pleased to hear the remarks of the member for Brownhill-Ivanhoe that the continued use of gold was indeed valuable in connection with our war effort. In "The West-Australian" recently the following appeared:—

The continued use of gold as valuable to the war effort, more especially to pay for essential imports not governed by lease-lend or financial arrangements with Canada, was emphasised by Sir Kingsley Wood, the British Chancellor of the Exchequer in the House of Commons recently. He said gold was a "very advantageous export."

Evidently in Britain the Government has very different ideas on this question from those held by the governing authorities in Australia. The extract from "The West Australian" continued—

Commenting in a leading article on the Chancellor's statement the "Financial Times" said:—"There is nothing to suggest that gold will not be a product of primary world importance when peace is restored, for the multi-lateral trade relations envisaged in the Atlantic Charter must call for a universally acceptable currency link. Gold has always supplied that link in the past and there is every probability that it will be wanted in larger quantities in the future . . .

About the same time the South African Minister for Mines (Mr. Stallard) told an interviewer that gold was the basis of South African war effort. It was, he added, South Africa's economic life blood and therefore in the first rank of key industries.

A financial paper published in Australia made this comment:—

Apparently South Africa considers goldmining an essential industry in war time, in its dependence on goldmining the economic position of the Union as a whole being rather like that of Westralia as a State. New mines are being opened up, plants are being enlarged and efforts are being made to step up production all round.

That is the position in South Africa. Here we have only narrowly escaped the closing of the industry altogether. The position in relation to the goldmining industry presents quite a different problem from that of transferring workers from one industry to another as has been done in the capital cities throughout the Eastern States. It is all right to transfer workers from a non-essential industry to another of greater importance in connection with the war effort, seeing that those men will still be working in the same city and are not being transported to another State. In Western Australia, in

partially closing down the mining industry the Commonwealth Government is completely wiping out whole districts and townships. The only recompense we are to receive is an advance of £100,000 a year to keep some mines going.

I think members will agree that it would require £1,000,000 or £2,000,000 to recompense this State for the loss of the important goldmining districts and the losses incurred by workers formerly employed in the industry. What about the houses and furniture that the workers had to leave behind? In this instance Western Australia has had a very raw deal. It could be said with safety that had the goldmining industry bulked so large in the economy of New South Wales as it does in our economy there would have been no reduction in the industry whatever. We are told that the Commonwealth Government has taken men from the mines because their services are required. Yet we had one instance only the other day of men having been taken from industry and the authorities did not know what to do with them! Those men have been placed on work that is quite unessential. Recently the Minister for Mines in Victoria indulged in a gibe against the same Commonwealth Minister, when he discussed the relationship of whisky to goldmining and wanted to know if the Minister had done anything to remove men from a non-essential industry such as whisky-making and place them in goldmines. That is a fair question because according to a report that appeared in "The West Australian" last week the United States of America had decided to discontinue the distillation of spirits until the end of the war. Evidently the American Government does not consider whisky important in relation to its war effort.

Take the position regarding the restriction upon wheatgrowing which applies only to Western Australian production. As I pointed out last session that action was taken in absolute defiance of the Commonwealth Constitution which provides against discrimination as between the States. If the necessity arose for the restriction of wheat production why not apply a 10 per cent. restriction all round and not levy it in Western Australia alone? If this action is purely a war measure why not restrict local consumption in the other wheatgrowing States, where large industrial expansion has

taken place, and allow Western Australia to continue her activities? Why could not Western Australia alone have been allowed to build up export stocks and thus be compensated? Then again in connection with the provision of power-alcohol plants, Western Australia has been handed out another token gesture. The member for Collie remarked that two men were employed on power-alcohol distillation. We have been told that the plant in New South Wales will be in full production very soon. There is another important point regarding the wheat position. It is to be subject to an international agreement which means that the State quota for wheat will be fixed by the Commonwealth Government. How is Western Australia likely to fare in that event? To judge by our experience, it will fare pretty badly. Of course we are told that there was reason for restricting wheat in this State, which could not store it successfully. The idea originated mostly from the report of two experts. One was a very decent chap named Wilson, a member of the Federal Parliament, and another was the well-meaning Senator Clothier, who, I feel certain, before he went into the country did not know the difference between a weevil and a grasshopper. However, those two gentlemen declared that the wheat industry of Western Australia was in a very bad way and that Western Australian wheatgrowing should be restricted. In this connection it is interesting to see how things actually worked out. I now quote from the report of the Wheat Pool Advisory Committee—

It is very pleasing to report that despite all the adverse criticism levelled against the Western Australian system, the losses from insect infestation will be very slight indeed. On the No. 2 Pool the loss will work out at less than a farthing per bushel on all accounts, whilst, so far as one can judge at the moment, the loss on No. 4 Pool wheat will be about one-eighth of a penny.

So there was very little substance in the criticism levelled at our bulk handling system. The report continues—

Considering the fact that some of these stocks were kept nearly three years, these fractional losses must be considered extraordinarily favourable.

It is also worthy of note that practically all the emergency depots built, or being built, in Canada and the United States of America follow the same constructional lines as those in Western Australia, and that despite the fact they adjoin upright terminals of the ortho-

dox type. So far as Western Australia is concerned, Co-operative Bulk Handling, Ltd., had to meet the most determined opposition by the representatives of the grain trade on the Australian Wheat Board, but have at last won through: the board gave instructions at the last meeting for the immediate erection in Victoria of three large bins similar to ours.

So there is nothing very much wrong with our wheat bins, and neither has there been any extraordinary loss from weevil. Further, it is interesting to take the realisation results of the pool, because we were told that the wheat industry of Western Australia was such a burden on the Commonwealth. Now a word or two about realisations:

No. 2 Pool.—Collections from sale, etc., £39,007,588; advances and expenses, £37,700,424; credit, £1,307,159. No. 4 Pool.—Collections from sales, etc., £13,928,225; advances and expenses, £13,605,185; credit, £322,040. No. 5 Pool.—Expenses and advances, £22,285,629; collections, £3,896,606; debit balance, £18,389,023.

The wheat business has not been so great a burden on the Commonwealth Government as has been represented. As regards primary products, the Commonwealth Government has been in an excellent position compared with the Governments of other countries. In connection with our biggest primary product, wool, the Commonwealth Government has been entirely relieved of all financial responsibility; and the total is one amounting to over £60,000,000 per year. The Commonwealth Government has not had to finance one penny of that huge amount. The British Government might have decided not to buy more wool than it actually needed, in which case the Commonwealth Government would have had to handle the wool that was not sold to Britain. Canada is donating wheat to such countries as Greece, and has also given millions to Britain in the form of produce.

Having gone a long way towards wrecking our economical stability, to what are we going to turn? The member for North-East Fremantle yesterday showed pretty conclusively that on one item alone the Commonwealth had unnecessarily spent fully £30,000. And we cannot get £30,000 granted to us to test our iron and steel possibilities, as was recommended by the committee which included the present Prime Minister. A searching inquiry should be held into the cost of administration. In that way a huge sum could be saved annually. Take the instance mentioned by the member for East

Perth, a few weeks ago. The fact is that we are governed by countless boards. The unnecessary expense must be simply colossal.

Now I want to mention something connected with price fixing, having heard of it only yesterday. I notice that the Leader of the Opposition in the Federal Parliament has been making statements as to the method of price-fixing and assessing companies on their profits. I think the Leader of the Federal Opposition was quite right in what he said, and I propose to give some instances in point that occurred in this State, and some of them within the last day or two. I obtained this information from women. There is a certain class of woollen dress material very well known in the trade, which was sold at a fixed price of 5s. 10½d. per yard. Firms were not supposed to sell the material below that price, and yet one firm has been selling it at 1s. 11d. per yard, with the result that some women have been using the whole of their dress coupons to purchase that material. It will probably go into a black market. Linens and silks ranging to 8s. 11d. per yard were sold by the same firm at 1s. and 1s. 6d. per yard during the past week. One man bought at a certain shop an eight-guinea dinner suit for £1. A few weeks ago, when new-laid eggs were 2s. 6d. a dozen, a firm was selling them at 1s. 3d. per dozen. By the same firm other produce was being retailed at correspondingly low prices. The firm's object was simply to keep its profits down, so as to comply with Professor Copland's directions. The firm does not wish to show a huge profit at the end of the year. Again, I can go to a shop in Hay-street and find one article sold at a certain price, and I can find a similar line priced higher at a shop a little way off, and still a little further away find it priced lower. I do think price-fixing is worthless for controlling profits. During certain periods firms cannot evade making high profits unless they throw away some lines at low prices. There should be a searching inquiry into that aspect.

As regards Federal administration, not enough use is being made of the services of State Governments. Only a week or two ago a one-time minor official of the Main Roads Board arrived here and set up a new department, he having been appointed a deputy director to control public works. Surely our Works Department, which has carried out good work all over the State,

could have saved the necessity for that new department. Indeed, we are told that much of the work of the new department will be carried out partly by our Works Department and the Main Roads Board. Why could not those two bodies have carried out the whole work direct? However, there is a new deputy director with a new staff established in offices in William-street.

The National Security Regulations involve the staff concerned in another State Department in work that is entirely unnecessary. In fact, one of the officials told me that four forms were used for everything, and that in the absence of unnecessary forms the work could be carried out without any difficulty whatever.

Undoubtedly Western Australia is the most patriotic of all States, and yet is getting the rawest of deals. We led in the last war, and we lead in this war, in voluntary enlistments. We get very little of the war expenditure of the Commonwealth. Yet we are foremost in raising money by war bonds and war savings certificates. We are doing best on the per capita basis. From April to the end of July this year, New South Wales produced only 11s. 8d. per head as against our 15s. 8d., and South Australia only 12s. 9d. This morning's paper brings those figures up to date, showing New South Wales 12s. 2d. per head against our 16s. 7d., and South Australia as 13s. 5d. So there is no doubt that Western Australia is making a magnificent contribution towards the war effort. We have a Western Australian Prime Minister and a Western Australian President of the Senate, and a Western Australian Speaker of the House of Representatives, but those facts hardly compensate us for the damage done to our economic structure by the Commonwealth Government. It is time that the Parliament of this State was more articulate in pressing Western Australia's just claims. Western Australia should demand the use of all its resources in aiding the war effort.

MR. WATTS (Katanning): I join with other members in expressing regret at the continued absence of the Premier by reason of ill-health, and also the hope that the hon. gentleman will soon be with us again fully restored to his usual health, and able to give attention to those things which should receive the attention of the Premier of a State such as ours. I listened with interest

the other day to the member for Perth, who seems to have come to the conclusion that so far as State rights are concerned the only thing remaining for us to do is to attend the last sad rites. I was not quite sure whether he was merely quoting an anecdote by way of amusing the House or was actually expressing such an opinion; but I think I do him no injustice in taking his remarks into consideration if I think he was definitely telling us what he believed. I do not believe any such thing and will go so far as to say that I think any member of this House or of another place or any person holding a responsible position in Western Australia who will for one moment contemplate a state of affairs in which there is unification—as explained by the hon. member—is liable to be branded as disloyal to this State, because I submit there is overwhelming evidence that Western Australia's position, poor though it may be under Federation, would be infinitely worse if we had unification. Federation allows the States to retain certain sovereign rights; the ones they lose are those which are assigned or handed over to the Commonwealth.

Under unification the central Government simply takes control, and all that is left to the State or provincial Governments is that which is assigned to them. Western Australia is in such a position that it cannot afford, I contend, to give up or resign from any of the sovereign rights which it has at present. The State ought, to the best of its ability, and to the best of the ability of its citizens, to fight against any further action which is liable to lead in that direction. Any citizen who suggests, even for one moment, that it is possible Western Australia might be reduced to a cipher in a unified Commonwealth, is not doing his duty by the State. Our attitude should be, on the contrary, to express to all our people the belief that we must struggle against any further encroachment and do our utmost to prevent any other rights from being taken away from the State. I do not like to contemplate the position we should be in if this matter were allowed to get out of hand. There was in 1929 a Royal Commission appointed by the Commonwealth Government to investigate the Constitution. There were seven members, one of whom was Sir (as he is now) Hal Colebatch. After covering all the ground in regard to the Constitu-

tion, the Commission in its report, at page 241, said this—

We think that the existence of these conditions furnishes a strong reason for the conclusion that the Federal system of government is the system best suited to the needs of the Australian people at the present time. A central authority is necessary for the discharge of those functions on which Australia should speak and act as a whole; but, in our opinion, the existence of self-governing units within the area of the Commonwealth is also necessary. The advantage of an independent right of self-government may not be so obvious to the residents of those States which are in close touch with the central authority, but it is of fundamental importance to States which are situated at a distance from the seat of government, and which by reason of the sparseness of their populations have a relatively small representation in the Commonwealth Parliament. Where there are adequate powers of self-government, there is scope for public spirit, local patriotism and local knowledge, which would be lost if all legislative and administrative functions in Australia were absorbed in the central Government. Again, the existence of self-governing States does, we believe, provide the best means of supervising development and the best safeguard against a disastrous experiment. The importance of confining economic and industrial experiments to limited areas was emphasised by several witnesses.

Those observations sum up the belief of the great majority—by far the great majority—of the people in Western Australia. I submit that anyone who reads any great portion of the Commission's report will come to the conclusion that it made a most exhaustive inquiry, and that the sentiments expressed in the report are soundly based and worthy of being followed by the people of this State now and in the future. I trust we shall not hear from members of this Chamber or of another place any further observations which may seem to indicate that they are prepared to throw up the sponge and permit, without any struggle by our people, the course of action which has been criticised so freely here.

The suggestion has been made that a unified Government would effect a great saving in expenditure. I venture to say that it would not. It might save some of the expenditure attached to the State Parliament, but it would almost certainly not save it all, for just as we must have local government in country districts, so we must have provincial Governments and expense would be attached to these. No system of unified government would last long which confined the representation in the

lower House to five members. There would necessarily have to be an increase in the number of Federal members on a population basis, if not on an area basis, and that increase of representation would naturally lead to an increase in cost. So that any reduction in State costs would be promptly offset by an increase in Federal costs. There is no question about that.

In addition, so far as I can see, there is no prospect of a reduction in the Civil Service, because the State would still have to carry on the social services that are now being carried on by the State Civil Service. I refer to education, police and other services. I am not prepared to say that these are not now being carried out with reasonable economy. I do not consider any Commonwealth Government could decrease the cost of those essential services, so no saving would be effected there. It seems to me that, by and large, when one puts down on the one hand the detriment it would be to this State, the difficulties there would be in getting a hearing at all from the central Government at Canberra, our development—slow though it has been—would be still further retarded; and when one puts down on the other hand the small saving that might be effected there would be a large balance in favour of the retention of our present system. I do not pose as one who wishes to hand over Western Australia to those who live in Eastern Australia, and who in any circumstances are not prepared to recognise our disabilities or assist us to overcome them.

I now wish to deal with a subject mentioned by the member for Pingelly, namely, cream deliveries in country districts. The hon. member made reference to some proposal for a National Security Regulation to compel the transport of butter-fat to the nearest factory. I understood from him that the regulation has not yet been promulgated, but that it has received some consideration. I should like to know why consideration is being given by the Federal authorities to a matter which appears to me to be substantially domestic. I cannot escape from the belief that if any Commonwealth action is contemplated, it is inspired by the State Government. I say that because the Minister for Agriculture has long expressed himself as being strongly in favour of a regulation of this kind, or of some State law to that effect. When the member

for Pingelly moved a few months ago for a select committee to inquire into the dairying industry, the Minister for Agriculture, in opposing it, said—

If members would refer to the Bill as introduced and look at Clause 11 (b)—the clause which was thrown out—they will find an answer to most of their questions and problems.

He based the remainder of his speech on that statement. He said that had he had his way and induced Parliament to adopt this particular Bill, the dairying industry would have been on a far better footing. I have looked at the Bill and find that Clause 11 (b) reads—

Whenever the Minister has defined and declared a transport route as aforesaid in relation to a specified dairy produce factory, milk or cream supplied to such factory shall be transported to such factory only along the transport route declared in relation to such factory.

That is the very point with which we are now dealing. I would have no objection to the Government's proposal being put into operation were I convinced that the primary producer would get the same return from the factory to which he would then be compelled to despatch his butter-fat as he is able to get now, when he has the choice of factories to which he may despatch it. I would be enthusiastic in supporting this zoning system if that point were finally and satisfactorily settled, but it is now about nine months since I took this question up with the Minister for Agriculture with the idea of finding out where the nigger in the woodpile was. Continually one is told—and it is conclusively proved in many instances in country districts—that the nearest factory is paying a price per lb. for butter-fat which is sometimes 1d. and sometimes more than 1d. less than is paid by the factory some 200 or 300 miles away. It is only natural, especially when it is borne in mind that the more distant factory also possibly pays the cost of railway freight, that the farmer should be determined to get the best price he can. It makes a difference of some shillings a week to him and therefore many pounds a year, and he is not in a position to subscribe to a zoning system that would deprive him of a substantial part of his income at a time when he is probably short of money. I thought, first of all, that the metropolitan factory might not be grading the butter-fats properly. I took up that point with the

Minister for Agriculture, but he was convinced that his officers performed the check-grading and that everything was in order. If that was not the cause of the trouble, what was? I made such inquiries as were open to me and three months ago informed the Minister of the result. I asked him then to get a report from his departmental officers.

We found that taking the nearest factory in the district which I represent, and the factory in the metropolitan area to which most of the cream from that district is sent, that between November and April there was a minimum difference of one-eighth of a penny in respect of one month only. For the other month the minimum difference was three-eighths of a penny to one and one-eighth of a penny in favour of the metropolitan factory, plus the cost of transport by rail. As a result, while in February 418 cans of cream were despatched from one station in my electorate, 337 went to a metropolitan factory and 81 to the local factory. At that time approximately 75 per cent. was taking the longer journey and getting the better price. For anyone to suggest, while that state of affairs continues, that the primary producers concerned should be obliged to send their product to the nearest factory is simply to require them, by legislation or regulation, to give away a substantial portion of their income with no commensurate return. It is useless to ask me to subscribe to a scheme of that nature. When they can get the same price for a similar product at each factory in the State I shall be glad to help any reasonable proposal to do away with unnecessary transport. Until that time anyone who wants to have this regulation promulgated, or the Act altered, will find me in opposition. I trust the State Government will not lend itself to any approach to Canberra in regard to this matter. I find it hard to measure up the protests made by members of the Government about the uniform taxation and other Federal encroachments, with their complacency—and I think that is using a mild term—in making use of regulations to deal with matters well within the ambit of this Parliament.

I was under the impression that a shortage of paper existed in Australia. Boy Scouts and other enthusiastic people are collecting all the scrap-paper and cardboard because of the shortage. One would imagine

that the Army, as a very responsible portion of Australia's population at the present time, would be among the first to ensure that there should be no wastage in this direction. I, like about 150,000 other people, possess a motor vehicle. In March or April last I received a card from military headquarters in this State. They required me to enter on this card the particulars of my motor-vehicle. I filled it in and returned it to headquarters. Three months later I went to the Katanning Road Board office to relicense the vehicle for a further period and was told that before I could do so I would have to fill in another card which was then handed to me. I found it was identical with the one I had sent in three months ago. I completed it and despatched it to the road board which, in turn, sent it to military headquarters. A week ago I was handed a sheet of paper about half the size of a quarto sheet. It was nicely printed and I was told that I must fill in the particulars of my motor vehicle. It was exactly what I had filled in previously. That makes three times that I have given particulars of my motor-vehicle to the military authorities in Western Australia. I would not be at all surprised if when I go home next week there is another. But the point is, many thousands of cards and pieces of paper have been completely wasted. Perhaps the authorities wanted to know what alterations had taken place in the vehicles in the districts. It would have been easy enough to ascertain the information from the local authorities and to have had these cards and papers issued to those people who had had changes made in their registration. But no! I asked the Secretary: "Has everybody got them, including the last one?" What is the use of asking the common people to assist in saving paper, and helping in things of that nature, when officials in responsible positions are wasting thousands of sheets?

The Minister for Mines: Who was responsible, the Liquid Fuel Board?

Mr. WATTS: No. One of the notices was addressed from the Western Line of Communications. The one in April was from somebody else, but it was also from Francis-street, or wherever their headquarters were at that time. Others have been responsible for the waste of a great deal of paper beyond what I have referred to. If one goes to a local post office a third of the counter is taken up with forms—rationing forms;

taxation forms and forms of this and that and the other kind. Numbers of them include questions which constitute a problem for the innocent person endeavouring to fill them in. Many of them are never looked at by the officers dealing with these matters.

I now come to the Economic Organisation Regulations. If one wishes to sell a two-penny-halfpenny block of land in a farming area he has to fill in a form containing four or five sheets, and give the farm's production, its acreage and the streets it fronts, and other information. The greater part of it is absolute rubbish. Yet these forms have to be completed as otherwise a transfer of the land will not be put through. One firm came to the conclusion that it would be quite all right if it merely numbered the answers according to the numbers on the form and suggested to the department that it could check them with its own copy, and it would save many sheets of paper. This was done, but the documents were all returned to this firm with the request that it first type out the questions and then separate the answers, with the result that another seven or eight sheets were wasted. This sort of thing is going on not in one or two cases but in thousands of cases. More waste of paper occurs in high places than can be compensated for by all the work done by volunteer people in collecting paper and despatching it to the proper quarters. Those who wish to save paper should start at the top of the tree and make those people realise that we do not produce much paper in Australia. They should be amongst the first to set an example in the community, instead of being the reverse.

I have a few words to say to the Minister in charge of the Department of Native Affairs. I did think when he took office, and for the first few months of his administration, that he would bring to bear on the department a considerable experience and a rather bright intellect. I have unfortunately had occasion in recent months to revise that opinion somewhat because I have become impressed with the idea that he is getting rather self-satisfied about his administration, and is of the opinion that nothing can be done to improve the situation. I will go from the general to the particular. At Mt. Barker there are natives. There is also a reserve, but with no water or improvements of any kind. It is set aside for the use of natives. At the request of the Plantagenet

Road Board, which controls the Mt. Barker local government, I have on two occasions in recent years asked the Minister to improve this reserve by making some water supply available and—what I did not regard as so important as the water supply—providing some fencing there. These natives I am given to understand, are in the majority of cases anxious to work. There is work to be found for them in the surrounding districts, which are more closely settled than are the majority of areas. Broadly speaking, there are no large properties in that part of the State. Therefore there are more people closer together and in many instances natives can get employment on those properties. They have, however, a large number of hangers-on in the way of wives and families. The Minister apparently thinks that the Mt. Barker district is the same as the wide open spaces of the North-West where the stations are, because, in the course of our correspondence on the subject, he suggested to me that the proper persons to find accommodation for the natives and their families were the employers.

The Minister for the North-West: Do not they find accommodation for white men?

Mr. WATTS: I question it. Many of the white persons who work on orchards at Mt. Barker live in the town. There is no provision for them on the properties; nor is it to be expected, therefore, that there would be provision for natives and their families, who are more numerous and not nearly so tractable as white families are. However, that was the point of view expressed by the Minister and he finally declined to spend any money in that area on work. He said—

Under the Native Administration Regulations, it is the employer's responsibility to supply camp accommodation to natives, just as it would be the employer's responsibility to supply accommodation for white employees; therefore, in my opinion, it would be wrong for me to expend public funds in this way.

All natives can be catered for from Carrolup, and employers engaging labour from Carrolup could therefore arrange camp accommodation on their property. Any tendency to improve camp accommodation as your board suggests would be an enticement for other natives to congregate in your district, and thereby perpetuate the difficulties, of which I have recent evidence in police reports, and in any event you, I am sure, realise that no funds are available at the moment for this purpose, but if desired I will be pleased to send the Superin-

tendent to remove any indigent or loitering natives to Carrolup immediately.

I do not think he has had any request to remove loitering or indigent natives, but I sent his note to the board at Mt. Barker and the following is the reply:—

I am directed to state that Carrolup, or any other institution, is so repugnant to the native mind as to prevent their going there voluntarily. They value their freedom too much. It is suggested, therefore, that they be treated as free people, at liberty to live where they like to live, and helped to improve themselves and their ways of life.

My board does not agree with the view of the department in its decision to expend no money within one hundred miles of Carrolup. If the natives can find work for themselves, they are acquiring the habit of earning a living among white people, and should be helped in every way to that end. It is a dreadful thing to allow these poor souls to live among us as they do. We have their hunting grounds. We have broken their old way of life, and the very least we can do is to help them to take their place in our society. They are here, increasing rapidly, and nothing of any moment has been done for them. My board still urges that the work on their reserve should be done. These people use water, but there is none for them or their horses. They need a camp that is away from roadsides. The provision of water and fencing has been asked for for many years. It is so very little to do for them, and reconsideration is urged, and your kindly assistance is asked in seeing the Minister, with the hope that something may be done.

I forwarded that communication to the Minister, and finally requested him to be good enough to visit the district in order to ascertain the conditions for himself and discuss the matter with the Plantagenet Road Board. I did not believe it possible that the interview would cause him to alter his opinion, but I did believe it would induce the members of the Plantagenet Road Board to realise that perhaps there was something wrong in their argument. At that time I had considerable faith in the hon. gentleman's perspicacity and thought he might induce the members of the board to believe that they were wrong and he was right. The reply I received from the Minister was that he would not put the State to the expense of going to Mr. Barker to look into the matter. I do not know whether that was the way to treat a local authority writing in the terms this authority did. I believe the Minister had every right, as soon as it was convenient—I did not ask him to do it at any other time—to visit that portion of the State. The local authority is a responsible one, entitled to his con-

sideration. To tell me the reason he could not go to Mt. Barker, which is on the main railway line and could be reached in one day, was because of the expense is, to my way of thinking, so much eye-wash, and I make no excuse for using that expression. Even Mr. Bray, Commissioner for Native Affairs, recognised in his report which has been tabled the point of view expressed by the Plantagenet Road Board. He says—

The nomadic habits of the natives create difficulties in ascertaining their numbers, and this was particularly so when the Carrolup native settlement, near Katanning, was established. Removals were effected mostly from the Great Southern districts. To evade removal, which applied only to indolents, the natives scattered into other districts, and since the decrease in coloured people is shown in the Great Southern districts, but is not balanced off by the number of admissions to the Carrolup Native Settlement, it is assumed that the coloured people involved as allegedly non-existent are really still existing.

He admits that the natives did not want to go there and, according to the Plantagenet Road Board, if they do not go there, they have no place to stay when they leave the work they get on these small properties. If they are prepared to stay in the district and cannot get work there, the only alternative he can suggest is to issue a warrant for their arrest. This is a most unsympathetic way of dealing with these poor creatures, for that is all I can call them. Carrolup is a fine settlement; much money has been spent on improvements and on the provision of a venereal disease compound, but if these natives would prefer to get work in another district, even if it meant an expenditure of £50 or so by the Government, I honestly believe it would be well justified. I tell the Minister these things because it is time he knew them. If he feels like visiting Mt. Barker, I can assure him that he would be just as welcome now as he would have been in the first instance.

I regret that the Minister for Lands is not present. Last year a deputation waited on him regarding the zoning of the Great Southern districts for the purposes of the Bush Fires Act and a close season against burning. At that time the hon. gentleman undertook to consider whether the zone system which was then in operation should not be altered. It so worked that zone No. 2 comprised portions of the Great Southern district, especially at the southern end in which, both east

and west of the Great Southern railway, climatic conditions varied very greatly. In the Mt. Barker and Plantagenet districts, for example, one can go ten miles east of the line and find a rainfall of 16 inches, and 20 miles west of the line and find a rainfall of 45 inches. Yet, under the zoning system, the same burning regulations operated last year in both those areas, which was obviously unsatisfactory and called for protests from the local authorities concerned. My only object in mentioning the matter today is that there may be some action taken by the Minister dealing with agricultural matters in the absence of the Minister for Lands, so that decisions will not be arrived at in the near future without the special conditions of the various areas being taken into consideration. There certainly must be some change if burning operations in certain circumstances are not to become impossible.

I desire to make some reference to remarks of the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe on the so-called vice squad. I am afraid I look at the matter somewhat differently from the hon. member. To me it seems a serious reflection on the City of Perth and on the State of Western Australia that such an organisation should be required. I doubt very much whether it would be required if the State Government had only seen what obviously was coming months ago, as many of us saw it. I recall representations being made to the Premier some four or five months back regarding the prevalence of liquor in dance halls and similar places. The deputation called upon him as he then had the necessary authority, without reference to Parliament, to take action so that the consumption of liquor in such places would be prevented and the police given power to ensure that liquor was not forthcoming within those places nor within the precincts of those places.

Mr. Cross: This was supervised in Perth for years.

Mr. WATTS: Without much authority.

Mr. Cross: There was plenty of authority.

Mr. WATTS: In my opinion, the hon. member does not know what he is talking about. The police have very little authority in this respect, and are thoroughly well aware of the fact, and have complained of the fact and asked for more authority. That was at least three or four months ago. Our Licensing Act is not at all clear on the sub-

ject of those places, and special provisions have been instituted in other parts of the Commonwealth for the very same reason. Without liquor it is highly doubtful whether there would be the question of vice—I use the word as applied in the Press—being prevalent at the present time. The great majority of the cases that have to be dealt with are those of persons who have got into the condition they have got into by first getting drunk. Gin is not an especially satisfactory commencement for an evening's entertainment. It is likely to lead to a great many things that otherwise would not occur.

Surely it is clear to all of us that that is the position. The very beginning of remedial measures is to prevent these young people from getting liquor. However, no action was taken to prevent it, so far as I have seen; at all events, not sufficient action was taken to prevent the scandal. Everywhere one went there was talk about identity cards being highly useful to assist the police to establish age and identity. I do not know that they were of much advantage, because the liquoring-up still went on. The beginning of the trouble, in many cases, was the starting-off with too much liquor. When the mental balance is somewhat lost through liquor, anything may happen, and so a vice squad is needed. Perth, which has had a good name in the past, has not been improved latterly. If the necessary remedy is applied without fear or favour to anybody who gets into a situation which attracts to him or her the attention of the police, there must be good results. The other day the member for East Perth asked by interjection whether we would favour an amendment to the Criminal Code to make the man liable. I do not quite know what the hon. member meant by that interjection. If Parliament decides to make such conduct an offence, there must be no fear or favour between rich and poor, between male and female, or any other distinction. I commend to the Government early consideration of these matters. They have nothing to do with the general application of the liquor law. Most of us do not want to deal with that subject. For years we have had a reasonably good Licensing Act, one with no great defects in its administration. But we live in extraordinary times, and extraordinary diseases require extraordinary remedies. Our Government should be willing to take the responsibility,

and not run off to Canberra for authority. I deprecate such evading of a responsibility which the State Parliament ought to undertake, one which it has had for years and should continue to have. I do hope the Government will discontinue making application to the Commonwealth Government for assistance by regulation in matters which strictly do not concern it and which it has plainly said it would prefer the States to look after. That has been said in regard to various matters, including the liquor question. Why should the Commonwealth Government be asked to accept a responsibility which is not its responsibility?

The Minister for Mines: This Government has never asked the Commonwealth Government to take any action in the matter.

Mr. WATTS: If there is a job to be done in this connection, it is the duty of the State Government to do it or else—

The Minister for Mines: I repeat this Government has not asked the Commonwealth Government to take any action in regard to liquor.

Mr. WATTS: On the face of it, the only action taken has been taken by the Premier under National Security Regulations, and that was at a time when the State Parliament was just meeting or had just met. The Premier could have come to the State Parliament and put the matter before it. Instead of that, when a motion was tabled on this side of the House—I am led by the interjections to refer to the subject—to discuss this very matter, the session was clamped down and not a word said about the question. Thus we were prevented from discussing the subject by motion or by any other means. I will not accept any excuse. I will not deny it may possibly be that the State Government did not ask the Commonwealth Government to do anything. The fact remains that the State authorities could have done it themselves and then there would have been no need for the Commonwealth Government to intervene. I have only to refer to the Prime Minister's own statement on that question. He did not want to intervene. He said so, but the Commonwealth Government finally did, for what reason I do not know.

Member: He asked the State Government to fix the hours.

Mr. WATTS: I understood he did. Therefore, it would appear that the Commonwealth Government intervened because the State Government did nothing. That is almost as bad, in my opinion, as the Commonwealth Government being asked by the State Government to intervene. The Commonwealth Government was in a position to see that nothing was being done.

The Minister for Labour: I think we introduced the six o'clock closing.

Mr. McDonald: We were asked a second time to alter the hours.

Mr. WATTS: I am not dealing with the question of the six o'clock closing. I brought up a point in regard to certain recommendations made to the Premier by members on this side of the House dealing particularly with dance-halls and similar places of amusement, and in respect of which no action was taken by the Government. That is what I based my protest upon.

The last matter to which I wish to make reference is the recent action of the Government with respect to the basic wage. At this hour of the day, I shall not enter into any argument as to the rights or wrongs of increasing the wage payable to workers. I am prepared to concede that there may be strong arguments why they should get the increase. I shall not, therefore, argue the merits or demerits of the increase itself, as I do not think I would be justified in doing so. But I do enter my protest against what I term this running off to Canberra. Here we have another lovely example of the same thing. When the State Government found that the Arbitration Court, over which it has complete control through this Parliament, had done something which, in its wisdom, it thought was right and of which the State Government did not approve, the State Government—instead of taking the opportunity to allow Parliament to deal with the matter—decided to take advantage of the National Security Regulations to have an order made. This is the Government which tells us that it objects to uniform taxation because it would deprive the State of its sovereign rights! This is the Government which would have us believe that it is anti-unificationist! This is the Government which runs off to Canberra every time it wants something done! Is it afraid to come to the State Parliament? Does it believe

that it cannot carry through the State Parliament a reasonable proposal? If that is so, it should no longer exist. It ought to have confidence in the institution which gives it its life. That is the present position. This Parliament gives the Government its life. It is not here at the wish of the electors; it is here at the wish of Parliament, and yet it ignores Parliament on every possible occasion and, as I said, rushes off to Canberra.

Mr. Seward: You will be asking it to do some work directly.

Mr. WATTS: If the Government were bona fide in its determination to upset the decision of the Arbitration Court, because that decision was an injustice to the workers, which—as I said—I am not at the moment prepared to deny, if it was bona fide in its intention to upset that decision, then why did it not let the member for East Perth discuss the Bill which he introduced on the 21st April last?

Mr. Cross: The member for East Perth was not present when the Bill came on. You know that.

The Minister for Labour: He was at Northam earning a legal fee that day.

Mr. WATTS: I was not aware that the hon. member was absent; but, in any case, the Bill was perfectly clear.

Mr. Cross: The member for East Perth was absent.

Mr. WATTS: The position is that there was a Bill on the notice paper to amend this section of the Act. If the matter were of sufficient importance, a Bill could have been introduced to make the increase retrospective to the day on which the Federal order was made. If the worst came to the worst, the Bill could have been discussed last week. The Standing Orders could have been suspended for the purpose.

Mr. Marshall: No. They could not.

Mr. WATTS: I have made two mistakes in five minutes, but that cannot be helped. The present Government, which does not hold office because the electors asked it to do so, but because Parliament said it could do so, owes a duty to Parliament which it has not faithfully discharged. Instead, it has run away from its duty and gone to the Commonwealth Government to help it out of its difficulties, when it ought to have come to the right place. If it believes that State rights should be upheld, it should uphold those rights; but it has not done so in the

last few months in all matters of vital importance. Today we hear of another matter that is under Federal consideration. I refer to the cream zoning. If the State Government will oppose that, I shall be led to believe that what I have said might have had some effect.

On motion by Mr. J. H. Smith, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.21 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 13th August, 1942.

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

QUESTIONS (2).

TAXATION.

Deduction for A.R.P. Expenditure.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT asked the Chief Secretary: Will he inform members the result of the motion carried in this House on the 12th May, 1942, protesting against the non-allowance of certain A.R.P. expenditure as a deduction for the purpose of income tax?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: The motion referred to requested an amendment of Section 52 of the State Income Tax Assessment Act, 1937. This Act is not now operative. Representations have been made to the Commonwealth Government, so far without result.

CORONERS' COMMITTALS AND COURT CONVICTIONS.

Hon. H. TUCKEY asked the Chief Secretary: 1, How many persons have been committed for trial by coroners in the metropolitan districts during the past three years? 2, How many of these cases have been withdrawn from trial by the Crown Law Department entering a nolle prosequi?