

is that the farmers, though having reason to applaud the Commonwealth Government for taking control of wheat when the writing on the wall was plain, yet have not much cause to thank that Government. An export pool was formed, and I gather that the Commonwealth Government took charge of the wheat. Present sales by the board controlling the wheat are in the vicinity of 6s. 10d. per bushel in bulk, and 7s. 6d. in bags. However, the Commonwealth Government has decided that the price of wheat for home consumption shall remain at the 1942 level. Today the price of this wheat stands at 3s. 11d., but the flour tax, it is stated, increases the amount to 5s. 2d.

Breakfast-food manufacturers and maltsters get their wheat for 3s. 11d. per bushel. The millers' price for wheat includes 40,000,000 bushels for stock feed as apart from flour sold to traders outside the scope of the wheatgrowing farmers. Much wheat has been sold at 6s. 6d. to 7s. per bushel to the United States, Chili, Peru and South Africa. The millers' price of 5s. 2d. was fixed when wheat was very low in price, to compensate growers for the high cost of farmers' machinery owing to the tariff. The Commonwealth Government takes a rake-off of £500,000 from the fund raised by way of flour tax. In the year 1943-44 the farmers producing wheat lost £9,341,666. That amount of money was taken from them by the Commonwealth Government through taxation. I should imagine the farmers are not too pleased about that. It is an extraordinary thing that the Commonwealth Government should take charge of their business. I gather that much more has been taken from the farmers through this Commonwealth pool than would have been taken by an ordinary pool.

The Commonwealth Government, of course, has full control, and the responsible Minister dictates to the farmers. The position is not like that obtaining in an ordinary co-operative pool where all share alike. This pool is practically a tool, and the Commonwealth Government is sitting tight granting no rise in price although the world's markets show that a considerable increase should be granted. Very large quantities of Australian wheat still remain to be sold. We realise that something had to be done to keep the farmer alive and going, and I am pleased to learn from the Speech that phosphatic rock is being obtained from a mine in some

part of Australia—I do not know where. There is just that reference, and I am indeed pleased to know that the mine is in Australia. I trust that the mineral is of sufficient quality to permit of our farmers being supplied with fertiliser of a higher grade than has been the case for some time past.

I trust, also, that a fair average quantity will be made available to Western Australia, as last year our farmers were very short of superphosphate and up to the present it has been extremely difficult to get any reliable opinion as to the quantity that will be available here. Western Australia unfortunately is still under very tight control as to the area she is allowed to put under wheat. That applies not only to the production of wheat but also to the production of other foodstuffs such as butter, cheese and mutton, and the production of wool. Superphosphate plays a highly important part now in the production of areas for grain on for feed. Therefore it is to be hoped that somewhat greater quantities of superphosphate will be made available to us. I do not desire to take up the time of members any further and therefore conclude by supporting the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

On motion by Hon. C. R. Cornish, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.1 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 8th August, 1944.

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

QUESTION—COMMONWEALTH HOUSING SCHEME.

As to Cost of Homes.

Mr. WATTS (without notice) asked the Premier:

(1) Has the Government obtained prices for the erection of brick and tiled homes in

the metropolitan area to be erected under the Commonwealth Housing Scheme?

(2) If so, what are the prices for the erection of—(a) a four-roomed house; (b) a five-roomed house?

(3) If obtained, how do the prices compare with houses of approximately similar dimensions previously erected under the State Workers' Homes Board Housing Scheme?

The PREMIER replied: The hon. member supplied me with a copy of these questions and I have obtained the following information:—

(1) Yes.

(2) Tenders were called recently for the erection of 50 houses in the metropolitan area. The average prices submitted by the lowest tenderers for four and five-roomed houses were—(a) four rooms, £927 10s.; (b) five rooms, £991 10s.

(3) The houses built by the Workers' Homes Board in 1939 were slightly different from those intended to be built under the Commonwealth Housing Scheme, but on a comparable basis the prices in 1939 would have been—(a) four rooms, £700; (b) five rooms, £781.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fifth Day.

Debate resumed from the 3rd August.

MR. LESLIE (Mt. Marshall) [4.35]: I desire to preface my remarks by extending to members of the House, both on this and on the other side, my very sincere thanks for the courtesies they have extended to me, and the great assistance rendered to me on my entering the House. In that I would include the Ministers, who have shown me every kindness that could possibly be expected, and have given me every assistance in any matter on which I have approached them. That atmosphere, while it did not actually surprise me, convinced me that the harmony that exists in our State Parliament is such that the people of Western Australia can be satisfied that any legislation submitted to the House can be safely entrusted to members. I commend the member for Nelson on the very fine speech he made in moving the Address-in-reply. I was rather surprised to find sentiments such as he uttered coming from that source, but it cannot be denied that when he remarked that the exist-

ing state of affairs in the rural areas of the State was a reflection on the nation, he was correct. To that I would add that it is also a reflection on the Governments of this State, and by that I do not mean only this Government but all Governments that have been in command in this State over many past years. I agree with him that agriculture is the broad basis on which rests the whole of our national life. I only hope that his mention of the fact from the part of the House with which he is associated is an indication that the recognition of this truth is slowly spreading among every section of the community.

I believe that we have to awaken in the minds of those who are not actually engaged in rural areas a sense of the interdependence between different sections of the community. The Minister for Lands is to be highly commended on the rural reconstruction report which I believe should be circulated freely amongst members of the public. I say that in all sincerity, because it is very evident that the Minister and his colleagues devoted considerable attention to the preparation of the report, which is educative and informative to the highest degree. Although there may be items in it with which we do not all agree, the report has touched on almost all the basic difficulties with which the economic life of the nation, and particularly of Western Australia as a primary producing State, is confronted. Mention is made in the report of the fact that 20.8 per cent. of the breadwinners throughout Australia are engaged in primary production other than mining, and that for a period of 10 years from 1930 to 1940 they were responsible for 82 per cent. of the total value of the exports from the Commonwealth.

Figures such as those serve to indicate the prevailing unbalanced system of economics that permits people, upon whose endeavours the economic life of the nation depends, to reap the smallest of returns as the result of their contributions. I am safe in saying that a considerable number of them have secured no return whatsoever. I therefore commend the report for perusal by everyone. One aspect I wish to mention affecting the economics not only of farming but of our national life, is that when reference is made to losses incurred in production the farming community is blamed wholly for inefficiency. Why only the producer or farmer should

be picked out for blame in that respect is difficult to imagine. It reminds me that my experience as a newspaper man has been that everyone knows how to run a newspaper far better than does the proprietor. People say that if they were running a newspaper they would put this in and leave that out: they would do this and would refrain from doing that.

The Minister for Mines: That does not apply only to newspaper men.

Mr. LESLIE: Perhaps not.

The Premier: It applies to football umpires.

Mr. LESLIE: I believe that it does. However, that has been my experience as a newspaper man and that sort of attitude applies particularly to the critics of the farming community. No other section of the community is similarly situated to the producer, who cannot make provision to meet rising costs. The manufacturer or distributor can increase his charges to meet added costs, and the industrial worker has the Arbitration Court which is designed to ensure that he is paid at least a basic wage commensurate with the prevailing cost of living. The farmer is left to pure chance. He has to contend with the vagaries of the season and with markets in which he is the prey for both consumers and distributors. Yet we find that when rising costs affect the economic stability of the country, the farmer is accused of inefficiency and costly methods. Much more than that is required in explanation than merely to lay the blame upon the farmer.

The primary producer will, I trust, secure fair consideration under the new order of which we hear so much. When it comes to endeavouring to define what the new order really is, I find that all the economic experts are as much in the dark as I am. If we are to enjoy the benefits of a new order, we shall obtain it only on the basis of one principle—it has to be based on social justice. In operation it will depend for success upon whether people, as a whole and individually, realise the responsibilities of the individual one to the other. That brings to mind our promised freedoms. How many people are anticipating that in the prospective freedom from want and freedom from worry there will be relief from all their responsibilities as individuals? I believe we are approaching the

question of the new order and its freedoms from an entirely wrong angle. Too many people think that they will be absolved from all the responsibilities that they as individuals owe not only to themselves but to their fellow-men. There is a danger that in seeking this freedom we may find it filched from us.

I suggest that we cannot find a better example of the needs of the new order than in the men who today are enabling Parliament to meet here in harmony and peace—the men of our Fighting Forces. I sincerely pray, and I hope all Governments and the people generally will pray, that our fighting men will bring back with them when they resume civil life the benefit of the lessons and experiences gained on the field of battle. If they do that, they will help towards success on behalf of the nation. If they do that, we will get somewhere with the new order. The first things the soldier acquires are self-reliance and self-responsibility. Next he is taught co-operation and mutual endeavour. Then he learns to practise self-sacrificing comradeship. That is what the new order should amount to. That is what should be our freedom. If men and women follow along those lines, we will have a real new order. I am satisfied about that, and I pray it will so develop. There is grave danger, however, that in looking to this freedom too many will endeavour to escape from their responsibilities and, in consequence, the people may reach a stage of complacency which will lend itself to exploitation by those individual sections prone to exploit others at every opportunity. If the individual is to realise the responsibilities he owes to himself and to his fellows, then he will realise that the new order for him will entail even greater responsibilities. I appeal to the people generally and to Parliament to awake to a realisation of this fact and to educate our youth to the knowledge that the new freedom we anticipate will mean greater responsibility than that which we ourselves faced in our youth.

While mentioning the Armed Forces it was a little disappointing to me to find no reference in His Excellency's Speech to the very fine record the men of Western Australia have established in every field in which they have been engaged. It is very pleasant to be told what the State has

done, how many of our men have enlisted and how much money has been subscribed by Western Australians towards the war loans; but, to use a colloquialism, a pat on the back for the men who are upholding Western Australian prestige is well merited. Those men deserve some commendation from the Government and from His Majesty's representative in this State. I do hope that the Government may see fit to send to the men a message to the effect that we as a Parliament, speaking on behalf of the people of Western Australia, do appreciate what they have done. The record of Western Australian military units stands high, and unchallengeable—something that we can all be proud of.

Turning now to His Excellency's Speech, may I say that it contains points which win commendation for the Government, but also some points which evoke criticism. I know it is easy enough to criticise; but criticism, to be useful, must be contributory and constructive. We must always bear in mind the fact that those whom we criticise here bear the burden and responsibility of government on their shoulders—no light task, as we all appreciate. I therefore suggest to Ministers that they bear in mind that whatever criticism may come from this side—and I speak now from knowledge of and personal association with members on these benches—is tempered by the knowledge that the Government has responsibilities and a burden in carrying on the affairs of the State. We keep that in mind; and therefore any criticism we may offer is offered not lightly, but only after due consideration of the facts so far as we are enabled to see them. If our criticism at times should appear to be unjustified and unwarranted, perhaps the responsibility for that may be laid at the door of members of the Government in respect of their failure to take us fully into their confidence as to their intentions concerning the future of the State. On that score I offer this first point of criticism.

I regretted the scantiness of the information contained in the Speech regarding the Government's programme for the future. Naturally, His Excellency refers to the surplus and credits the Government with having produced it. It is very fine for a Government to be able to report a surplus at the end of the financial year; but, as has already been mentioned, the activities of the Government may not be as commend-

able on that score as appearances suggest. It all depends on whether the Government is to be regarded as purely a business institution or, on the other hand, as an organisation created to improve the social welfare of the people. Success—and I suppose a financial surplus may be considered a success—is always only of a comparative nature, and our estimation of it must be based upon a standard of values according to the point of view. Personally, I should consider the success of a Government as being far greater if measured by monuments to which it is able to point in the establishment of improved social conditions; by, shall I say, a transition now from that parrot cry of a standard of living to a standard of comfort—a better standard of social amenities, to such things as make people love to live in a country instead of criticising its Government.

The Premier: Co-operation with the Commonwealth Government in order to escape deficits is also important.

Mr. LESLIE: If finance is to be the be-all and end-all of government, I suggest to Ministers to look in their consciences as to whether they have fulfilled those requirements for which a social and democratic Government such as this is established. Now I desire to make reference to particular items in the Speech. First of all I wish to deal with the outstanding industry of the area which I represent—the wheat industry. In all sincerity I commend the Government on the fact that His Excellency tells us that Ministers are going to seize every opportunity to protect the wheat industry from any further shrinkage and to plan efforts for its re-establishment. I know that this is a very sincere desire of the Minister for Agriculture, and I can assure the hon. gentleman that knowledge of that fact is appreciated, and that my people believe in his earnestness in that regard. When dealing with a question such as the agricultural industry we must endeavour to leave on one side all partisan feeling and to regard the subject from the broadest possible point of view. Whilst I commend the Minister for Agriculture and whilst I know that his ideas and endeavours and sympathies are directed into channels which we all approve, his particular methods are of course open to criticism, questioning and differences of opinion. It is from that angle that we may offer suggestions.

Wrapped up in the subject of the wheat industry are the remarks of His Excellency that steps for the revaluation of conditional purchase lands held in the outer areas are nearing completion. I contend that a complete analysis of the possibilities of country included in the marginal areas would reveal that the arbitrary division of our lands into marginal, buffer and good areas is economically unsound. In the marginal districts is to be found country equal to the best in the State in point of productive capacity, which has been proved beyond doubt. The quality of the soil and the climatic conditions are there to justify investigation into the possibilities of the land for more intense utilisation than that for grazing pursuits. I suggest that not only a re-valuation of land is called for, but also an actual re-classification of that country which is described as marginal. I can assure the Minister that outside the marginal areas there is land which, though considered to be good, is inferior to other country that is considered to be merely marginal. The Minister may reply that the classification of country as marginal is based on the rainfall; but I contend that some of the country described as marginal can be used for more productive utilisation than that of grazing, taking the rainfall into account.

The Minister for Lands: To follow your argument to its logical conclusion there must be at least three prices?

Mr. LESLIE: I do not think that the suitability of marginal areas, or portions of them, for production has been completely investigated.

The Minister for Lands: Do you inveigh against the prices now charged for land?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. LESLIE: Not at all. I am not complaining now against the prices charged for land. My complaint is against the policy. Now I desire to quote from an article dealing with marginal areas which was published in the "Wheatgrower" on the 9th March. It states—

Another sore point with marginal farmers is the fact that no definite statement will be made as to whether they are to be permitted to continue wheatgrowing. At the present time they are reduced to 150 acres, but the future is indefinite. Under the scheme put before the then Minister for Commerce in 1940, the marginal farmers were to be permitted to carry on wheatgrowing as a side line in conjunction with pastoral pursuits. It is on the continuance of wheatgrowing depends the success or otherwise

of pastoral pursuits in those areas. A minimum of 200 acres is the least which these farmers contend they can deal with.

Here we see the setting up of a definite policy in relation to those wheatgrowing areas, again an arbitrary policy which does not take into consideration the suitability of particular land for the purpose to which it is put. I am concerned, as are the settlers in these areas, at the fact that if this policy is continued those areas may be turned into merely grazing propositions. We view with concern the difficulties that may arise then on account of erosion and salt, the effect of which will be to render the country unsuitable even for grazing. We fear we shall eventually find that instead of one road board being able to report that of 275 settlers only 70 are left, the road board will have been closed up as well as others, and a portion of the State which has contributed considerably to the wealth of Western Australia—far greater in proportion to the amount which has been written off—will have been lost to us. I offer encouragement to the Minister to continue his efforts on behalf of the wheat industry, but I appeal to him to bring about an alteration in that arbitrary arrangement, the wrongful revaluation and classification of country in chunks, instead of completely investigating the land and reclassifying it.

It is pleasing to note the increase in stock numbers, although it is regrettable to find that while on the one hand Governments offer every inducement and encouragement to stock producers to increase their stock for the benefit of the nation as a whole, as soon as seasonal conditions are adverse the producers are blamed for having done something they were encouraged to do. The blame for overstocking has been laid at the door of the producer who has endeavoured to comply with the urgent requests for increase of stock made by the present and past Governments. I suggest that the men who have so complied with requests made to them by Governments in order to meet a national situation, and with a view to rehabilitating themselves, should be commended for what they have done and some effort should be made to assist them when seasonal conditions are unfavourable.

This point raises the question of railways. When the timetables were prepared for most of the branch lines of our outback areas, the

number of stock in those districts was very small and stock trucks were added to a service designed for passenger carrying. The increase in the number of stock and the consequent demand for railway facilities for transport to markets have changed the situation very considerably, so much so that the passenger service is now added to the stock train. As an example, we find that on the Beneubbin branch line the passenger service is nothing more or less than a stock train. People travel in little more comfort than do the sheep, at the same speed and with little convenience. I accordingly impress upon the Minister for Railways the need for a revision of these timetables and services. He should realise that stock railage has so increased as to warrant separate stock trains, independent of passenger services. I am sure that if the Minister is prepared to provide a better passenger service, one more attractive and offering better convenience to passengers, he will find that a passenger service can be maintained apart from stock trains. It is deplorable that passengers should have their carriages hooked on to a rake of trucks conveying sheep.

The question of water supplies is one that is rather a sore point at the present time. It was more so during last summer. I recently asked a question of the Minister as to water supplies for the coming season and the answer was not satisfactory. We must bear in mind that many country areas are now served both by the Goldfields Water Supply and the No. 1 or Barbalin Water Scheme. Many farmers regard that water service as an insurance scheme. It may not be generally known that farmers are compelled to pay water rates through a charge levied on the extent of their holdings, irrespective of whether they use the water or not; and, as I said, most of the primary producers in those districts look upon the charge as being in the nature of an insurance against adverse seasons or a shortage in their own water supply. They pay the charge as willingly as any person pays a charge inflicted by a Government, and consequently it is heartbreaking to them to find that just at the time when they most require the water for which they have paid over many years it is not available.

That occurred last year. I am not blaming the present Minister for it, but we

certainly can blame the Government that failed to provide adequate facilities in the past. Owing to manpower difficulties and scarcity of material for renewals and replacements, farmers were unable during the past serious dry season to obtain adequate water requirements. Many of them are at present viewing the coming season with misgivings. I would urge the Minister to investigate every possible avenue and make the most urgent representations to the proper authorities for the release of manpower and materials in order to ensure an adequate water supply for the coming season, otherwise many farmers will suffer a serious financial loss again.

Another matter I desire to touch upon briefly is health. His Excellency has advised us that legislation will be brought down to deal with nurses. I know the Minister for Health is as aware as I am of the most unsatisfactory conditions under which nurses have to train and work. An overhaul of the remuneration at present paid to nurses during their training period is definitely and urgently required. There is reason for anxious concern about this matter because unless the profession is made more attractive during its commencing stages and the later period, we shall not be able to maintain the numbers of nurses who will be required when some of the social schemes that are in contemplation are brought into being. The Minister might consider a revision of the conditions under which nurses are trained and of the remuneration to be paid to them during that period, as well as a revision of conditions and rates of pay when their training has been completed.

We have in the Minister for Education someone to whom the country is looking with great hope to bring about a change in the exceedingly unsatisfactory educational conditions now prevailing. That is acknowledged on both sides of the House. The present Minister is a practical man and we are looking forward, shall I say, to almost revolutionary changes in the educational facilities. No definite indication is given to us in the Speech as to the action the Minister proposes to take, and therefore we can but hope that he will bring down legislation and take such action as he, a practical man, knows is urgently required. From experience, I know he has dealt most sympathetically with the re-

quests that have been made to him, but of course the bogey of finance comes up. On that point my opinion is that the needs are of greater importance than the means and that we should adopt a standard of values which will comprehend that policy. I suggest to the Minister that one of his biggest stumbling blocks is the fact that he must go cap in hand to the Public Works Department for every little school requirement. It is high time the Education Department established a ways and works branch of its own. The Education Department is the best judge of the requirements of a school, not a man trained in engineering and whose main job is probably the construction of roads, bridges and buildings.

Mr. Mann: What about the Under-Treasurer? I think he is the worst man of all.

Mr. LESLIE: Yes, I believe there is something in what the hon. member says; it all depends on the point of view. If money is to be the guiding factor, let us aim at a huge surplus at the end of the year, irrespective of what might happen. But I repeat that the Education Department knows best the needs of a school, and it seems to me that it is the department which should prepare plans and estimates and have the necessary work carried out. Engineers and inspectors are concerned only with ways and means, not with the necessity for the work itself. If that difficulty is to be overcome the Education Department will require to set up a department of ways and works, in which it will be able to undertake what it considers to be necessary work in the interests of the children and of education. It will not be bound by finance from another department or have to meet the question of standards simply because some department in no way connected with education decides that it has a set standard which will apply whether suitable or not, and without any modification to suit different conditions.

Continuing with His Excellency's Speech, there is the question of soldier settlement. I do not intend to deal with that at any length for the simple reason that notice has already been given ensuring discussion in that connection in the House. But it is rather disappointing to find that no apparent action has been taken by the Government to deal with the question of attracting soldier settlers into our rural areas.

We know that before the war there was a definite drift to the cities, and that is likely to continue. If the presumed clamour for land is to come about and if we are to get these soldier settlers, we must make conditions in rural areas attractive to the people whom we want to induce to go out there. That is definitely the responsibility of this Government. We cannot expect men and women under modern conditions to go out and labour as did their fathers or the pioneers. I do not think I can do better than to refer in this connection to the report of the Rural Reconstruction Commission. The Commission has this to say in paragraph 93 of its report—

Some city dwellers take the view that farmers are a race apart, that their desires and wants are simpler than those of the more sophisticated city workers, and that the amenities which modern civilisation regards as normal are not desired by farming people. The Commission considers that such persons are builders of delusion, and that the average country man and woman have the same sort of aspirations to a comfortable home, modern conveniences and normal recreational facilities as those whose lives are spent in cities.

That is something which anyone who has any knowledge of rural conditions will whole-heartedly endorse. That particular passage should be considered by the Government and it should take action at an early date in order to formulate a plan to provide for these social amenities to be introduced the moment that a soldier settlement scheme is prepared. The Government must make conditions attractive in order to have the most suitable type of man coming into our rural areas.

I have left one point to be dealt with finally because, to my regret, no mention whatsoever of the subject is made in His Excellency's Speech. I refer to the vexed question of vermin. I am going to leave alone the question of rabbits, because it has been discussed so often in the House that I am sure all members are aware of what is happening in that regard. But I do want to utter a very serious warning concerning emus. We are facing a very definite menace from the invasion of emus in the north-eastern areas of the State. Very recently a deputation waited upon the Minister for Agriculture and informed him of the serious depredations made by emus and the losses being incurred by the farmers as a result. It fell to my lot to be able to go through

the northern part of my electorate at harvest time and actually see the damage the emus were doing. I can assure members that in no less than three cases I saw the farmer's wife driving a truck around the place while her husband was working as fast as his machinery would allow him, to get the crop in before the emus could smash it down.

The pest is serious. Whereas at the commencement of the last harvest season emus were more or less confined to an area roughly on a line north of Koorda and Bencubbin, today they are as far south as Dowerin and Nungarin. It is not a matter of a single bird here and there; they are there in flocks, and their invasion is slowly going southward.

Mr. J. Hegney: It is suggested that their meat would be good to eat.

Mr. LESLIE: I would not care to tackle it.

Mr. J. Hegney: How would it compare with mutton?

Mr. LESLIE: If any member would like to eat emu flesh, I extend to him a hearty invitation to come to my electorate, where he will get a surfeit of it.

Mr. J. Hegney: It was a man from up your way who made the proposal.

Mr. LESLIE: It did not come from my area, or perhaps it was a bait offered to the city folk to induce them to come out and help in the slaughtering of the emus in the absence of any governmental action.

Hon. N. Keenan: Do not people eat a portion of the emu?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. LESLIE: No portion of it! However, I want to say this, that when the deputation met the Minister, he expressed his sympathy, and in his reply outlined a rather visionary scheme or method to deal with the whole vermin question throughout the State. I am sure that we will receive his support on request for the appointment of a Select Committee to go into this question. But the emu pest is an immediate menace, and it is absolutely necessary that immediate action be taken by the Government to stop the spread of the birds and also to reduce their considerable numbers before the oncoming harvest. We are, I am happy to say, experiencing a rather satisfactory season in the district I represent. We will, of course, require the finishing rains, but it would certainly be a heartbreak to find that, after the anxiety of the opening of the

season and the promising outlook today, the whole of our efforts will be brought to nothing because of the failure to deal with a pest, the knowledge of the dangers of which has been brought home to those in a responsible position.

I cannot speak too strongly in urging the Minister to take some immediate action. I know that we have his sympathy, but sympathy is a very holey bag; it holds no water. I can only hope that he will awaken to the immediate danger of the position, and to the fact that not only in these areas will the country be denuded of crops but that the pest will establish itself further south and become more costly to eradicate. I suggest that the Minister make every possible effort to deal with the menace. I add my support to the appeals that have been made and are being made to him in connection with this pest in a desire, shall I say, to fan his rather ineffectual spark of sympathy into a blaze of activity so that he will get something accomplished before too late.

The Minister for Justice: There are thousands in my district.

Mr. Thorn: He is not trying to get any of yours.

Mr. LESLIE: I am not concerned with the emus in any one particular district; I am concerned with the fact that the emu question is becoming a national menace. At the present time it is most urgent. Not only are the standing crops likely to be ruined but next year's crops in areas as far south as the York electorate and westward, are likely to be affected. The birds are travelling and they are a definite menace.

MR. NORTH (Claremont): I would like to commence my few remarks by offering my congratulations to everyone present, including myself, for their safe return. I am taking the place of one who would have been a maiden speaker. I cannot claim to be making a maiden speech this time. I feel compelled to make a few remarks about the recent election to explain my position to the House and to the people of Claremont, because many things were said during the course of the election and I can no longer ignore them as in the past. There were in the district other strong forces of the same political colour as myself. They were trying to gain the seat. Before dealing with that

question, might I refer to four or five local matters which are very pressing in Claremont? It is very dangerous for a member, as most of us know, to get too high in his ideals and forget the parish pump. So, let us put the parish pump first and in a few words deal with what are important matters to the local residents, though not so important to members present, because they view the State as a whole.

The first important matter of interest to Claremont, as in all other suburbs, is in connection with the erection of new houses. I do not want to waste a lot of time discussing that. It must be realised that the demand in my district is just as strong as in other districts represented in this Assembly. Secondly, there is a great need in the district for improved transport after the war. Whether that should be by trolley-bus or motor-bus I would not at this stage offer a suggestion except to say that there is a distinct drawback to the trolley-bus for long-distance work. It is hampered with overhead wires. One trolley-bus cannot pass another. I have suggested to the Minister and, through him, to the department, that they should look into the question of finding a way to duplicate the power wires so that the trolleys can pass each other. If that could be done, the idea of using trolleys over long distances would be attractive. They would not then need to crawl one after another, but would be as mobile as the bus services.

Mr. Cross: They are very successful in other countries.

Mr. NORTH: Yes, but I see no reason why, because in the past we have accepted this idea of one vehicle crawling behind another, we should in the future, in the new order, not have the fastest possible transport. By that means, a person could travel from Fremantle or North Fremantle to Perth in about 35 minutes instead of an hour and a quarter, as would be the case if he went in a trolley-bus that had to crawl behind another. I do not wish to stress these parish pump points because, while they are very important to local inhabitants, I should not, I think, detain the House unnecessarily. I know the Minister will always receive us and so avoid wasting time in this House.

Mr. Watts: We love to hear you.

Mr. NORTH: That is nice. The next point deals with a local requirement. It was

mentioned by one of my opponents during the last election. He was very anxious to have beautification carried out in the district. He wanted to beautify the Cottesloe beach and also the Claremont river foreshore. He also wanted a beautified Butler's Swamp. Butler's Swamp, I may inform the House, is a space of water near the Claremont station, at present very cluttered with dead gum trees, and not very beautiful, either. Those three proposals for beautifying the district will receive the commendation of everybody after the war.

Mr. Marshall: Is that not rather a matter for the municipality?

Mr. NORTH: As a matter of fact it is, but the State Government invited the local authority to submit plans of this nature for post-war work. I hope that during the session the Government will tell us something of the plans that have been submitted so that we shall know what is being done. These matters will be of considerable interest to us later on.

Mr. J. Hegney: What about completing the sewerage scheme?

Mr. NORTH: Yes, the completion of the sewerage system in my district would be a very acceptable work. The local council has approached the Minister, but he prefers to see the sewage lifted and pumped into the main scheme as soon as the requisite money can be made available.

Mr. J. Hegney: What about the lake on the other side?

Mr. NORTH: That is known as "Butler's Swamp" and I have already made reference to it. I do not wish to take up the time of the House longer with parish pump matters. What I wish to deal with more particularly is the fact that during the last 10 years I have been opposed at the general election by other Nationalists endorsed by the party. This in itself is quite in order; it is authorised by a party rule. It happens also that during the past 10 years I have been elected by the same party to its executive, which is the cabinet of the party. During the election it was strongly stressed in my district that for a member of the party who had won his seat on six occasions to be continually opposed by a member of the same party placed him in a very unsatisfactory position, and the electors are very curious to know why this should happen. I propose to give

the answer. I say that the party acted quite within its rights in endorsing the other candidate. The party always has the right to permit opposition to the sitting member. That is one of the planks of our platform. I am aware that I have earned the displeasure of some sections of the party and probably that justified their opposition.

There are several matters which I have brought forward or supported in the House and which did not appear on the party platform. In 1924 I moved in favour of a power scheme at Collie. That item did not appear in the party programme. In 1925 when the Government brought down an amendment to the Industrial Arbitration Act dealing with the basic wage, I contended that the amendment should not be confined to the question of the basic wage but should include also the question of family allowances for women and children. This, I consider, is the right policy to go hand-in-hand with a provision for a basic wage. This was not on the party platform, but 15 years later the Commonwealth Government made provision for the payment of those allowances. Yet the fact of my advocating those allowances 15 years ago brought upon me censure from some members of the party. In 1926 I supported a motion, carried in both Chambers, advocating the broadening of the railway gauge from Kalgoorlie to Fremantle. That, also, was not in the party programme and again I incurred displeasure for my attitude, and almost immediately afterwards the Premier repudiated the idea of the project being practicable at the time. Yet today it figures as one of the 14 points.

The Premier: But to be financed by a different authority.

MR. NORTH: The motion to which I refer did not ask that the State should do the work.

The Premier: But there was a scheme for the State to do it.

MR. NORTH: Yes, and under that scheme the Port Augusta-Red Hill and Brisbane-Kyogle sections were built. I am merely explaining why I have had to face opposition at the general election. The reason is that I have brought before the people proposals which at the time were not included in the party programme. In 1928, on behalf of the people of Claremont, I tabled a motion dealing with nutrition. At the time it was considered to be something new-fangled, the idea of a crank, but we know

today what attention is being given to this matter everywhere. Everyone is interested in it, especially the member for Subiaco.

In 1930 onwards I moved for a Royal Commission on banking and my action on that occasion brought me enmity. I repeat that the party was fully justified in acting as it did, or rather those members of it who opposed me, but I contend that time has proved that my views and those of Claremont were not altogether unsound. In every case effect has been given to the proposals, including the Commission which the Lyons Government granted. The report of the Commission was an excellent one, so excellent that a copy of it cannot now be obtained. The whole issue is whether a party should be hidebound or should permit its members to advocate ideas apart from those set out on the party platform and, of course, take the consequences. That is the course I have followed for 20 years and I am proud of it, notwithstanding that it has cost me a good deal of worry and money. Events have shown that I was not far wrong in my attitude. Many of the things for which I have fought in the past are accomplished facts today and every party favours them. Of course, after the Referendum, there may be fights to get some of the decisions carried out in full detail.

I now wish to bring forward a subject which I know is a matter of interest to the Deputy Premier and to members of the Country Party, and that is the subject of soil. In the last six months my attention has been directed to this matter. I admit that it is primarily a subject for farmers, who might consider that a member representing a metropolitan constituency should leave it to them but, so far as I can learn, it is of such magnitude that the House should consider it. At the right time the Minister for Lands might be able to give us some data on the subject. I propose to bring it forward in the form of a motion with a view to getting an inquiry made. My first point is that the soil is failing—going back; and my second point is that we have gone too far in our demands on the soil; in other words, we are taking too much out of it. The Rothamsted Experimental Station, with the work of which members are acquainted, is endeavouring to show that our action in discharging human excreta through deep sewerage drains into the sea, together with the use of artificial manures, is having an

effect on the soil, which, in the course of a very short time, will completely bring about the doom of civilisation. A writer, H. R. Broadbent, quoted Raymond Gram Swing as having broadcast that at the present rate of soil and water depletion, in 50 years the fertile soil of the United States will be one quarter of what it is now, and in 100 years at the present rate of depletion the American Continent will become another Sahara.

The article continued—

Perhaps he was thinking of other civilisations buried in the sands; the ruins of ancient towns and villages in the Gobi Desert, Palestine and Mesopotamia.

The conservation of the world's soils is only just beginning—monoculture is disappearing and crop rotations are taking its place with a complement of animal husbandry to maintain fertility. Diversity is displacing monotony, and the natural protection of the soil provided by a canopy of vegetation, ground cover of litter and underground network of binding roots in soil laden with humus, is being imitated as much as possible by the protective systems of farming now being devised. But every step taken increases the number of men working on the land and reduces the surplus available for machine production. The foundation of our present machine production is disappearing.

The writer was showing that the whole of our industrial age has been stolen, as it were, from the soil. We have taken too much out of it, and in some parts of the world there has been serious depletion of fertility. I have mentioned this matter because, in some parts of the world, it has been so badly attended to that we in this State might well consider it in good time and see whether some action should not be taken. The contention of the writer was that we are not at a balance, that man, considered as an animal and the most numerous of all animals, does not return to the soil what he takes out of it and, because of our various sewerage systems, much fertiliser is being lost to the soil. One student claims that the Roman Empire fell because, among other reasons, the marvellous sewerage schemes of the day deprived the soil of so much fertiliser for centuries that it became necessary for the people to be fed from North Africa.

That, of course, is carrying the case a little further than we need go. All we have to ask ourselves is whether we are taking too much from the soil, whether we are putting back something as good, and whether an alteration of the sewerage system would en-

able us to get better results. The Cambridge experts contend that the sewage should be used on the soil and have invented a very clever method of mixing it with mulch. They take all the leaves and dressings from the gardens and mix them with the crude heavy sewage. This is then spread over the soil and gives as good a result as the natural excreta without the ensuing unpleasantness that comes from the product of sewage farms. I admit this is not a savoury subject, but there is a dangerous future before the world if it is not given prominence and not looked into in the right way.

Member: You are not suggesting that that should replace superphosphate?

Mr. NORTH: Far be it from me to pit my knowledge against the local experts on matters of this sort. A few weeks ago I was in the Midland areas talking to farmers, who volunteered the information that superphosphate by itself eventually flogs the soil to death.

Mr. Berry: That is so.

Mr. NORTH: The question we have to ask ourselves is whether we should find out through a commission what is the effect of our present system—I would not suggest decrying the use of superphosphate, but asking whether we should add something to our soils that is now being lost. I have referred to the fact that under the plans of present and previous Governments the people of Western Australia have been denied the use of the sewage taken from the soil because it has been thrown into the sea. I have so far merely touched on the fringe of this insidious and dangerous subject. The experts at the Cambridge experimental school say that where they have used new sludge from the deep sewage farms, they are restoring the health of the people. They claim that the denial to the soil of this good quality manure has eventually undermined the health of the inhabitants, and that a great deal of the expenditure by Governments on hospitals is being traced to that soil which has been flogged and has not been able to do the job Nature intended it to do. There is another line which could be followed up. I would quote a few remarks from another article by Reginald Reynolds under the heading of "Salvage of Soil." The extract is as follows:—

Some of the most startling evidence on the necessity for organic manure comes from the

researches of Sir Robert McCarrison, who was for years engaged in studying the causes of deficiency diseases in India. One of his principal discoveries was that Indian crops were lacking in nutritive properties. This deficiency in the crops he traced in turn to the soil. Owing to the poverty of the peasants, cow dung that should have gone back to the land had for generations been burnt as fuel. But even when he experimented with artificial fertilisers, McCarrison concluded that crops fertilised by cattle manure were 15 per cent. more nutritious than those artificially manured.

These aspects of the question might form part of the work of inquiry into the new order. Although I do not say that this matter is not already well in hand in Western Australia, I do feel that it is one that merits the fullest attention in the right quarter and as soon as possible. I am rather ashamed with regard to the failure of certain residents in my district to achieve prominence over this subject, notwithstanding the attempts that were made in this direction a few years ago. There is a gentleman named Johnson who lives at Claremont, who for successive years has been attempting to get before various Ministers to induce them to listen to what he had to say. Time after time he was told by one of the departments that there were good men now in the service and that these questions were being gone into. One day he became so cross that he went to his own backyard and in the sand grew some of the very things he claimed could be grown by the use of the right ingredients.

Members have never seen anything like the tomatoes and other vegetables which this gentleman grew by his own methods. They were of a terrific size, very nutritious, and nice to look at. He had been unable to convince Ministers concerning his theories and so he did the job himself. Before he came to Australia he was in charge of the estate of some big personage in the Old Country. Mr. Johnson became an expert on cultures. His point is that we in Western Australia must get our soil back to where it was and return to the use of animal and human manures and not depend too much upon those of an artificial character. Furthermore, we should not allow the human manure to be lost by deep sewerage.

I also wish to deal with an after-the-war subject which has not been very prominent. We have had post-war talks for many years, but it all seems to deal with the mundane or workaday side of our activi-

ties. I would strongly stress the need for a change of heart in our public works policy, if not in our public activities generally, in regard to the beautification of our landscape. A few years ago it was almost impossible to bring forward such a subject because we had become so workaday, so much immersed in balance sheets, taxation, etc., that we did not dare suggest anything like beautifying the landscape. I have a motion on the notice paper dealing with the question of encouraging tourists after the war and creating a tourist industry. It should be possible to draw attention to the need in a public works policy of this country for proposals for the beautification of our landscapes.

I have seen terrible instances of lost opportunities in that direction, to say nothing of cross-currents. I have seen two departments fighting each other with the result that neither has been able to achieve its object. Along the seafront at Cottesloe, the best part of the district, there is an instance of what I mean, although a comparatively small one. Some years ago at great expense a number of Norfolk Island pines were planted there. They grew into fine trees, 60 or 70 feet in height. There were not many such trees in the district at the time. Notwithstanding the terrific gales, these trees have defied the elements and present a fine spectacle, and a first-class example to other districts. In places, however, we now find that the Electricity Department has erected poles along the street amongst these pines with the result that we now see four wires on poles and the trees either cut in half or otherwise badly mutilated.

Mr. Berry: That is characteristic of some departments.

MR. NORTH: Here and there only the upright posts with wires on them are left. That is typical of our outlook in connection with landscape planning. The time has come when we should inaugurate some policy of beautification without any fear of subsequent interference. In my early days in the House we were frightened to spend a penny on even essential works. I have been looking through "Hansard" and find that long before the days of the depression, when we had millions to spend, and when the Collier Government was in office, and before the big crash, two leaders of the House, one on each side, had some-

thing to say about the expenditure of money.

The Premier: Those were the days.

Mr. NORTH: In 1928 one of them said, "We cannot afford roads in Western Australia," and the other said, "Oh, I think we can afford some roads." In an economic mental atmosphere of that sort, in the days when millions were coming in, it would have been impossible to suggest spending a little money to make our country more beautiful and remove the eyesores that are ever present today. In this year of 1944 when we are told in a British White Paper that the new policy of Britain is to be a policy of plenty instead of scarcity, of full employment instead of depression, surely it is the time when this Chamber can consider not only a public works programme for Western Australia, but making the country more beautiful for its inhabitants to live in.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Great Britain can raise the money, but this State cannot do so.

Mr. NORTH: That is perfectly true at the moment, but I am referring to the year 1928 when the State had plenty of power for the raising of money. We have lost that power now.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: We voted it away in 1928.

Mr. NORTH: The hon. member is referring to a subject I have carefully avoided. Whether it is a State or a Federal matter we know that the policy of plenty is now a world policy. That is shown in the recent food conference in America, in the British White Paper, and in the Federal sphere.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: And in the war expenditure.

Mr. NORTH: Yes. Instead of its being a house for the people it is a barracks for the troops, but there is plenty of money. What I suggest can be done, although I admit that the taxation element is not a pleasing one. We should set our hands firmly to the plough and make Western Australia a more beautiful place for its inhabitants to live in. It means so much to the lives of the people. We are facing racial extinction. Mothers have thrown up their jobs and gone on strike. If we are going to encourage families we will have to begin by making not only homes but the country itself more attractive, instead of taking every opportunity to spoil the beauty of the land, as has been done, for instance, in the wheatbelt where trees have

been cut like the hairs on a man's face under the razor. We must make a beautiful landscape everywhere such as is to be seen on the Midland line.

A beautiful landscape can be profitable; money can be made out of it. For instance, if fences could be replaced by hedges, the same boundaries would persist and there would be no need continually to renew them. I absolve myself and members of this House and past members of Parliament of both Houses from any neglect to bring this question forward. As I have endeavoured to indicate, we were in the past living under a so-called scarcity complex under which money was made by keeping goods short-supplied and charging higher prices for them. Working on such lines, men cannot afford to beautify their country. I suggest that the Government should consider legislation for an overhaul of the town planning laws to make them of larger moment and broader scope in such a way as to improve this country for the producer, the retailer and the consumer.

We need a policy that will transform our countryside. The next time members happen to be at a picture show—and I am sure some members go sometimes—I would urge them to compare the scenes in some of the coloured travel talks with those in our Australian news-reels. In pictures of this country—even of Sydney, on which we pride ourselves—we perceive the ramshackle and unfinished appearance of the country in contrast with the beauties of Europe and the United States of America. Yet we could have much better landscapes because we have easier climatic conditions. Moreover, thousands of tons of water in this State alone have run to waste year after year. We have hardly scratched the engineering side of conservation. But in the past it has been a matter of scarcity of money. In 1928 I said—

Mr. Marshall: You argue that the greater the national debt the more prosperity there is.

Mr. NORTH: The hon. member knows that I consider that is a question of mathematics. There is no need for me to advance arguments of that kind because a White Paper issued by the British Government and dealing with banking policy touches on the subject very fully. I do not wish to waste time by dealing with astronomical figures.

Mr. Marshall: This country has to find a hundred million pounds a year to service the war.

Mr. NORTH: Yes, the debt will not be far from £3,000,000,000 if the war lasts another two years. But to me those are only figures. We should look at the assets and see what we possess today and not worry about costs. We have been told by all the political heads that full employment is inevitable—or rather not inevitable but feasible—and with full employment all these things can be done.

Mr. Needham: Should it not be inevitable?

Mr. NORTH: Yes, it should be. If my friend wishes me to deal with that subject, which has been raised in this House before, my reply is that the Commonwealth Government has already a report on that subject on which to work. Not only that, but the present Government went to the country on a certain financial policy—

Mr. J. Hegney: Mr. Curtin was defeated on his financial policy on the first occasion.

Mr. NORTH: The beautification of the countryside does not need to be held up on the score of finance because the present Commonwealth Government has declared that what is physically possible can be made financially possible. The rest is pure mathematics. That does not worry me. I am not concerned whether gold is available or not. I consider gold is a beautiful metal, and could even be included in beautification schemes. But let us see the gold! Let us get it from the vaults and use it. Someone should work out how much gold we would all have if it were distributed amongst the people, not merely in the form of coins but, possibly, in the form of a gold watch for every respectable adult. Is there enough gold in the world to enable that to be done?

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Are there enough respectable adults?

Mr. NORTH: We should adopt the policy of some older countries in regard to our countryside. We should make it beautiful to live in and not a place to get away from in a hurry. Our seaside, river and picnic resorts should be made beautiful. Let beauty everywhere, in every local government area, be our policy. I have been as far as Geraldton in the north and Albany in the south in this State, and my view is that our country is not as beautiful as it could be and that

there has never been a local authority that has dared to think of beautifying the district under its control to any considerable extent. Road board members have not dared to mention the word beautification. At present we know that the coffers of local governing authorities are substantially filled.

Mr. Leslie: But certain work requires to be done urgently.

Mr. NORTH: Yes, I would not suggest that the local authorities should use their existing finances on beautification schemes. But if we are to have a new policy of full employment for all, let us put men on to useful work and not merely, as in the depression years, weeding the grass. There was an interesting story concerning what happened in America during the depression. There public works were carried out under Mr. Roosevelt's direction. Some of the men known in America as "bums" were employed shifting dirt. They did a little calculation and worked out what it would cost to utilise a steam navy to do their work for them. Each of them put 5½ cents a day into a pool for the purpose of securing this machinery, which did the work for them, and enabled them to sit on the grass at the side of the work playing poker. I think in some ways that was one of the finest contributions of the depression towards economic doctrines. The days of the depression have gone, and when we talk of public works and full employment now, surely we do not envisage the digging and filling of holes! Surely we intend to have the latest machinery available and get the most intelligent and useful work from our employees that is possible. Far be it from me, however, to suggest that private industry should be mulet in regard to the big works that will be undertaken, including the beautifying of our landscape. These things are for men not required in industry.

The final point to which I wish to refer concerns the 44-hour week. In 1925 the Government of the day was advocating a 44-hour week, whereas the Opposition was in favour of a 48-hour week. I had to oppose the measure for a 44-hour week, which was before the Chamber, because I was a member of the Opposition and had loyally to exercise my vote with the Opposition on vital matters. But in speaking on the matter I intimated that the reason I was opposing

the 44-hour week was not because I was in favour of a 48-hour week, but because I considered we had the machinery to enable us to produce what we wanted to produce in the lesser time, and that if men worked more than 44 hours it would end in war, as had been the case in the past. That war did actually occur. That is what caused the flutter in the dovescotes. I am equally convinced today that if those people in command—

Mr. Needham: Would you call them dovescotes?

Mr. NORTH: I am convinced that if those in the higher spheres of administration who arrange these things at international Labour conferences could make provision for a 40-hour week, they would be doing a service. The trouble is that half of the 8-hour day which is worked is spent either in producing disaster or in making efforts to cure disasters already caused, and only half of the day is productive. All we have to do is to overcome the causes of disaster and leave men free to engage fully in the production and distribution of the things that mankind requires. I have enjoyed very much the 20 years of service I have been able to render in this Chamber. The representatives of the people at Claremont have not figured on the Government bench but those people, through their representatives, have made many contributions to thought, and have made suggestions that have been adopted in other quarters. Far be it from myself or anybody in my district to be so mean or low as to claim the credit. I think we are all useful, but unfortunately for us only a few people will realise the usefulness of others. They are all so anxious to be useful themselves.

The Minister for Lands: You can only get epitaphs when you are dead.

Mr. NORTH: Yes. I think it is nicer to be returned here and see what is going on. My final word—

Mr. J. Hegney: You will be here for another 20 years.

Mr. NORTH: I do not know about that. It is getting harder all the time.

The Minister for Works: We come in and save you every time.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. NORTH: Any suggestion of looking to the hours per week instead of looking to

the production and other sides of our problems is not advanced with the idea that we should reduce the hours of work tomorrow, or next week, but that the question should be approached from that angle. Let us consider the effect after a few years of this new policy of full employment which, so far, is only proposed and has not been in force anywhere in the world, except during the war when there has been full employment. Unless it is dealt with, the productivity of industry will reach a stage, at the expiration of a few years by working the present hours, when we will have a terrific surplus of commodities.

I suggest to this House, as I have on several occasions, that the question of hours should be reviewed and analysed by experts in an endeavour to find out how much of the working week is really occupied, not in beneficial effort, but in repairing evil, and in the occupation of those who are causing evil. The total together gives us the full week. In the past the question has been masked because we have never had full employment. There have always been hundreds of thousands and, in some cases, millions of persons not employed. It has been said that those people were not capable of giving efficient work and that the reason for their unemployment has been their own inefficiency. That doctrine has been exposed as being false. Nearly all economists today agree that it was the mal-adjustment of working conditions that caused that unemployment. Members will realise that after a few years, when we will have overtaken the war ravages, the housing shortages, and the consumption-goods shortages, the day will come, though not perhaps in our lifetime, when, under the machine age with its tremendous electric power, the hours of work will have to be reduced because of the output of goods. I, personally, cannot see any objection to that though in many places dismay is felt when the question is brought forward. With these few remarks I have much pleasure in supporting the motion.

MR. BERRY (Irwin-Moore): First of all, I want to associate myself with the various tributes and congratulations that have been extended to the appointment, in particular, of the member for North-East Fremantle to the position he now holds. I think, as most of us do, that he will fill it, not only with honour to himself, but with

satisfaction to the people. In the second place I wish to welcome the new members. Everyone will agree with me when I suggest that the two new members who have spoken in this House have made most excellent speeches; more particularly when due regard is given to the fact that they are maiden speeches. I congratulate them both. We have two more still to come. I have no doubt that we will hear from them just as efficient speeches as those that have already been delivered. It is practically five years since this war began. When I came here as a new member the attitude of our minds towards its ultimate outcome, whilst in no way pessimistic, was decidedly disturbing. Since that time there has been, in our fortunes, such a marked change that we are now coming to regard this struggle as something which is almost complete. That is entirely satisfactory.

When the European situation is cleared up—and it might clear up at any moment—the problem of dealing with the Asiatic, in the shape of the Japanese, will be paramount. With the knowledge I have of these people in the far eastern countries, I believe that we will all be surprised at the ease and speed with which we will put them in their correct perspective. I am sometimes sorely tempted, knowing the people, to hope that they will go on destroying themselves in the way they have done. There is no need for me, having lived a large part of my life among them, to say that I have absolutely no sympathy whatsoever for the Japanese. While I am on the subject of the war, I would like to point out that in "The Daily News" there appeared something which I consider to be thoroughly alarming, although it was something I was anticipating. I shall read the extract before I discuss it. It is a bannered column and is headed: "Americans Are Winning the War." It is as follows:—

"Americans are winning this war," says the Chicago Tribune in an editorial.

"We are doing virtually all the fighting in the Pacific, have made virtually all advances in France since the initial beachheads were established.

"Our industry has meant difference between hopeless stalemate and victory to the Russians.

"This is an American-made victory and peace must be an American peace."

That was written by the editor of the "Chicago Tribune." I can only assume that he is an arrogant pup. The paragraph is a

piece of unmitigated cheek! It behoves us to make a request to the Commonwealth Government that our Ministry of Information corrects statements of that sort. They are entirely damaging. That man has completely forgotten that after Dunkirk, when we were down and out—

The Minister for Works: Not down!

The Premier: Down, but not out!

Mr. BERRY: Well, practically down and out, the Royal Air Force and the British Navy probably—and I think definitely—not only saved Europe, Australia and the rest of the British Dominions, but it actually saved America. Had Britain fallen I cannot see how the American people could have withstood a two-pronged attack—from Germany on one side and Japan on the other. That is exactly what would have happened. I think that in a statement of this sort it is forgotten that Australian troops were in New Guinea. I am told, although I do not know definitely, that Australians were there in the proportion of six to one by comparison with the Americans. I consider this to be an irresponsible statement from an irresponsible man in an irresponsible newspaper! He had probably forgotten that the British Forces drove the Germans out of the Middle East.

Mr. Marshall: He may never have known that.

Mr. BERRY: It is time he knew it. It is our duty to inform the proper authority that this sort of thing could quite easily influence the minds of American citizens to the extent of making them believe that at the peace table it should be an American peace. If that happened, it would be a disaster.

The Premier: That viewpoint does not prevail among the American people.

Mr. BERRY: The statement appeared in an important newspaper that probably has an enormous circulation, and it behoves us to do something about it.

Mr. North: That paper has a circulation of a million copies a day.

Mr. BERRY: Probably! The British characteristic of not bragging is one that could with advantage be slightly modified. Our Navy has done a magnificent work, and I think we should say so. Whenever the Navies of our Allies do anything, we hear about it. If we want concord and harmony, and if we are honest in our statements that we are going to have a golden age to live in after the war, statements of that kind ought

not to be published, because they merely irritate people. Talking of the golden age, I trust that it will not prove to be merely a period of multitudinous forms, irritating signatures and boards of control. We are sick and tired of that sort of thing. Having read the Speech of the Lieut.-Governor, I regard it as a bone with very little meat on it.

The Minister for Mines: But meat is rationed, you know.

Mr. BERRY: So is the information in the Speech.

Mr. Needham: Anyhow, there is plenty of marrow in the bones.

Mr. BERRY: To lapse into the vernacular, "You're telling me." I was pleased however, to note a reference to proposed action to unify the railway gauges of Australia. This is a job that should have been undertaken years ago. How important and necessary it is has already been shown to us by the position that arose, in this State particularly, when the Japanese entered the war. We recollect the condition of congestion, almost of panic congestion, when people were leaving the Far East and coming here in ships, large, small and indifferent, in fact in any ship that would bring them. We also realise that had the Japanese followed up their victories in Java, a rapid push by them to Western Australia would have made things very sorry for us. Our last two years would have been a period of intense discomfort. There was much talk of letting this State go because it was so ill-protected. Had it been the desire of the people in the Eastern States to convey by rail to this State both soldiers and equipment, a very serious problem would have confronted them to make the many changes that the railway system would have been called upon to make. It is not the fault of the present State or Commonwealth Government that that condition should have existed, but the fact remains that the time has come when the railway gauges must be unified to safeguard future generations.

The first war in which Australia took an interest in a practical way was the Boer War. We sent soldiers to South Africa. In 1914-18, the period of the first Great War, the area of conflict actually came closer to Australia, as was evidenced by the fact that several of our ships were sunk by raiders or by mines in the immedi-

ate vicinity of our coast. During the present war, Australia has actually been bombed. What is going to happen in the next war is a matter for conjecture, but if the scientific progress of the world continues, it will be quite safe to say that next time—and there will be a next time unless we radically change economic conditions—Australia will be right in the conflict. There is no need to stress the urgency of the work of unifying the gauges. It is one of the points that is going to decide my attitude to the voting on the 19th of this month.

Another point in this somewhat meatless Speech is the fact that at long last the Railway Department has been able to do something in the direction of obtaining Diesel coaches. The condition into which our railways have fallen is deplorable. I have frequently experienced on the Wongan Hills line the inadequacy of the service, the time the journey takes and the fact that it is very difficult to get any food on that line. Since the outbreak of war, people have been compelled, as a result of petrol rationing, to travel by train much more than they did previously. I have spoken to the Minister and I understand it is difficult for him to do anything at the moment, but something must be done as soon as possible, and I trust that the Diesel coaches will be used on the country lines and not run in the immediate neighbourhood of Perth. While on the subject of railways, let me refer to the question of transport to and from places like Rockingham, Safety Bay and Mandurah. Through the shortage of houses, I have been compelled to live at Safety Bay.

The Minister for Mines: A nice suburb.

Mr. BERRY: Yes, but if the Minister had to travel in a bus crowded almost beyond capacity and take two hours, sometimes longer, to do 36 miles, he would consider that the suburb was not quite so attractive. If the Americans actually possessed this country and those beautiful seaside resorts, they would have taken steps to ensure that the people had ready access to them. The real way to get through is to build a railway line from Perth to Rockingham, Safety Bay and Mandurah as quickly as possible; and if a diesel coach were put on that line, the people would be served. I have a feeling all the time that in Australia we are not very concerned about comfort. Comfort appears to be the one thing we regard as being somewhat

“sissy”. Therefore it is left to us to put up with these anomalies and I have no doubt the people of Western Australia will go on putting up with them for ages yet, whilst it would be possible for us to make what the member for Claremont has described as beauty resorts at the expenditure of a few pounds on decent railway accommodation. But it has to be decent! I admit that the railway system of Western Australia has suffered from depreciation because of the demands of war. However, that depreciation would have occurred just the same had there been no war. I trust the matter will be given consideration.

I trust also that the people who have put up with the atrocious Toodyay-Miling run will receive the very earliest attention. That train service is simply deplorable. I was going up to Miling some time ago, and intended to travel by train, but I was requested by the Miling people please to come by car as otherwise they would not know when I would arrive. The train was due at 7 p.m., but the residents of Miling assured me that it never arrived before 9 p.m. In this particular instance it arrived at 10.30. The rate of travel is a little faster than a man could walk. So that there is great need for attention to the existing railway service. I hope that this new Parliament and the new Government, realising that the matter is essential, will go into the business and give up the practice of being niggardly. We are always told that there is no money. However, if funds are needed for destruction, there is always plenty.

The time is coming when the old rotten financial system must go by the board. The member for Claremont reminded me tonight that when speaking here about five years ago, I tried to paint a picture of the debt situation, depicting the rising debt as being something which would eventually necessitate the writing of our debt figures in a 10-acre paddock, as paper would not accommodate those figures; and I also said that we would need ledger keepers mounted on horses writing figures in the dust. I prophesied that the end of it would be that a whirlwind would blow away all those figures. That position has come about today. The essential feature of post-war reconstruction must be the writing-off of debts. There will be no post-war reconstruction, no golden age, no new order so long as the peoples of

the countries of the world are loaded down with so much debt that it is impossible for them to purchase the ordinary amenities of life. We have already had that position, and we must not have it again. I hold that one of the greatest problems now confronting us is the question of how we are to employ the spare time of the people.

At the week-end I was away on perhaps the most enjoyable of trips through the country I have ever had. I went in company with the Minister for Lands and Agriculture and his very attractive companions, who with him form the Commission on Post-War Rural Reconstruction. I repeat, it was a most enjoyable week-end. There was only one jarring note uttered by the Minister's companions, and that was when they told us that they demanded more efficiency from the woolgrowers; that the way to meet the post-war troubles of wool was to reduce the cost of producing it. I have heard that economic story now for 30 years. I was told it when engaged in the rubber industry. I was told then that we must reduce our cost of approximately 1s. 11d. per lb. for produced rubber because of the receding market. At a great sacrifice to the health and wealth of the people we brought the cost below 3d. per lb. And what did it avail us? Nothing at all. The price had receded even as we reduced the cost, and something eventually had to be done to meet the situation, because the price of rubber had fallen to the amazing figure of 2d. per lb. Even at that niggardly figure some of us were able to save our skins from disaster, but at what a cost to the economic life of the community!

If we want efficiency from our farmers to meet post-war prices of products, we also want efficiency from the city businessman who handles the raw material. If we reduce the cost of the wool required for a suit of clothes by, say, 6d. and the tailor does not bring down his price equally, we are back exactly where we were. If after this war we are to be honest in our endeavours to bring about a better state of affairs for the people, we must tackle the problem of price-fixing by the middle man, whom we, perhaps somewhat ungenerously, call a parasite on the industry. The week-end tour to which I have referred included many bright aspects. One of the brightest was the company I was in. Another bright feature is really

an answer to the member for Claremont when he told us that he wanted all the latrines in the country districts to be turned into cabbages. In China all the excreta are liberally preserved and used on the vegetable gardens, with the result that in the Far East one does not dare eat lettuce or vegetables which are the product of that manure.

I have a very good electorate, perhaps one of the soundest agricultural electorates in the State. There the people are already alive to a great deal of what the member for Claremont has stated, and perhaps to something more. We know there is a danger that superphosphate will eventually destroy the nitrogenous and humus value of our topsoil, yet we cannot return the nitrogenous quality to the soil of this State without the application of superphosphate. If the hon. member went to this particular part that we visited he would find the amazing spectacle of acre upon acre of pasture land which is to a very high degree nitrogenous owing to the introduction, care and ultimate success of subterranean clover. He would find that not only the sheep themselves have benefited but also the men who own them. It is not so many years ago when the carrying capacity of my own land fell from about 1,500 to 900 sheep. People told me that the sheep died of toxic paralysis, but I know that they actually died of starvation. By planting subterranean clover, topdressing and pasture generally I have since, with I think only an additional 150 acres opened, carried 2,500 sheep during the whole year. The member for Claremont will be interested to know that the sheep themselves provide manure, as do the cattle. We find it absolutely essential to stock our properties to maintain the fertility at which we have already arrived.

That brings me to another problem, namely, education. The Miling pasture group of which I spoke is so fully alive to this question that it has incorporated it in its programme. It is absolutely essential for us now to tackle this problem with vigour. We should start by educating our Education Department. I got a good deal of information by viewing the film which came to us from Tasmania and which showed us the amazing strides that had been made there. I do not know how many members were present on that occasion; I went in the afternoon and had a most enjoyable time. I learnt how backward this State was in the matter of education, although I realised that we

have to contend with great distances, which is not the case in Tasmania. I did notice, however, in the film that the children were brought to school in buses of a much better type than our metropolitan buses and certainly much better than the rough trucks used in this State for a similar purpose.

Apparently it is recognised in Tasmania that the academic teaching of children can be reduced in a great measure by giving them practical education outside the school walls. We would do well to emulate that State; it seems to me that little Tasmania is putting it all over us. Education must begin with the youngster and be carried on when he is an adult, in order that he may then be able to grapple with life's problems as they arise. We should send teachers from this and the other States of Australia to the Far East to educate the teeming millions of China and of India. If we really desire to solve the problem of post-war marketing and the disposal of our wheat and our wool—both of which will be thorny problems—we should realise that we must improve the buying power of 480,000,000 in China and an equal number in India. We would then not have to worry for many years. They would buy everything we had to sell. The problem is to educate those peoples to do it. We should have enough sense to do so.

The Minister for Mines: They might come and take all we have in 25 years.

Mr. BERRY: I prophesy that in 25 years we will be fighting China. I want to save the Minister from that disaster by improving the lot of those people in time.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BERRY: I am interested in attempting to save those people. We shall have many problems after the war. One of the most serious is synthetic fibre competition. I have seen in this city a most attractive toothbrush which I was assured on the best of authority was made of casein and a little coal, but mostly air. The brush was attractive enough to catch the eye of anybody, and it is the kind of competition that our raw products must face. That is one of the problems of the future. Are we to sit here idly making inane remarks and not do anything about the matter? The entire problem could be modified for us by our educating the peoples of the Far East. They have already had an impetus on account of the war, but even before hostilities commenced were looking towards the west for western civilisa-

tion and comfort. Education therefore is of paramount importance.

We were hoping while the Minister was in the Milng district to be able to impress upon him the necessity for establishing as early as possible somewhere in that vicinity a school of agriculture similar to the one at Narrogin. There is ample scope for it there. West of Moora and towards Dandarragan we have a neglected type of country possessing amazing potentialities. There is an ample water supply; lupins will grow if one merely throws them about. The fat stock are really remarkable, and I have eaten the best oranges in the State there. I am told that vines do well in the district.

The Premier: I have been there, but I will take you to Northampton some day.

Mr. BERRY: Maybe! I have not been there, but I do know that we are not availing ourselves of the great opportunities we have in this particular district, which will have to be considered when we are talking in terms of closer settlement. We are still looking to the dry areas while we have all this valuable country lying in a state of neglect. There is every reason for establishing an agricultural school in the vicinity; I do not think the people of my electorate would object if the school were built outside the district, so long as it was near enough for their children to attend and profit by it. There is a definite cry right throughout the country today for greater educational facilities. People are alive to a need which has existed for years and has been neglected. I know that in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech there is reference to what we are going to do in the post-war period in regard to education. Why can we not do it now? Are we doing what we constantly do in this Assembly, namely waiting until tomorrow? That is what we did with regard to our railways until we nearly lost our freedom, our identity and our lives. We talk glibly of training people later on. What is wrong with training a few now and getting on with this business immediately? I am not asking these questions alone; the people are asking me to ask them.

There is no excuse for the procrastination that has gone on to such an extent that the time has come when, if it continues, the people will demand the disbandment of State Parliaments. The more vigorous we are here, the greater our opportunity of remaining if we wish to remain. But if we have spine-

less legislation and do not thrust ourselves into the very forefront and obtain concessions for our State there will be no State Parliament left in three years' time. Or if there is, it will be a very modified one. I see an endeavour is to be made to provide greater voting strength in relation to the other place, as we must call the Upper House in this Chamber, though I could never guess why. If many more votes are provided for the Upper House it will be merely a duplicate of this Chamber, unless Labour secures sufficient seats to enable that House to be dissolved. It is amazing that that party has never once put forward a motion for such a dissolution. Again, I am merely mentioning things that have been told me.

The Premier: They are not facts

Mr. BERRY: Can the Premier point to any motion of the kind?

The Minister for Mines: I myself moved an amendment to an Address-in-reply with a view to abolishing that House.

Mr. BERRY: I thank the Minister for the information. I next wish to refer to the possibility of inducing people to come to Australia. People will be persuaded to come here only when the country is made sufficiently attractive to them. That point was made very clear by the members of the Parliamentary delegation who addressed us in this Chamber a few weeks ago. If the attraction exists people will come here but, if we are going to adopt the same method of bringing people here that was adopted before when they were put on group settlements in the South-West and loaded with debt, we will have the same chaotic sadness as we had previously, and as was in evidence in Victoria. If this is an attractive country people will come to it. Australia is an attractive land and the people of Australia are attractive, but they have a lot to learn. I endeavoured to make that clear when I spoke about the railways and I think the member for Claremont made it apparent when he spoke of the necessity for Australia being beautified. In that connection a great deal of work has been done.

When I first came to Western Australia I wanted to stay here because Perth was so beautiful. Though I have never been to Adelaide, there is scarcely a city of importance in Australia that I have not visited, but I have never seen one—Sydney, where I came from, included—that can beat Perth. I pay tribute to those responsible for the

present beautification, and I know that we still have in our Ministry some men who are imbued with a desire to make this place sufficiently beautiful and conditions sufficiently attractive from a financial point of view to induce people to want to come here, people who would pay their fares to come and who would wish to settle permanently and completely. But so long as we adopt a dog-in-the-manger attitude and the attitude of "anything will do," people will remain away from the State because that sort of reputation travels fast abroad. It has already done so. We cannot expect people to come here to settle if they are to be placed on the land and allowed to live as I have seen them living, worse than the native people in the Far East who are contemptuously described as niggers. The great problem is, do we want people to come? That is as important as the other question of trade with other countries. If we propose to seek markets in far eastern countries, are we prepared in return to take the products of those countries? If not, we are wasting our time. If we are going to exhibit a spirit of nationalism as we did before the war, we will indeed be in a sorry plight.

In addition to the delightful week-end which I had in the country and to which I have referred, I had another attractive week-end when the Minister for Education travelled with me to the native settlement at Mogumber and then on to Moora. The Mogumber settlement is a disgrace to this community. For the want of a few pounds expended on paint the place looks degraded and dirty. In my conversations, I found that there was an undercurrent of "fed-upness" and it did not take long to realise why. It seems that another failing we have in Australia is to seek to pay the lowest possible wages for work done. When we want somebody to go to an isolated spot like a native mission and to take on what is perhaps one of the toughest jobs we could attempt, we advertise for a married man in order that a few paltry pounds may be saved by utilising the wife. I do not know how much is paid, but from what I hear it is very little. By advertising for a married man we get the services of two people who could do the job only if they were thoroughly wedded to it. That is a sad, lonely settlement and the people are sad and lonely too. We give them a job at £6 a week, which is worth

£12 or £14 a week, and make mother get busy as well.

That is one of the failings of Australia. That is one of our besetting sins—the sin of trying to keep everything on such a low level that jobs are not done properly; and then we wonder why. The native problem is a very big one. I understand that the Education Department now intends to take an interest in the settlement, that it will endeavour to have portion of the settlement devoted to some form of agriculture in order to give the people an interest and perhaps help to make it a little more self-supporting. I know all the problems; I know the difficulties the department has had to face. But I think that if the Education Department takes over the training of the youngsters and the Department of Agriculture will help to irrigate the river flats—if the water is fresh, and I am told it is—we will go a long way towards improving the lot of those simple half-caste people.

Before closing on the subject of the natives, I assure members that we who live in that district have these natives living on the farm and working with us for periods. They come and they go. I think they are an asset to the State. I am of opinion that mentally it would be possible to build them up into a self-respecting people. I do not know whether the colour will ever be bred out of them. The problem of education, however, is ever-present. They should be educated and trained to be clean in body, in mind and in a desire to be clean citizens of a clean State. If we do that, we shall achieve something. As the matter stands now, the place is so thoroughly unclean that I would not be surprised at anything at all happening there. We went from Mogumber to Moora, and there again we were received by this cry for further educational facilities in the country. I will not again go over that; I have already stressed it. We were taken to a playground in Moora. It was just one mass of slush and water, and only 40 points of rain had been registered.

That playground had previously been flat but had subsequently been worn into a saucer shape by the activities of the children. It is essential that it should be given immediate attention. We were told, much to the annoyance of the Director of Education, that the people thought that was sufficient to drain

away the water. The Moora school playground must receive the attention of the more skilled personnel of the department. If we value the health of the children of Australia, we must do something about it. Believe me, the children of Australia are Australia. It belongs to them; the future is theirs. Our responsibility is to build up a virile generation, with first-class physique, and able to grasp the opportunities of the future. We will never achieve that physique if for four months of the year playgrounds of schools such as Moora are to be fit only for ducks.

From what I have said in this Chamber in the past members will know that, like the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie, I have an interest in the future, and the present too, of the fishing industry of Western Australia. In this instance again we have been reprehensible in the extreme. I think we still are. In a few weeks' time we will have the annual invasion of the spawning schnapper, and again, for the nth time, we are going to destroy the fish while they breed. That is the most stupid folly ever perpetrated. We have the amazing ease of the egret which was wiped out in order to get its plumes to satisfy the vanity of women. These birds were actually shot as they sat on their nests, or hovered around them. I have seen colonies of nests in which there were nothing but two small dead birds. Today, of course, the people are paying for it. Whenever we destroy the natural fauna of a country, we pay for it. It will behave us before very long—it should have been done ages ago—to take an interest in the preservation of our fauna—not only our fish; I do not know whether they are fauna—but we have not done it.

I have asked in this House time after time by way of question for a commercial research vessel, a commercial fishing boat, in order that the Government can prove to its satisfaction and the people's satisfaction where the fish are in Western Australia. To go blindly on, as we have in the past, catching them on their breeding grounds is, as I have already said, stupid. We should find where these fish go and where they are in quantities. Some of us who have had experience believe that we have the fish here, but not around the immediate coastal features. They are perhaps on the continental shelf where the bottom of the sea shelves

away. I have been told stories from departmental sources of acroplanes coming in here and reporting that 50 miles off the coast there were schools of fish which were estimated to cover 60 square miles. What do we know about them? No wonder the Yanks brag; they had to come and tell us that! It is amazing.

A commercial boat owned by the Government and operated by practical fishermen would give us the knowledge we need and the knowledge we must have if we are to preserve the heritage God gave us. If, of course, it does not matter two hoots to members, or to me, or to the people whether we have fish or not, or what we pay for it if we get it, then the whole question is of no importance. But that fisheries research vessel should have been here long ago. I understand that the Commonwealth Government advanced the money, or was prepared to advance it. I believe we can build such a vessel here because we have built others. But today, after three years, I am still appealing to the Government through you, Mr. Speaker, to rectify some of these follies which go on year after year until they become proportionately as serious as the menace of the fox and the rabbit to the farming community. The time must come if we remain blind to these problems when there will be no fish. The river is a practical illustration of that point.

I have not been here long enough to give the past history of the river in a practical sense, but I have been told that there was a day when even schnapper could be caught therein. Where have those fish gone? Why have they gone? Who destroyed them? And last, but most important, who was responsible for allowing them to be destroyed? No wonder the people are fed up with State Parliaments; no wonder! While on the subject of fishing, a new idea has been tried. All sorts of amateurs came into the business while the Italian fishermen were interned and the others unable to carry on. These people received petrol to go fishing. Quite a number were honest and probably quite a number augmented an otherwise very slender motorcar supply which would otherwise probably have been *non est*. In its wisdom, the Department of Fisheries decided to look into the matter and check up on the use of petrol to be certain that the

people who obtained petrol to go fishing and illicitly poured it into their motorcars to go elsewhere were brought into line. That was laudable, but the department came to the conclusion, based on a Commonwealth average, that for every 100 lbs. of fish trapped or line-caught, a one-gallon petrol ticket would be issued.

Now, academically that is quite all right, but in practice the department overlooks the fact that there would be days when a particular fishing ground which had been prolific the day before would yield nothing the day following. I have been out to a place called Dago Rock, and in a matter of a few hours caught 100 to 150 lbs. of large skipjack, and have gone there the next day and caught one large rock cod only. But under this scheme of allotting one gallon of petrol to 100 lbs. of fish, it means having to go out to the fishing ground and if one uses half a gallon of petrol or more one must stay there and catch enough fish in order to get more petrol. I am told that an officer of the department who is not a fisherman is being sent to distant places like Safety Bay in order to reach what I might term a balancing compensation. That is all very well, but the fishermen have to go to this man when he visits the place. He says, "I will be there on Tuesday," mentioning a certain time, and it may be that on that day the glass is rising and it is a good day for fishing. Yet those men must miss that fishing day to see this official and really bargain with him for petrol.

The system might apply fairly well at Fremantle where a man has to run only a few miles, but at distant places it could not possibly work satisfactorily. If a man happened to want petrol when the officer was at Fremantle, he would have to walk to Fremantle to get it. That is silly. There is also the danger that the people who can make themselves really good fellows with the issuing official might get more tickets than other people. I am not suggesting this as an accusation of dishonesty, but it is human nature. The consequence is that the people who are definitely augmenting the supply of fish are greatly troubled about this new regulation. I am criticising without having the answer, but in the course of a few days a meeting of fishermen is to be held and I hope I shall be able to advise the Government through the department what they consider would be the best and most economical method of

getting petrol for fishing. It is distressing when academic people come in on a business which is perhaps well known and understood by practical men. If more practical men were employed in collaboration with the academic side, we would get much better results.

Another point in the Speech to which I must address myself is in reference to superphosphate. Everywhere we went over the week end, we saw evidences of lack of superphosphate. We saw some astounding instances of sandplain of the lowest class being converted into something worthwhile because of the value imparted to the soil by the phosphoric acid in the superphosphate. We saw on an arid piece of country pastures of a highly nitrogenous nature which had greatly improved the texture of the soil. Speaking from my own experience, after seven years we rip up clover paddocks and put in a crop of wheat, and wherever we have ripped up subterranean clover paddocks in that manner and planted our crops, our yield has been not less than 18 bushels. This goes to show that superphosphate to Western Australia is as valuable as blood to the human system. The great problem is that we have only a certain quantity of superphosphate available for distribution. It is idle to kick against the pricks and say that we want so much more if it is not available. The question arises, however, whether it will not be possible to get more. It should be possible now to increase the quantity considerably. I have been told that an increase of 50 per cent. is being granted in the coming season. This is very satisfactory, but if we have to help to feed the people of the world immediately after the war and if there is an atom of truth in the story that wheat is going to be in short supply then it behoves us to ensure that we are in a position to get enhanced quantities of this artificial manure from the sources where it exists.

It might be dangerous to say to the people of the United States of America that they should give back Nauru and Ocean Islands to us now. They might reply, "There is your source of supply; put it in order and put on your ships to transport it." A reply like that would be tragic; we would not be in a position to do it. But we should exert every effort through every channel, Federal and Imperial, to get supplies at once and commence the reconstruction of the canti-

levers so that we will be in a position to relieve the abnormal situation we are told will prevail in Europe. I know both of those islands. When we first take them back we shall probably have to revert to conditions of handling which I saw there many years ago. The waters alongside those islands are, I believe, the deepest in the world, so deep that it is impossible for any ship to anchor there. So it was the practice to use surf boats manned by natives to take the phosphate out and load it into the ships, but the moment the glass fell or bad weather sprang up, the ships would disappear and would not re-appear for several days, sometimes as long as 10 or 15 days. That would be the position if we were given back Ocean Island or Nauru Island now. So the best we can expect will be to get them back and start immediately on the work of reinstating the machinery which revolutionised the verbal picture I have just painted.

In distributing the superphosphate that is available, due consideration should be given to what is a fair minimum to be allotted. Various figures have been suggested such as six tons or ten tons, but there are instances where people have been given $1\frac{1}{2}$ tons, and they are expected to provide for the welfare of their children while other people with an equal number of children and equal responsibilities generally, I suppose, have received a very much more liberal allowance. I am not putting this forward in any spirit of carping criticism, but I trust something will be done to equalise matters, because it is more difficult to keep a family of five on a couple of tons of super than to keep a similar family on 20 or 30 tons. Another cause for complaint is the basing of the superphosphate allotment on the figures for 1939-40 purchases. This has proved to be not quite equitable, because there are so many factors governing the quantity of superphosphate that an individual actually used in those years. While I know that the department is alive to that fact, and while I have personal knowledge that the officers have done a great deal to help in connection with many bothering matters brought before them, I consider that this particular matter should be adjusted. Possibly the fairest way would be to make the issue on the basis of the actual licensed area. That would perhaps prove more equitable and easier, and certainly more satisfactory to the farmer himself. There may be

in my suggestion some catch of which I do not know. Perhaps the Minister will make a note of the matter and let me have information on it at a future date.

Many, many moons ago the Wheatgrowers' Union laid claim, through their Katanning Zone Council, to the inauguration of a dental clinic van for schoolchildren in that area. The people there, as the Leader of the Opposition will probably be able to confirm, have profited considerably from the dental van which went around. In spite of its efficiency, the van dealt with school children perhaps not as far as it should have done. Irrespective of that criticism, however, the truth of the story, as far as I can make out, is that this dental van has proved an enormous success, as well as a definite boon to the children of that area—so much so that some little time ago we found it impossible to get the van shifted from the area in view of the amount of work it had to do there. If the story is correct, and if the dental van inaugurated seven or eight years ago is of such paramount advantage to the people of that portion of Western Australia, why in the name of Heaven could not more vans have been provided? Of course the answer given at the time was, "There is no money." There has got to be money! As I said earlier, money must be found for these attentions to the people. We want in Western Australia, and in Australia, a keen and virile people. Are we to sacrifice virility and keenness to the stupid cry of "no money"? Money has to be found, and I for one do not care how it is found.

I do not know how long I have been going and members will be getting thoroughly bored, and during the session there will be other opportunities. Therefore I conclude by congratulating you, Mr. Speaker, upon your re-election to the position you hold. I want to assure you, Sir, that when, as I said earlier, I came here as a lonely shag on a lonely rock, I did not feel quite so lonely because of some of the pleasant attentions I received from you. Your re-election to the Chair, therefore, gives me intense pleasure.

On motion by Mr. Needham, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.44 p.m.