

and its regulations, authority for the making of which is set out in the Bill, the other provisions of which are mostly of a machinery nature.

The Bill should, I suggest, receive the approval of members. It represents an earnest endeavour to give to our native people the opportunities afforded by the full rights of citizenship. It is an inspirational measure for those natives who live under white standards, and it opens up more clearly the transitional path from native circumstances to white standards for detribalised natives, particularly the half-caste who is justly deserving of consideration since he is no more black than white. I know that members appreciate the fact that the native problem is very difficult. We have to be very careful how we deal with matters affecting natives, more particularly when we propose to give them certain rights or privileges to which they have not been entitled previously. The Bill can be looked upon as a genuine attempt to provide for some hundreds of natives who have in many instances over years past been endeavouring successfully to live the life of the white people.

While the Bill may not go quite as far as some people interested in the native question would like, nevertheless I regard it as a step in the right direction, a step justly earned by many natives of full blood, and particularly by half-castes, who will be prepared to apply for the certificate provided for in the Bill. I trust members will give the measure sympathetic consideration and that we shall be in a position to say at long last that we have been able to provide for natives or half-castes, who show that they have the same attributes as have white people, the consideration that is required in every way. I think the measure represents the best means by which that consideration can be granted to them, and I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. H. Tuckey, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.35 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 18th October, 1944.

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

QUESTIONS (3).

AXES.

As to Supplies.

Mr. PERKINS asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

(1) Is he aware that axes are almost unobtainable in country districts of Western Australia?

(2) Will he take steps to ensure that sufficient supplies are available; requesting the military authorities to release some of their reserves if necessary?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Strong efforts have been made from time to time to obtain supplies and further efforts will be made at frequent intervals.

TRAINING OF TEACHERS.

As to College Course, Etc.

Hon. N. KEENAN asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Is he aware that at the Teachers' Conference held last August the following resolution was carried unanimously, namely: "That the executive be requested to press for a Royal Commission to inquire into the selection and training of teachers and the organisation of the Teachers' College?"

(2) Is it his intention to give effect to the above resolution?

(3) Will he give the House an assurance that if the Royal Commission asked for is not granted, the intended two years' course of training for teachers will receive strict

ministerial and departmental supervision so as to prevent present abuses and waste of students' time?

The MINISTER replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The matter is under consideration.
- (3) Yes.

BRAN AND POLLARD.

As to Manufacture and Use.

Mr. BERRY asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) How many bags of (a) bran and (b) pollard, are being manufactured from the present output of flour?

(2) Is all this available to poultry and dairy farmers?

(3) If the answer to (2) is in the negative, what percentage of the available bran and pollard is absorbed by millers and distributed by them as laying or fattening mashers and stock foods?

(4) Is he satisfied that the production and distribution of these mashers is in the best interests of efficient and economic production?

(5) Are millers making a profit by the manufacture of mashers in excess of that accruing from the direct sale of bran and pollard?

(6) Does he consider the general position in regard to the disposal of mill offal as sufficiently unsatisfactory to justify immediate action by the Government to control all stocks and sales of mill offal?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Production for the four weeks ended the 28th September, 1944, from Associated Flour Mills:—

	Bus.	Bags.	Tons.
Bran ..	315,903	57,437	3,159
Pollard ..	221,119	31,588	2,211

(2) It is all available as fodder, either as bran and pollard or mixed with other feeding stuffs, but is not restricted to poultry and dairy farmers.

(3) Information for all stock foods not available. Consumption of mill offal for prepared poultry foods by millers in the past six months, however, does not exceed two per cent. of the State's production of offal.

(4) There is no evidence to the contrary. It is considered that the production of

mashers is an efficient means of utilising bran and pollard, particularly for small producers.

(5) Information not available, but all such prices are subject to determination by the Prices Commissioner.

(6) It is not considered desirable or necessary at the present juncture to introduce a strict system of rationing by permits.

MOTION—STATE-WIDE POST-WAR WORKS.

As to Government Planes for Official Inspections.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [4.34]: I move—

That this House realises that it cannot adequately handle the various problems which arise in the 1,000,000 square miles of Western Australian territory unless the most modern transport facilities are utilised. It, therefore, advocates that the Government should acquire some well-found transport planes to enable Ministers, members of Parliament and particularly engineers of the Public Works Department, etc., to cover all parts of the State including the Kimberleys, wherever much Federal money will have to be spent after the war in large engineering projects.

This motion deals largely with the North-West of this State. We have already passed through one war which was brought to a favourable conclusion, and now we are approaching the termination, as we anticipate, of the second world war. During the progress of those two periods of hostilities, it was quite obvious that very little could be done in the direction of opening up the North-West. That applies also to the interval that lapsed between the two outbreaks of war. With the progress of the current conflict, we have had a very rude awakening in that our territory was nearly invaded and then, to put the most serious aspect in one sentence, we were confronted with the revelation of the Brisbane line in which that well-known politician popularly known as Eddie Ward, played his part. That revelation regarding the Brisbane line sent a tremor throughout Australia. People then realised that Western Australia, in particular, was to be abandoned to the enemy and the beautiful and valuable territory in the North-West was to be left to the tender, or rather I should say to the barbarous, devices of the foe.

The question that we have to ask ourselves is this: Are we in the South responsible for the North-West? We can also ask ourselves whether we are doing our duty, as the representatives of the people, if we leave the advocacy of the interests of the northern parts of the State solely in the hands of the four members who have been sent here to speak on behalf of those outlying portions of Western Australia. Surely I would be justified in saying that the position is similar to that which arises in the Commonwealth Parliament where the representatives of Western Australia have such a small voting strength. We appreciate that our five Western Australian members in the lower House of the Commonwealth Parliament cannot handle our problems there as they would like, and cannot exercise the influence desired in our national Parliament at Canberra. When the Federation was inaugurated, the construction of the Trans-Australian line was put forward as an inducement for Western Australia to link up with the other States in forming the Commonwealth of Australia.

For many years the Western Australian members advocated the construction of that line in a hostile House then located in the temporary Federal capital, which was Melbourne. Ultimately it was the support of Eastern States politicians that made possible the construction of that railway. The votes of the Western Australian members alone could not have brought forth that result. Surely the same situation applies to the North-West of this State. All the work and all the voting strength of the four members who represent northern seats could not influence this Chamber without the active support of southern members. It is the votes of the latter that achieve what the northerners desire. What is the position regarding the attractions of the North? Very few people know what they are. The details of actual rainfall sufficiently disclose one important feature, quite apart from any reference to the uncertain rainfall belt. These statistics disclose that in the North we have extensive areas enjoying satisfactory rainfalls as follows:—

Square miles.		Rainfall.
146,000	.....	10 to 15 inches
62,000	.....	15 to 20 "
30,000	.....	20 to 25 "
23,000	.....	25 to 30 "
36,000	.....	30 to 40 "

Throughout all that vast area, there are perhaps 2,000 people all told. This Parliament is bound to do the best it can to cope with the situation. Even if we had all the finance available with which to open up that part of the State in accordance with Commonwealth policy, we would still be some thousands of miles away from the field of operations. We would still be that distance away from the Kimberleys which in British official publications is referred to as well watered and fertile country. The time has arrived when we must consider alternatives that have been suggested. On the one hand there are some who say we should cede the North-West to the Commonwealth. There are others who say that we should form two States within the present boundaries of Western Australia. Well now, there might be a third proposal, and that is the proposal of this motion, that the Government should acquire transport planes in order to enable both Ministers concerned and any members of Parliament concerned, and also officers of the Public Service, including engineers, to be taken to various spots in that territory where there is to be development in the future.

We have to realise that there is a menace ahead of this country after the war—not necessarily a military menace, but the economic pressure of one thousand million Asiatics adjacent to us in our northern seas, and coveting what is known to be fertile and unoccupied territory. Surely we not only are in a position to ask the Commonwealth Government itself to come forward and provide the necessary funds when the labour is available to open up the territory, but also in a position to ask the United Nations, at the suggestion made during the recent Food Conference, to contribute the technical ability and technical equipment which they offered at the Food Conference in Hot Springs to any territories within the United Nations that needed development. From those two sources we should be able to obtain the necessary materials and plant for the projects which will have to be undertaken in the great North of Western Australia.

At present we are passing through a very bad period as regards rainfall in our South. It is obvious to us all now that many millions of pounds could well have been spent, and no doubt eventually will be spent, in

our great West and South to avoid the terrible troubles being experienced now, which have been publicised widely during the last few days. Similarly, there are proposals, some of which the Government has announced, for testing the Ord River country, and there are other like proposals which no doubt will come forward in the future in respect of the North. Can we find any objection to the idea that this Government should set the world an example in becoming mobile beyond the limits of an existing railway system? In the first place we have, without my giving figures, the aerodromes which will be required for a project of this kind, and which have already been provided for the purposes of the war. So we have there a big start for the handling of any plans which may be tested.

In the second place, we can clearly realise that although there are many thousands of valuable planes including transport types now in the possession of the Allied nations, the time will come when there will be a big glut of these valuable planes on the world's markets. Recently I quoted figures given in the House of Commons which showed that the British Air Ministry is in a position to supply in three days' production all the civil aeroplanes, together with transport, that will be required for the next 10 or 15 years. So when the day comes that there are thousands of first-class planes in the hands of Governments, it should not be hard to look around and ascertain where the best arrangements can be made, at probably economic cost, to obtain a few of these necessary planes for the work of this State. Who would use these planes? In the first place, as I have already said, there are the Ministers concerned with the works which will be opened up in the North-West, and there are the members of Parliament concerned, and the engineers and officers.

But we have also to consider that this country is not the only territory in Western Australia which is situated well beyond the railway system. Apart from the Kimberley districts, we have the North-West lower down not in the northern or southern rainfall. All that territory will need attention. We have also the huge area on the Eastern Goldfields, and the country down as far as Esperance. All that territory and its development will have to be

considered after the war when specific details are available. At present we hope to return to the goldmining industry, but the days will shortly come—we hope not too soon—when the goldmining towns will perhaps have to face the prospect of dwindling and either closing down or of taking-up some new industry. What could one consider for that part of the State if we had the efficient mobile and reliable air transport to take up to the various spots concerned?

It seems to me that Kalgoorlie represents an ideal place for the manufacture, after the war, of ordnance and planes and tanks and all the transport vehicles of our Defence Army. Kalgoorlie might well be chosen as a western Woolwich Arsenal for this Commonwealth. In addition, there is no reason why the surrounding country, of which there is plenty, should not become a western Salisbury Plain, on which could take place manoeuvres of the standing Army of this country after the war. We shall be justified in saying that after this war, leaving out the well-watered portion of the South-West which we know is well populated today, development of our unoccupied areas should be taken up as a defence proposition, and not merely an economic proposition. It is the most exposed and vulnerable territory, I suppose, in the British Empire; and it faces this huge population of races of different cultures and different ideals within striking distances of our shores.

If we can manage through the advocacy of our Premier before the Loan Council and the Commonwealth Bank Board, to bring this State forward as a defence proposition, we might get some of these projects considered and even undertaken soon after the war is over. None of us would like to see the magnificent city of Kalgoorlie and its attendant satellite towns face a dying future. We want to see them maintained. They are on the main line between the east and the west, and they have all the amenities of civilisation built up at great expense. If substitute industries are provided for them, those industries will be placed in a very safe position as regards attack by any foreign nation. We shall be doing something valuable to Australia and valuable to the British Commonwealth of Nations if we carry out such a plan. Earlier in the few remarks I have been mak-

ing, I suggested that there were two alternatives besides having aerial transport available to the Government, one being a cession of the northern part of our State to the Commonwealth, and the other being the dividing of Western Australia into two or more States.

I have on previous occasions cited as a precedent for this proposal the United States of America; but it seems to me that if we can handle this State in the form of provinces for many years, with mobile transport, we shall be doing good work, and perhaps at far less expense, avoiding the necessary dead expenditure which would otherwise be incurred by our Government. There is also this side of the proposal which should be stressed to members, that it has been shown that the cost of government in Australia is not excessive, representing only one farthing in the pound of the national income. That means that if it is necessary to have transport for Ministers and others to visit the outlying portions of our State it will not be a charge on this country which could not be substantiated, because if there is a big charge on Western Australia or on Australia it is the cost and the servicing of our loans, and the overhead costs of the whole services of Australia. It is not the cost where it concerns the running of Parliaments or the establishment of Governors or Governors-General. So members should not have any qualms about the few pounds involved in the purchase of necessary planes.

What is the alternative? Are we going to open up the North-West by steamships and by roads and railways? Of course these things will come too, but they will take a lot of time to establish and millions of pounds will have to be spent either through Federal agencies or through the United Nations as a result of the Hot Springs conference. In the meantime, in undertaking these projects, we have the great advantage that the initial cost of planes would be the only cost, apart from that involved in running them.

Mr. J. Hegney: What do you mean by "well-found" transport?

Mr. NORTH: That is a term often used in regard to ships. The type is left to the Government to consider. A development of this idea might perhaps be regarded as somewhat fantastic at this stage. It is that during the discussion of the Estimates each year, members of the Assembly

should be taken to these places and show what it is proposed to do.

Mr. J. Hegney: A good idea!

Mr. NORTH: That is one vote at any rate! Let us consider that aspect. How many projects are put before the Chamber during the discussion of the Estimates? However, all we have is the mere statement of figures and we do not actually realise the extent of the projects proposed. If we are in charge of this great fertile territory in the North-West should we not know what it is all about? Should we not be able to see that country as we are now privileged to see Albany or Geraldton? A glance at the map will show that the portion of our territory actually covered by railroads is very small and we should consider the whole matter to a large degree from that angle.

Mr. J. Hegney: Get a bird's eye view!

Mr. NORTH: Yes. We have this further fact in our favour. There are aerodromes already established, the number and whereabouts of which, on account of war conditions, have not been disclosed. Those aerodromes, as they stand, would probably be sufficient to meet the needs of this project. When we had once reached our destination we would have the choice of going over the country in cars, if it were a detailed inspection where we were following river beds: or of sitting aloft in our observation posts and travelling along over the river routes and seeing for ourselves the type of country and determining where dams should be established and irrigation undertaken. I suppose I have no right whatever to speak on this matter except in a kind of reflective way in support of the claims made over the years by members representing North-West constituencies. Consider the Ord River, the Fitzroy River and the Prince Edward or Prince Henry Rivers, concerning all of which there have been glowing descriptions! They are 300 or 400 miles long and run through very fertile territory.

We cannot let such valuable territory as that linger any longer in nature's garb. It was all right before the war and would be all right if we had a peaceful world. In such circumstances we might have considered leaving it alone for 50 years. But struggling Western Australia with its handful of people will be in a different position, when peace is declared, from that of well-settled territories. Those other places will not have

huge areas of inviting land adjacent to hordes of people of other nations. They will go back to their ordinary vocations possibly with plenty of money to spend and some big public works to undertake. We shall have to start all over again. It would not be unfair to describe our position in Perth as similar to that of Downing-street in 1827 or 1828 when the Swan River colony was started, because the Kimberleys are hardly less advanced now than was this part of Western Australia in the first 10 years of the colony's existence. The Premier might well say that this is not a matter that it is necessary to consider this week. He might say that we are not going to buy planes in the next few weeks.

The Minister for Mines: I do not think he would be able to get a permit.

Mr. NORTH: Exactly. But we know how differently things move here from the way in which they move in ordinary life. A comparison might be drawn with the handling of a ship like the "Queen Mary" and the handling of a little row-boat. It is necessary for us to start a little ahead. We have to see things coming months, and even a year or two before they hit us. That is why this motion is submitted now and is not being delayed until we hear the peace bells. I think I am justified in saying that this is the time for the Government and for this House to give the matter full consideration, to look into ways and means and to decide whether my project would be a satisfactory alternative to the formation of two States or to handing over our territory to the Commonwealth. I have tried to show it is, and I think that quite a number of members will support that suggestion. At any rate I hope to get the support of members representing North-West constituencies and other outback areas for a start.

My scheme would allow us to embark on decentralisation. Officers could be on the spot in these outback places, instead of the unfortunate residents having to be brought from the North-West and other areas down to Perth to attend to business unnecessarily. It would enable us to take Mahomet to the mountain instead of the mountain being brought to Mahomet. People would not mind living in those regions if they knew that their wants could be attended to on the spot. It would be possible for officials of

the Titles Office and other departmental officers to go to these centres every now and then, and back in another day or two. They could attend to all the wants of those vast districts and save the unfortunate people from coming to Perth and spending their time and money unnecessarily. All these points are worth considering, but I feel that sufficient has been said to justify the motion.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have no objection to offer to this motion. I think that later on, with the great developments in transport occasioned by the war, it might be found necessary for air transport to be utilised far more extensively in this State than has been the case in the past. It is true that some of the post-war proposals of the Government seek to put into operation in the more isolated parts of Western Australia projects which will be substantial in character, and therefore it would appear to be essential that fast means of transport should be available for the purpose of enabling a Minister, a member of Parliament, or an officer of the Government to visit such a part of the State quickly whenever requirements justify such action. The last few words in the motion appear to me to be restrictive, and I suggest to the member for Claremont that they be deleted. The motion as it reads asks the Government to acquire some transport planes to enable different people to cover all parts of the State, including the Kimberleys, where much Federal money will have to be spent after the war in large engineering projects. It might well be that there will be no place in the whole State where large sums of Federal money will be spent on engineering projects but there might be several parts where the State Government will spend sums of money on large engineering and other projects. If the motion were to be carried in its present form, the direction or the suggestion of this House to the Government would be restricted to that extent. It would be unwise to carry the motion as it is at present. I therefore move an amendment—

That in lines 11 to 13 the words "wherever much Federal money will have to be spent after the war in large engineering projects" be struck out.

On motion by Mr. Watts, debate adjourned.

MOTION—HEAVY INDUSTRY.

To Inquire by Royal Commission.

MR. CROSS (Canning) [5.5]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House, a Royal Commission consisting of five persons, should be appointed to make a full investigation into and report upon the following matters:—

- (1) The establishment of heavy industry in Western Australia, by the smelting of Koolan Island iron ore on a commercial basis.
- (2) The construction of rolling mills for the manufacture of steel.
- (3) The probable and possible market, both in Australia and overseas for the disposal of the manufactured iron or steel.
- (4) The possible profitable disposal of a limited quantity of iron ore to European or other markets.
- (5) The possibilities of financing the launching and the successful establishment of all activities involved in the inauguration of the smelting of iron and manufacture of steel for the profit and benefit of the people of Western Australia.

We live in a world of change, and in the last few years, even during the war, many events have occurred which will bring about far greater changes than before, very soon after the war is finished. Tremendous strides have been taken and many astounding discoveries made, although the secrets of some of them cannot be given to the public at present for reasons of national security. But it is true that tremendous discoveries have been made in the alloy of metals, and in plastics particularly, and great advances have been made in the use of mineral alloys. In spite of the increasing use of aluminium and its alloys, iron is likely to remain the world's most useful metal. Iron and steel together form the largest manufactured material in the world, and each of them enters into every branch of industry and is a necessary factor in every phase of modern civilisation. Pre-war there was manufactured in the world more than 140,000,000 tons of iron annually. Now, the iron and steel industry is the foundation, the very base, of sound economy and it is the backbone of all secondary industrial development. So long as we in Western Australia depend on other States and imports from overseas for our supplies for industry here, then for so long will our development be slow.

It is my opinion that countries without supplies of iron and coal are doomed to

poverty. Notwithstanding the use of light metallic alloys, such as chrome and aluminium, the use of steel and iron was rapidly increasing before the war. The existence of payable iron-ore deposits in Western Australia has been known for a long time. As far back as 1800 a man named William Kent, who came to Australia from Yorkshire, gathered some ore and took samples back to England and had them smelted. They were found at that stage to be richer than anything it was possible to get in Great Britain. Up to that time, and before 1875, a great many small-scale attempts to smelt iron had been made in Australia. It is regrettable, but true, that every one of those many attempts to smelt iron on a small scale failed. The most successful of the small attempts at smelting iron and making light steel alloys was that made by Hoskins in New South Wales in 1875. Over a period of ten years the firm struggled and made nearly 11,000 tons of light steel, and then it failed.

The first large-scale attempt was made by the B.H.P., who commenced operations 22 years ago. The B.H.P. had the advantage of securing the information in connection with all the previous mistakes that had been made. The first things that company did was to send its manager, Mr. D. G. Delprat, to Europe to inspect not only the iron deposits but to see the smelting works in Sweden and in Germany. It directed Mr. Delprat to go to America also to see the main deposits there and to view the latest methods, and get the fullest information. The B.H.P. gave Mr. Delprat power to bring back experts to commence the industry in South Australia and New South Wales. Mr. Delprat made full use of his authority because he brought back Mr. David Baker, who afterwards became the first manager of the B.H.P.'s steel rolling-mills. I want members to notice that before attempting to commence the industry, the B.H.P. made the most exhaustive inquiries into the newest methods and the latest labour-saving machinery. It did, as a matter of fact, establish the latest machinery which the world had at that time. The venture, as members know, succeeded. Indeed, I might say that Australia was lucky—and I think the Empire was, too—that the B.H.P. was in existence when war broke out.

Mr. Perkins: You have said enough bad things about that company in the past!

Mr. CROSS: I have not said much about it at all, and the member for York knows little about it.

Mr. Perkins: Your Party—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Canning will kindly address the Chair.

Mr. CROSS: Today the B.H.P. controls a gigantic industry. It has kept up with the times, because it continually sends its key men to Germany and other European countries, and to America. It has improved its methods and kept them up to date. In addition it has maintained and kept up to date all its machinery. It is true that the B.H.P., allowing for exchange, has supplied Australia with steel and iron requirements at less than half the cost at which they could be produced in England or America today. In the years before the war, the B.H.P. was smelting 1,035,000 tons of iron ore per annum. When the war broke out it was in a position to step up production to over 2,000,000 tons.

It is true also that large quantities of manufactured steel were sent to Great Britain, and were supplied at less than the price at which it could be produced on the spot. In the production of iron from the iron-ore a great deal of other material is used. The B.H.P. uses an enormous quantity of Newcastle coal and coke. In 1939 it used over 620,000 tons of Newcastle coal. It also used 250,000 tons of limestone from Tasmania, and thousands of tons of magnesite and of dolomite. I mention these items to indicate that heavy industry, not only in itself creates considerable employment, but it also creates a tremendous amount of work in other industries which have to supply the raw materials. The B.H.P. has been obtaining most of its iron-ore from Iron Knob in South Australia, where iron-ore exists in a remarkable quantity, but good as is that deposit Western Australia has a better one.

To me it is remarkable that in spite of the examinations that have been made of the deposits at Yampi Sound—these were made as far back as 1908 and again in 1919—and in spite of the information contained in the reports of the experts, little or no action has been taken by the State Government to make any use of this natural wealth. I propose to quote from the second

report of the then State Mining Engineer, the late Mr. A. Montgomery, submitted to the Government in 1920. Very few members have seen this report and it is because of the valuable information that it contains that I propose to read some of it. Members will find it fairly hard to get a copy of the report. I have been able to get only one, but it took two or three weeks to get it.

Mr. Doney: How many did you want?

Mr. CROSS: One copy contains more information than the hon. member has offered in the House since he entered. Mr. Montgomery made an examination of the iron-ore deposits, which are hematite, on Koolan Island and Cockatoo Island and gave a rough estimate of the tonnages of ore available above high water level. He also took samples which were analysed by the State Geologist. After commenting that on Koolan Island alone, at a rough estimate, there was 76,550,000 tons of iron-ore in sight above high water level, Mr. Montgomery proceeded to say—

Of course these figures are only to be regarded as such very rough approximations as can be obtained from lengths scaled from the plans, a few barometric heights and taped measurements of widths, and ocular inspection of the outcrops. I have much confidence, nevertheless, that the quantity of ore is not over-estimated, but the contrary. The object of putting forward such crude figures at all is simply to enable some clear idea to be formed of the great magnitude of the proposition, and its capacity to supply a large output of ore for a long term of years, and also of the extent to which it would justify the expenditure of the large amount of capital required for opening and equipping the quarries and providing the most modern and economical appliances for handling and shipping the ore. The result of the approximate figures is to show that there is a very good prima facie case for considering the Koolan and Cockatoo Island deposits as ranking high amongst the great iron mines of the world in magnitude. To obtain anything like exact estimates of the ore reserves, several months of exceedingly arduous survey work would be required, and also a considerable amount of cutting through the ore bodies at different points by tunnels or bores to ascertain the real widths. Extended sampling and analysis would also have to be carried on to obtain reliable results as to the quality of the ore. . . .

The very unusual and complete exposure of the ore bodies in the wonderful sea-cliff sections available makes it possible to dispense with a great deal of such preliminary work and to attack the proposition with great certainty that both quantity and quality can safely be regarded as already proved. We can actually see and handle the ore bodies in the cliffs along the whole length and for a depth of as much

as 600ft., and by bores or short tunnels could cut through them wherever desired, but the natural exposures are so complete as to leave no doubt about the size and quality. This is a very unusual and valuable condition of development.

He proceeded to point out that on the island plateau there are further iron ore occurrences which indicate further secretions of ore beneath, and that there might be very large quantities of ore under the sea. The report continued—

The conglomerate plateau is very suggestive of the probable condition of much of the sea bottom near the foot of the iron ore cliffs, where hundreds of thousands of tons of hematite have been broken away and buried under the water of the Sound. The Cockatoo Island deposit runs under the sea bottom at both ends of the present cliffs, and most probably more ore has gone into the Sound from these parts of the ore bed and the fallen-away parts of the visible cliffs than is now remaining . . .

The foregoing estimate of ore available in Koolan and Cockatoo Islands is only of that which is obtainable above high-water mark and mostly by open quarrying. The amount obtainable by mining must be enormously greater . . .

A great deal of the world's iron ore supplies is won by underground mining, and by the time the easily quarried ore begins to become scarce at Yampi Sound, it is probable that mining out deeper ore will be a much more feasible proposition than it appears under existing circumstances . . .

In the estimates of the iron ore resources of the world which have been made to take stock of this most valuable of mankind's assets, it has been customary to go far beyond the mining engineer's usual rule of reckoning upon only the ore in sight and to calculate the probable tonnage of ore in the known ore-bearing areas, as far as justifiable from their geological structure. If probable underground ore on the same basis is calculated upon for the Yampi basin, the estimates above given must be multiplied many hundredfold.

That is what Mr. Montgomery had to say about the deposit. I propose to read a few more extracts from his report—

The proposition is a vast one, and it should be handled from the very first with a view to a large and continuous output of ore by the most economical known methods. Unless a large tonnage be dealt with, it will not pay to have expensive handling equipment, and without the best of mechanical equipment, there is little hope that costs can be kept down to a figure which will permit of profitable export to distant markets. The Yampi Sound proposition exhibits a combination of natural advantages to which I have heard no equal anywhere in the world.

The reason is plain; there is no equal. The report continues—

The deposits are of great size, excellent quality, admirably placed for cheap ore-

breaking, and situated alongside deep water a natural harbour of the very best description. Its principal disadvantage is its distance from the world's markets, but there appear to be very good reasons for believing that arrangements will be possible whereby rates of freight will be obtained low enough to allow the ore to be sold profitably.

If the export of the ore to Great Britain and her Allies were allowed, a large trade in iron ore might be established early with concomitant great advantages in better shipping facilities for meat and wool from the north-west part of Western Australia. A good man of war vessels in the East Indian and China trade might often make it convenient to run down to Yampi Sound to take a partial loading of iron ore, and complete their loading with high-priced freight at Batavia or Singapore.

As shown in my report, the quantity of ore at Yampi Sound is so large that export to Great Britain could go on for many years without seriously affecting the reserves still left available for Australia's own use. The benefit to Western Australia would be very great.

Further on he referred to wharf facilities and follows:—

When wharf facilities have been provided access to the mines will be particularly easy as the largest vessels afloat can enter and leave Yampi Sound at any time of the tide. The Sound is a particularly fine, well-sheltered deep-water harbour, which will rank among the best in the world when the time comes for it to be made use of. These iron deposits are therefore a most important asset to our State and their development to the best advantage is among the most important questions now requiring the consideration of the Government.

Mr. Montgomery said that 25 years ago. It was true then and is even truer today. He said—

The iron deposits are large and of excellent quality and will be a very valuable asset to the State of Western Australia when opened up for a large export trade. A very strong combination, preferably including both smelting and shipping interests, however, will be required in order to enable export of the ore to be carried on advantageously; and success in the development of the mines will depend on their being worked on a large scale with the best and most modern methods of handling the ore. It is of no use whatever to contemplate starting in a small way and trusting to the trade to improve naturally as time goes on, as there was no hope of work on a small scale being able to pay working expenses. The ore must be handled on a large scale from the first or not at all. This should be constantly borne in mind in all the negotiations between the State Government and companies formed to work the ore and steps taken to prevent the deposit being handed over to anyone except a strong financial company adequate to develop the property properly.

I have quoted extracts from the report of an engineer who has expressed opinion

which are agreed to by the experts in the iron world. To show that Mr. Montgomery's opinions are sound, I propose to quote some comparative figures of some of the great iron-producing centres in the world. The Lake Superior red hematite deposits are easily the largest deposits in the British Empire or in America. These deposits lie near the surface and are mined with comparative ease. Seventy per cent. of this ore is taken from open cuts, the remaining 30 per cent. being mined. The ore is put on trains and railed to the shore of Lake Superior, where it is put into bins built on the wharf. The wharves are built into deep water and can take ships of 10,000 tons. These ships take the ore across Lake Superior to the Lake Sault St. Marie Canal. From there it is taken down the chain of lakes. Eighty per cent. of it is sent to the United States by rail. Some of that ore is sent by railway as far south in the United States as Youngtown, Pittsburg, Minnesota and other places for smelting. It is transported thousands of miles by rail. Labour-saving devices are used.

In 1939 a labour-saving method was adopted in carting the ore to the bins on the shore of Lake Superior. That is where most of the ore for the United States is discharged. At Port Eire new shipping facilities have been provided and ore is taken direct from the open cut and tipped into the bins. To give members an idea of how efficient the machinery is, I may say that 10,000 tons of ore is loaded in about 4½ hours. Specially-built boats are employed and these have a large number of extra hatches. The vessels can be unloaded in about the same time. As much as 10,300 tons was loaded in four hours 16 minutes. An immense quantity of ore was removed from Lake Superior in a year—as much as 55,000,000 tons. Members should bear in mind also that the canal is closed by ice for three or four months of the year; and that in consequence there is only eight months in which to do the job. That ore is not as good as Yampi Sound ore. I propose to quote some figures from the 1940 Mineral Year Book, which is issued by the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Mines. It is stated at page 542—

Over three-fourths (81 per cent. in 1939) of the domestic output comes from the Lake Superior region, where in the third quarter of

1939 mine schedules were revised upward on short notice and immediately available lake transportation capacity was pressed into service.

Later, at page 543, there is another comment as follows:—

Recent years have witnessed significant changes in open-pit mining practice in the iron country. The use of small tractor shovels, tractors, wagons, scrapers, scraper hoists, heavy trucks, and conveyors continued to expand in 1939.

In order to prove that the Lake Superior ore, which is supplied to both America and Canada, is not as rich as the Yampi Sound ore, I shall quote from the same Year Book the following table:—

Average analyses of total tonnages (bill-of-lading weights) of all grades of iron ore from all ranges of Lake Superior district, 1935-39.

Year.	Iron (natural). Per cent.
1935	51.44
1936	51.45
1937	51.53
1938	51.90
1939	51.75

Therefore, members will realise that the Lake Superior ore has less than 52 per cent. metallic content.

[The Speaker took the Chair.]

Mr. Seward: What does the analysis of the Yampi Sound iron ore disclose?

Mr. CROSS: I will give that later; I am saving the best until the last. From 1938 to 1939 the price of ore at Lake Superior increased 45 cents per ton at the mine. The ore is divided into four grades, the average price of the first grade ore being three dollars, 25 cents per ton at the mine. The Yampi Sound iron ore would be worth very much more. While I have these reports, I am able to give members—should they so desire—some particulars of the steel production in the various countries. In 1938 throughout the world 162,000,000 tons of iron-ore was smelted into iron and steel. Great Britain's requirements were over 12,000,000 tons, and every ounce of it was used. To give members an idea of the magnitude of the industry in the United States, in 1939 the United States produced 47,141,000 tons of steel. The Lake Superior ore deposit is one of the greatest in the world, but analysis discloses that it is of less than 52 per cent. metallic content. Some time ago Great Britain stopped mining iron-ore in England because the grades of ore were

too poor and had to be mined 80 feet below the surface. Great Britain therefore got her supplies from Norway. The average metallic content of that ore is 50 per cent., the highest being 55 per cent.

I wish members to notice that that ore had to be brought from the mines by train, dumped into bins and put into ships, and afterwards sent by rail to the smelters. That involved a great deal of handling. In addition, royalty is paid on the ore. The Norwegian deposit is also a big one. In passing, I may say that the richest lodes in Great Britain are in the lower Cleveland deposit at Middlesbrough in Yorkshire. That ore has a 30 per cent. metallic content. It is 80ft below the surface and the vein is only 16 to 18 inches, so it does not pay to mine it when the ore can be obtained cheaper from Norway. Since the war Great Britain has obtained ore from Spain. She also got a little ore through Bilbao, Spain, before the war. The metallic content of that ore was 50 per cent. It is similar to the Norwegian ore, but contains a higher percentage of sulphur and manganese. These are undesirable in iron; the sulphur cannot be got out.

In Germany before the war were found the largest producers of iron and steel in Europe. Those concerned in production of iron and steel were working on the Minette deposits, Luxemburg and Lorraine, and the metallic content of the ore used was 36 per cent.

In China at Hungyang occur the largest iron-ore deposits in the world. Not much is known about that ore as to extraction because not very much has been done with it. According to samples taken by British companies, however, the metallic content appeared to analyse at about 50 per cent. The most consistently rich deposit outside Australia is that which occurs at Magnitogorsk in Russia, and the average metallic content of that ore—most of it is magnetite and not hematite—is 60 per cent. The ore at Iron Knob and Iron Monarch in Australia has been analysed at from 50 to 58 per cent. of metallic content. My friends ask me "What about Yampi?" I will give the name and the date and the number of the samples analysed by the Government Geologist, who dealt with the iron-ore deposits at Yampi. Sample O.A. analysed and taken in 1908 by Mr. Campbell, the State Geologist showed the following metallic

content:— Fe_2O_3 , 94.97 per cent., that is pure iron; FeO , 4, nil; S_2O_3 , 4.16, that is silica. T_2O_3 , trace; SO , 17; PTO , 14.

Mr. Mann: What does that mean?

Mr. Doney: What is the use of asking the hon. member?

Mr. CROSS: It means the hydrogen and oxygen, the water content; there are two parts of hydrogen and one part of oxygen. The hon. member cannot trick me, as I know more about the subject than he does. There was no C.O.A., and no M.N., which is manganese. The complete analysis of pure metallic iron which would be extracted from ore of that sample shows 66.48. I have the record here of a sample O.B. taken in 1901 by Mr. Campbell, the iron content being 92.71. In 1920 the late Mr. Montgomery took several samples. One numbered 519 shows 95.59 metallic content. The second sample he took, No. 5198, contained 87.0 metallic content, and sample 5199 showed 97.53, that is Fe_2O_3 . Sample 5201 showed metallic content of 98.55. Bear in mind, I am talking of Yampi.

Mr. Seward: At what depth were those samples taken? Were they taken on the surface?

Mr. CROSS: Since then other samples have been taken.

Mr. Mann: Were they surface samples or were they taken at depth?

Mr. CROSS: The earlier ones were surface samples. I have quoted the sample taken. I have the average of a number of samples that have been taken in the last few years by an expert.

Mr. Seward: Who is he?

Mr. CROSS: I do not know that I will tell the hon. member.

Mr. Seward: Do you refer to Dr. Woolnough?

Mr. CROSS: Yes.

Mr. Seward: Were the samples taken at depth or on the surface?

Mr. CROSS: They were taken from tunnels. They are supposed to be sample taken by Dr. Woolnough. They were taken over a wide area at Yampi. Incidentally similar samples were analysed at the same time by the State Geologist. The iron-ore content, F.E., is shown to have been 66.07. That is the average of nearly 100 samples. Silica, S_2O_3 is shown to be 3.24. It is a bad thing to have phosphorus in iron-ore for if there is as much as .025 per cent. it affects the smelting. The phosphorus o

the Yampi iron ore is very low, namely .026. Sulphur S. was .032. The hydrogen and oxygen content, H_2O , was 0.70. This is the average of the analyses.

Mr. Seward: Was that in connection with surface samples?

Mr. CROSS: This is the richest deposit of iron-ore in the world. The keynote of success in iron smelting is the availability of the ore and the cheapness of transport. I emphasise that nowhere in the world compares with Yampi either as to richness, accessibility, or ease of transport. It is not very hard to understand why so many people covet our undoubted treasure. Japan attempted to obtain possession of the treasure at Koolan Island. Japan has always been very short of such raw materials as iron and coal. The fact that that country failed to secure possession of these deposits by negotiation was, I think, one of the reasons for its attack upon Australia. It wanted to get hold of our rich iron-ore. Japan is now after China's mineral wealth. China possesses huge deposits running into hundreds of millions of tons of iron-ore in sight. The Japanese are after the deposits at Hangyang. No nation ever maintains its position as a first-class power unless it possesses ample supplies of iron and coal. The country which is without either of those two things is doomed to perpetual poverty. In Western Australia we have both iron and coal. The Broken Hill Pty. wants our deposits of iron. It is amazing to discover what hold that company has already in this State.

Mr. Perkins: How do you account for the prosperity of Denmark before the war?

Mr. CROSS: If we allow any outside party to become possessed of this treasure, these huge and valuable deposits of iron-ore will be taken from us and smelted elsewhere, and we shall lose all the benefits that we would otherwise derive from the presence of that wealth. The Broken Hill Pty. would take the ore and smelt it at Newcastle. That is what the company proposes to do. I know that its manager in Kalgoorlie left to start operations at Cockatoo and men are working there now. It is proposed to ship the ore from Cockatoo and smelt it at Newcastle. The ore is richer than anything the company has today and has fewer deleterious properties in it than the ore it is handling at present and

it is therefore easier to smelt. Western Australia will thus for ever lose any chance it had of establishing subsidiary industries that would make for prosperity and work in this State. I defy anyone to contradict that statement.

Mr. Fox: Has the company a lease of Cockatoo Island now?

Mr. CROSS: It has had a lease for years. Indeed, it is possessed of more than the hon. member knows about. In the "W.A. Mining and Commercial Review" published this month some comments appear on Mr. Montgomery's report. I will read those comments because they deal with the activities of the Broken Hill Pty.:—

The recent announcement that the annual meeting of the Broken Hill Proprietary Company that the company intended to develop the iron-ore deposits at Yampi Sound is of a paramount importance to this State. Unfortunately the company contends that no suitable fuel exists here for the establishment of smelting although this State possesses the necessary fluxes.

The company is after them too.

Broken Hill steel is the cheapest in the world and working costs are the envy of British and American iron founders. The company has done an astounding job and no Australian with the interest of his country at heart would deny that achievement. We in this State, however, with our excellent iron resources, do feel that some attention might have been paid to those deposits by this large enterprise. That attention is apparently now to come. It will at least remove the charge that we have been neglectful of this iron wealth which has been the envy of Japan. Various surveys have been made of these deposits, and most of them, except as to the tonnage available, have confirmed the report of the late Mr. A. Montgomery, State Mining Engineer.

In regard to tonnage, the latest reports are that the deposits are available in greater quantity than was previously believed. The article continues—

More recently, the aerial and geological survey of Northern Australia carried out an inspection of Yampi ore and confirmed earlier reports on the amazing extent of this ore, which has a ferro-oxide content as high as 97 per cent. It is obvious, however, that as Mr. Montgomery remarked only a wealthy and well organised concern could develop the iron.

It will be heartening to see the Broken Hill people at work in that area, and their presence will be an incentive to develop this area of our State.

The same magazine contains something else that is very interesting.

Mr. Seward: So was that.

Mr. CROSS: It tells of the tonnage quoted by Mr. Montgomery and states—

The Broken Hill Proprietary has a lease of the deposits on Cockatoo Island and Brasserts, Ltd., a London company, a lease of the deposits on Koolan Island. Before the war Brasserts spent over £1,000,000 in development and equipment. It had a contract to supply 1,000,000 tons a year to Japan.

Mr. Seward: We had all that years ago.

Mr. CROSS: I have not referred to other iron deposits in this State, of which we have plenty. There are deposits almost all over Western Australia. They are not as accessible as are the deposits at Yampi. There is not another place in the world where a ship can pull into the shore and load iron-ore straight from the mine. We have millions of tons of coal at Collie only 100 miles from Perth. We also have the refractories that are used for smelting operations, and we even have the alloys that go into the manufacture of steel. We also have deposits of magnesite. Incidentally, there are 92 elements or atoms, and 64 of these are minerals. Magnesite is not a mineral, unless it be termed a secondary mineral. It is formed by the oxidation on the outer side of rocks, and is only found in thicknesses of not more than two or three feet on top of the rocks, and is rarely below the surface. It is very rare and is extremely valuable in connection with iron smelting. The B.H.P. has combed Australia in an effort to find supplies. It has procured some from New South Wales. The richest known deposit now is at Bulong, and that has been secured for the company.

Magnesite exists in at least six places in Western Australia. I made inquiries and was told about five. I pointed out that there was a sixth deposit. The nearest one to Perth is probably at Corrigin. At Bulong several hundred tons have been mined for the B.H.P. Along the whole length of the serpentine rocks in the Bulong area there are thousands of tons of the mineral. If the B.H.P. could get hold of all the magnesite here it would not be used in Western Australia but would be taken to aid in the smelting of iron-ore in Newcastle. About two years ago I accompanied Mr. C. G. Latham to a war loan rally at Bruce Rock. In the bright moonlight, I noticed an outcrop of white rocks on the road between Kulin and Bruce Rock. Later I returned to that district and secured samples of the rock. I had them an-

alysed, and the State Geologist reported that the three samples averaged between 93 and 98 per cent. MgO, which means that the samples were almost pure magnesium.

The Minister for Mines: Did you peg out a claim?

Mr. CROSS: No, I did not. At any rate it is worth looking into, and I suggest that the Mines Department should proceed with that object in view. However, that is not the only deposit that I know of, and I do not propose to tell this House where the next one is that I will refer to. I believe that if I did mention the locality, the B.H.P. would be out after it. Here is an extract from an official report dealing with this outcrop of magnesite—

Numerous patches of magnesite occur as boulders of varying size, in some places forming almost continuous masses. In places, the magnesite was seen to be three to four feet in thickness, but the extent of mineral of this thickness cannot be determined in the absence of prospecting pits. The boulders vary from hard nodular to soft cellular and a bulk sample was obtained by picking over an area of about two acres on the south side of the road and west of the creek bed. This sample gave the following result on analysis in the Government chemical laboratory.

Mr. SPEAKER: Has this anything to do with the motion?

Mr. CROSS: Yes.

Mr. SPEAKER: In what way does magnesite enter into the smelting of iron-ore?

Mr. CROSS: It is used in the process. Magnesite is one of the refractory bodies that play a big part in the treatment of the iron-ore. To continue reading the extract from the report, the result on analysis in the Government chemical laboratory was as follows:—

Silica (SiO_2)	.. ..	2.17 per cent.
Iron and alumina (Fe_2O_3 , Al_2O_3)	.. ..	1.26 per cent.
Magnesia (MgO})	.. ..	39.42 per cent.
Lime (CaO})	.. ..	7.26 per cent.
Carbon dioxide (CO_2)	.. ..	47.35 per cent.

That means that there is about 97 per cent. of magnesium in the outcrop.

The Minister for Mines: From what document are you quoting?

Mr. CROSS: From an official report of one of the Minister's departments. This particular item appears in an obscure corner of the published document, and only my intensive research served to reveal its presence. I would be very sorry if the B.H.P. got to know anything about it. I am convinced

that if the company knew of it, the deposit would be lost to this State. I am told by an expert that the mineral there is easily ten times as good as that at Bulong. We have another refractory ore which is used largely in smelting iron-ore. I refer to dolomite. There is a considerable deposit at Mt. Magnet, the lease for which is not held by B.H.P. but by Mr. Gillies who has mined some 200 tons for someone in Perth. The mineral is easily mined and is not hard to break up. The outcrop is close to the railway. There are thousands of tons of that mineral in the Kimberleys, but it would be hard to get. The B.H.P. has been able to undersell both British and American smelters and Western Australia is in a particularly favoured position for the manufacture of first-class pig-iron.

In my opinion, the fullest inquiries should be made into the possibility of smelting iron-ore here for the production of steel, both of low and high grade alloy values, on a commercial basis. The iron-ore deposit at Koolan Island is ideally situated in relation to sea transport. The ore could be conveyed straight from the deposit to the ship's holds by conveyor-belt, or, if more desirable, it could be loaded into bins that could be loaded direct into the ship. Western Australia has plenty of iron-ore and plenty of coal. Something else is required in vast quantities and that is a matter which will particularly interest Mr. Speaker. Vast quantities of limestone will be required in connection with the refractory unit and huge quantities can be easily procurable in the South Fremantle district. I can readily imagine that if the industry were established, at least 250,000 tons of limestone would be required annually. Here is a golden opportunity for Western Australia. I do not know why we have been so slow in making full use of the gifts with which Nature has so liberally endowed us. When ships proceed to South Fremantle, they could dump the ore in bins on the wharf there, from which it could be easily conveyed by belt direct to the smelters. With the manufacture of iron and steel in large quantities here, we could reduce our prices below those charged by the B.H.P.

The Minister for Works: I think Mr. Speaker has been giving some close study to the question of magnesite and other minerals.

Mr. CROSS: The subject is one worthy of considerable study.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I notice from a perusal of the reference in the "Encyclopedia Britannica" that magnesite is employed in the lining of furnaces used in the manufacture of iron and steel. Therefore the hon. member is near enough to it in making the references he has.

Mr. CROSS: Yes, it is also a refractory used in the furnace.

Mr. SPEAKER: As the "Encyclopedia Britannica" says it is used in the lining of furnaces; that is near enough.

Mr. CROSS: I can imagine members asking where will be the markets for the product of the heavy industry if established in this State. They may ask what attitude the B.H.P. will take up. It will interest members to know that Great Britain has no payable deposits now. All her deposits have been worked out and have not been used during the war period. Even in pre-war days, Britain imported her requirements from Norway, Spain, Algeria and Cuba. Britain uses not less than 7,000,000 tons annually and had done so for many years prior to the outbreak of the present war. The importing of iron-ore into Great Britain involved the payment of royalties, railway freight to port of shipment, then the cost of shipment to port in England, and further railage to the point of smelting.

Britain will have to get her future supplies from somewhere, and I believe, even with the handicap of distance, our iron-ore at Yampi Sound will serve that purpose because of its richness. The richer the iron-ore, the lower the quantity of refractories required, and the less the coal consumed in smelting. Britain requires millions of tons of ore for iron and steel each year. Moreover, the Motherland imported pig-iron and steel in vast quantities in the pre-war period. It is imperative that the Mother Country shall encourage the establishment of this industry here, even if purely from the standpoint of Empire security. No doubt, after the war England will attempt to ensure the strengthening of her position in the Pacific by the establishment of smelting works in Australia apart from the existing plant of the B.H.P. It will constitute a measure of security and a preparation against possible eventualities, in view of which we shall probably be able to approach

Great Britain with the object of securing financial assistance. It may be that not only would Great Britain be willing to lend financial assistance but would furnish us with orders for the manufacture of iron and steel plates. I believe the British Government would give us an assured price over a period of years in the same way as contracts have been entered into for the purchase of butter, wheat and meat for years to come. I do not anticipate that we shall receive much assistance from the Commonwealth because, particularly in wartime, industries already established, which are able to produce the goods required in quick time, will naturally receive preference.

We know that the B.H.P. has its tentacles spread over all the industries, large and small, in the Eastern States, and that company will place every obstacle possible in the way of the starting of operations in Western Australia. The B.H.P. is a cormorant, and wants to control the whole of Australia's heavy industries. If the B.H.P. gets its tentacles on all the iron-ore available in Western Australia, our ore will be taken to Newcastle for smelting there, and we shall not derive any benefit therefrom. In addition to the possible market in Great Britain, there will be opportunities for trade in Africa and Egypt. Members must appreciate that both Germany and Italy possess no valuable iron-ore deposits. The most valuable ore that Germany possesses contains only 36 per cent. of iron. That ore could not compete with the Western Australian output. In Colombo, Singapore and other centres in the Near East, thousands of tons of iron and steel will be required for reconstruction purposes. In Java and the Philippines, many thousands of tons will also be required, and we shall be able to compete successfully from the price standpoint against America, which has to buy her iron-ore from the Lake Superior district and transport it over thousands of miles by sea and rail. On the other hand, Western Australia is right on the doorstep of the Philippines. I am convinced in my own mind that we shall open up a big trade with the Philippine.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. CROSS: If once we were successful in the smelting of iron in this State, it would be almost ridiculous if we did not

follow up this operation by the manufacture of pig-iron into steel, because Western Australia, in addition to having all the refractories that are essential in the manufacture of pig-iron, has also the valuable alloys which are used in the manufacture of steel. While I do not desire to go into detail regarding scheelite from which tungsten is made for the manufacture of special steels, I point out that such steels could be produced here. I remind members of something they already know of, having heard a good deal about it in past years. I refer to our own manganese deposits, the lease of which is held by the Broken Hill Pty. Coy. at the present time. In 1935 the Mines Department took a considerable number of samples of the Horseshoe manganese deposit, and the department in its report said that there was estimated to be not less than a quarter of a million tons of marketable ore carrying from 40 to 55 per cent. of metal. The analysis of a very large number of samples gave the following averages:—Manganese, 54.8 per cent., iron 3 per cent., silica .7 per cent, phosphorus .03 per cent, and sulphur So. .07 per cent. That is considered to be extremely rich manganese.

The Americans in the manufacture of steels make use of grades of manganese considerably lower than the percentages I have stated. In addition to the Horseshoe deposit, a considerable deposit of manganese exists in the vicinity of Ravensthorpe. With this deposit up to the present time nothing has been done. The only attempt to produce manganese in Western Australia was made, of course, when the price of manganese jumped from £2 to £22 per ton. A railway was then built; it has since been pulled up; but one day, obviously, we must put in another railway in order to transport that manganese for the manufacture of high-grade steel in Western Australia. To be successful, as was indicated in Mr. Montgomery's report, this job has got to be tackled on a big scale. I do not think that the Broken Hill Pty. Coy. will smelt in this State at all. Private enterprise will be afraid to tackle it. It is plain to anybody that in the South Pacific, Malaya, Singapore, Rangoon, the Philippines, Ceylon and China there will be tremendous markets for iron and steel.

I believe that in spite of the huge, up-to-date plant possessed by the Broken Hill

Pty. Coy. there is room for another smelting works and for steel-rolling mills in Australia. I do not think that both works together will be able to supply the markets I have mentioned, even though they are able to supply orders to Great Britain. The requirements during the next 30 or 40 years in the South Pacific will prove to be beyond the capacity of both works. It is a positive fact that in order to make a success the very latest methods and the very latest machinery must be obtained and operated. I consider it imperative that action be taken in the interests of our State, because if we lose Koolan Island, for which I understand in the last two months there have been negotiations, Koolan iron-ore will be required elsewhere. The interests concerned will never smelt iron here, but will take the ore to Newcastle, where they have a big plant. If I were in New South Wales, I would advocate that course; but I am in Western Australia and I think we should get some advantage from our own mineral leaseholds.

This is going to be an expensive business. One will not start the iron-smelting and steel-rolling industry in this State cheaply. I think that to establish it successfully will require an expenditure of from £6,000,000 to £10,000,000. I was pleased to learn that the Government were building a power house at South Fremantle. I may point out that South Fremantle is ideally situated for the erection of iron-smelting works and steel-rolling mills. Limestone is found on the spot, and there is the harbour available. There is also good suitable land. It will not be as expensive to erect works there as proved to be the case at Whyalla, where a good deal of swamp had to be reclaimed and tens of thousands of piles had to be driven.

Mr. North: And hundreds of millions of gallons of water had to be supplied as well.

Mr. CROSS: Yes. For some requirements of the industry 20 to 30 millions of gallons of water are needed every day. Most of that will be sea water, but nevertheless considerable quantities of fresh water are needed, and that is available here. A fleet of six or eight ships of 10,000 tons' capacity will have to be built especially for the trade, not only to bring the products down here, but possibly to take iron and steel to Britain. The enterprise will want mining gear, huge

electric shovels, drills, bins, ore-crushers of a capacity of approximately 500 tons per hour, open hearth furnaces, docks and loading gear, magnesite bricks for base plates, dolomite for a refractory for open hearth furnaces, limestone for flux, and plenty of water. Limestone and water are both available at Fremantle. The Broken Hill and Newcastle furnaces are fired with coal and gas from Newcastle coal; but the Western Australian furnaces could be fired with gas produced from Collie coal. We require a power house for that work alone, and also an alternating current plant fitted with a minimum of two 3,000 K.W., 5,000 volt, 25 cycle, 3 phase, 1,500 r.p.m. turbo-alternators. These would cost a very considerable sum to erect. But if we once got a plant like that we would be able successfully to smelt half a million tons of iron per year. South Fremantle, I repeat, is ideally situated for smelters; and rolling-mills. There is a decent ocean approach; and the land, as I have said, is suitable. The site is near to the centre of population, and near the port of Fremantle. This latter is an important feature, because the world's shipping comes to Fremantle, and perhaps not all of it would go to the North-West even if smelters were erected there.

One of the most important developments which would ensure the success of iron-smelting in this State is the fact that it has been discovered that Collie coal can be gasified. The engineer, Mr. Fox, who has been successful in his experiments, is not a gas producer at all. Actually he is a smelter of ores, and knows more about iron-ore smelting than about gasifying coal. If he were successful in that, he could tell us a lot about this project. He definitely informed me personally that one could reduce and smelt the iron-ore with a gas from Collie coal. What is more, the gas, he stated, could be produced more cheaply from Collie coal than from Newcastle coal. That is an important point. In any case, even assuming they said, "We will smelt electrically," they could fire the boilers of the power house with the gas from Collie coal, supposing they could not smelt direct. That is a matter for inquiry, for it would mean that in addition to the increase of trade and the increase of employment from the manufacture of iron-ore, there would be a huge

increase of employment at Collie, because of the far greater demand for Collie coal.

The Minister for Works: Why not establish the industry in Collie?

Mr. CROSS: The Minister speaks facetiously. The reason for not establishing the industry in Collie is readily understandable, because the whole success of this business is that the iron, which is the greatest of all requirements, can be transhipped cheaply from the point of mining to the point of manufacture; and there is no transport as cheap as sea transport. It is easy accessibility that puts this State in the position where it can undercut the prices of other people. As I have already indicated, the cost of ore at the mines at Lake Superior in the United States amounts to about 15s. per ton in Australian currency. I venture to predict that ore can be put in a ship at Yampi for less than 5s. per ton. The ore having been placed in ships at Yampi with the aid of the latest and most up-to-date labour-saving machinery, at a cheap price, it will be delivered at South Fremantle either direct into the bins or on to a conveyor belt and carried into the smelters.

[Resolved: That motions be continued.]

The Minister for Works: It might be cheaper to get the iron-ore from Koolan to Collie than to get the coal from Collie to South Fremantle.

Mr. CROSS: No, it would not.

The Minister for Works: It might be.

Mr. CROSS: It might be, but I say it would not. If necessary, the manufactured iron and steel could be loaded on to the ships at South Fremantle for the world's markets. The success of this scheme would spell prosperity for Western Australia. There should be a very full inquiry into the possibilities of successfully establishing this industry here. Last night we heard a doleful story of how this State will be affected because of the shortage of water for the primary industries. Here we have a possible industry that would create work for an army of workers and thus a market for our primary products, and an industry that would not be affected by drought, and yet no attempt has been made to establish it on a large scale. The stage has been reached when the Broken Hill Pty., Ltd., alive to the possibilities of treating our rich ore, is taking steps to get hold of every refractory ore and alloy and

the iron-ore itself with a view to conveying it to another State where all the benefits will be received, while we will merely lose our wealth. I know the argument that will be put up. I will be told it cannot be done, that it is too expensive and that we cannot get the money.

We should appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the matter. That commission should comprise five members. There should be on it three experts from the iron industry, one of whom should be Mr. F. C. Fox, the engineer who produced the gas from Collie coal at Midland Junction. The other two members of the commission should be members of this Chamber. That commission should secure full information with regard to labour-saving machinery connected with mining, and ship-loading. It should see the facilities available at Lake Superior and should get all the information concerning the latest improvements in connection with smelting and the production of iron and steel, including the production of high-grade steel alloys and the methods of firing furnaces. Not all the iron in America is smelted with coke or with wood charcoal. Electric smelting is carried on there, and 70 per cent. of the high grade alloy steel is electrically smelted in the U.S.A. which is the world's largest producer. To secure this information, the commission should visit British and American smelting works and should even go to Russia and see what has been done at Magnitogorsk. It should make inquiries into the possibility of the British Government's finding finance for this project, either by a direct gift or by giving us £5,000,000 or £6,000,000 in return for our placing 5,000,000 or 6,000,000 tons of ore free on board over a period of ten years. That would be a good arrangement.

The Minister for Works: A gift would be preferable.

Mr. CROSS: That is not as stupid as the Minister might think it is. It is not nearly as stupid as the effort to manufacture low-grade iron-ore at Wundowie in this State with charcoal iron. The success or failure of this industry definitely depends on what it costs to produce a unit of heat, and the cost of getting requirements to any given point. I consider that Great Britain, for the security of the Empire, and for its requirements in the South Pacific and to assure itself of a supply of high-grade iron and

steel, would assist us. To a country that is spending £7,000,000 or £8,000,000 a day on war, what is a gift of £5,000,000 or £6,000,000 to ensure that if anything else happens that country will have a source of high-grade materials used in the manufacture of munitions? The proposition to send men abroad to obtain information is not new. B.H.P., since its inception, repeatedly, when manufacturing chlorides of silver, sent experts to America and brought men from that country.

Think of men like D. J. Delprat and later Mr. Davis, and then Mr. Essington Lewis! Giants of American industry have come here and the company has carried out a policy of sending manufacturing executives to obtain latest details of manufacture from Germany, America and Sweden, and have brought experts to this country. They have continually obtained up-to-date machinery and kept up to date with the times. They have had experts to run the manufactories and that is why they are a success. Some time ago the New South Wales Government decided to try the process of hydro-generation of coal—that is, the production of oil from coal. It sent men to Great Britain and Germany to ascertain the latest methods, and those men gained valuable information before the war. Revolutionary ideas in regard to the use of machines could be obtained. Let me give one example. Everybody has heard of Henry G. Kaiser, of Tacoma, in America. When the Germans began to sink merchant ships Great Britain could not build vessels fast enough, and consequently sent someone to America to find out who could build ships and do it quickly. The American Government advised Great Britain to secure the services of Henry G. Kaiser. That gentleman introduced startling methods. He built a shipyard and the first two ships in 11 months. At the end of 1943, he was employing more men in shipbuilding than the whole of the British shipyards put together. Henry G. Kaiser did something else. He is the man who built the Grand Coulee Dam, the world's biggest, and he did it in two years. When he tendered for the job his price was millions of dollars below the other lowest tender. People thought he was mad, because the site of the dam was in a most difficult place.

Tremendous quantities of supplies had to be transported over swamps, rivers, val-

leys and hills, but he revolutionised the machinery used for that kind of project. One of the things he built was a conveyor belt miles long which ran over the tops of hills and over rivers, valleys and swamps. It was the world's longest conveyor belt. By the introduction of these labour-saving methods, he justified his low tender and made an enormous profit on the project. While a great deal of data is available as to the value of our iron-ore deposits, a great deal more information is required. The work of this proposed commission might involve an expenditure of £10,000 but, if as a result heavy industry was established in Western Australia, the cost would be fully justified. In the past this State has wasted millions of pounds on various projects. At one stage the course of a river was altered by men using wheel-barrows. Tens of thousands of pounds have been spent to provide work for men.

My proposal is that this commission should get data and supply a report that would enable this House to decide whether or not for once in our history we should make a start in industry on a scale that would ensure success. The commission's job would be to see whether we could obtain finance. I do not think that is so silly, either. I have gone to a great deal of trouble to collect the data I have secured because I realise that this country must have more population, and to that end we must find lucrative work for the people. The only thing for us to do is to use the resources which nature has given us and turn them into profit-making enterprises. I know, and you know, Mr. Speaker, that heavy industry is always followed by a long list of subsidiary industries. We own the world's richest deposits of iron-ore. Those deposits are more easily accessible than are any others in the world, yet if we want to buy anything made of iron—a saucepan, galvanised wire, or corrugated iron—we cannot do it. There is something wrong that must be rectified. Not so much can be done while the war is on, but preparations should be put in hand to correct the mistakes of the past and to take steps successfully to introduce heavy industry after the war. Let us remember that heavy industry is the basis of sound economy for any country in the world.

On motion by the Minister for Works, debate adjourned.

BILL—SHEARERS' ACCOMMODATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council with amendments.

BILL—LAND ALIENATION RESTRICTION.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 20th September.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS [8.1]: This Bill is designed to protect the interests of returned men insofar as land controlled by the Crown is available for selection or for sale. So far as the conduct of the Department of Lands is concerned, the Bill can be regarded as unnecessary because it simply endeavours to make essential by statute that certain principles should be observed before any approval is given for the alienation of Crown land. I have mentioned previously in this Chamber that the practice suggested in this Bill is already adopted by the Lands Department. It seems to me to be somewhat strange that the Bill should emanate from the other side of the House because it is from Opposition members that the greatest activity is shown in having land released, even at present, and not necessarily for returned soldiers. I would not like to embarrass any member, but with perfect bona fides and in good faith members have stressed very often to me the necessity of allowing this settler or that settler to have an adjoining area added to his existing property.

I am wondering just how many cases that are now before me, sponsored by members in this House, will be affected unless a decision is made by me very shortly, and as reasonably fast as decisions can be made with full consideration being given to returned men. There are at the moment requests that several blocks in this State should be made available to other than returned men. If that is an offence, well, it is an offence that members opposite have sponsored. So I am to an extent surprised that this Bill should come forward purporting to be a direction to the Government not to take action in certain cases. One thing it will do will be to make very easy some decisions in difficult cases. If a division is called for on this Bill it will be very interesting to see how some members will vote. I stress the point that the

practice that will be required by statute, if this Bill is passed, is the practice of the Lands Department today. All applications for land are dealt with by a senior officer acting under instructions from the Minister according to set principles. The senior officer who handled all land transactions under pre-war conditions was the Assistant Under Secretary.

Because of the introduction of the principle that no areas likely to be suitable for soldier settlement are to be alienated, all applications for such areas are scrutinised by the Surveyor General prior to any approval being given and, in addition, all approvals today must go before the Under Secretary himself. That is the existing practice. If there is any provision in this Bill requiring that the Minister shall give his permission in writing it means not a mere formality, but that some scrutiny better than the present arrangement is necessary, because if there is an express direction in any statute to any Minister then that Minister must accept the responsibility of that scrutiny, and give particular attention to any administrative Act that renders it incumbent upon him to act according to the statute that he works under. This Bill provides that the Minister shall give his permission in writing before any Crown land can be sold or leased to any person other than a member of the Forces. While I have no objection to continuing the principle already in force in the Lands Department, I desire to point out to the member sponsoring this Bill the difficulties of administration in a department where the Minister is sometimes hard worked, if such a proposal is insisted upon.

I point out that the Minister for Land is a body corporate. If members insist that he must act with the perpetual seal, then all such documents to be signed by him in writing must be signed under seal. With the hundreds and thousands of transactions that have to be signed by the Minister for Lands at present in the course of the year including land grants and many other things, it is wholly unnecessary for this principle, requiring the Minister to sign or deal in writing, to be enforced, instead of applying Section 13 of the Land Act which gives him the right to delegate his authority. I submit that no cases that have received the approval of the officer to whom the

authority is delegated can be questioned. If there are any doubtful cases or any in connection with which the officer does not wish to act, or if there is a particular point applying to any section of the Land Act, they are today referred to the Minister.

So I submit it is unnecessary to insist on the formality of the seal being produced, or on the formality of the document being signed or approved in the writing of the Minister. It is quite unnecessary to insist on personal approval. Whatever policy is laid down would be followed by the departmental officers who are responsible and reliable. There is no doubt that any case which could in any way be disputed or questioned would, in accordance with the present practice, be referred to the Minister. In addition to that particular requirement of this Bill, which I intend to endeavour to delete, there is in the subsequent clause the provision that all land shall be available primarily for soldier settlement. As I have already explained there is today not one application for land that does not go before the Surveyor General, or his deputy, who issues a document stating that in his opinion the area is land unsuitable for soldier settlement or, as a unit, is insufficient for a farm. All these things are attended to.

The other aspects of the Bill to which I take objection are those which prevent the leasing of land. I shall endeavour to have the references to the inability to lease land deleted from the Bill. I think it unwise to refuse to lease land to a person other than a member of the Forces, or a dependant, because in the interests of the State, in the interests of the mortgagor and of the mortgagee it is often—and particularly at present—necessary to continue that property in a productive state and to keep it in good condition. In some instances it is necessary to keep it in production for a soldier. Many properties belonging to men who are serving in the Forces are leased by the Agricultural Bank in the interests of a soldier so as to keep them in reasonable condition and the improvements fairly maintained so that they can be kept in production.

As all these leases are short-term leases, whether made by the Agricultural Bank or the Lands Department, it is essential that the circumstance giving either the institution or the department the right to lease these properties should remain. In a general

way, and with these two or three exceptions, I have no objection to the Bill because it conforms to existing Government practice. If it will mean that in a statutory way there is no chance whatever of land that is under the control of the Crown and that is suitable for soldier settlement, being alienated, the Government will have no objection to imposing that particular stricture by statute. As I intend to move several amendment in Committee I have no objection to the second reading.

MR. LESLIE (Mt. Marshall): I was pleased indeed to hear the Minister say that the Government has no objection to the Bill. I can appreciate the ease that the Minister has submitted to the House. I am aware of the fact that the Lands Department and incidentally the Agricultural Bank have adopted a sympathetic attitude in the matter of the transfer of land, having in mind the possible requirements of returned soldier settlement as soon as that is introduced. We feel that a Bill of this sort will lend a measure of legal support to the policy the Minister has already adopted. This measure of legal support has been requested not alone by members on this side of the House. The Federal body of the Returned Soldiers' League carried a motion only two months ago urging that any proposed transfer of land should be critically examined before the transfer was permitted. That resolution naturally would be concurred in by the branch in this State. Apart from the returned soldier movement, the Primary Producers' Association and the Wheatgrowers' Union have carried similar resolutions at their conferences within the last few months. The Wheatgrowers' Union suggested that the transfer of all land should be entirely frozen.

My only regret is that the provisions of this Bill are limited to Crown land. If it were possible, I should like to see a restriction placed upon the transfer of all land, not with the idea of definitely limiting the transfer of land to a degree that would impose hardship on the present owner, but in order that the transfers of private land should be examined to ensure that such transfers as are being made are not being conducted for purely speculative purposes in the hope that at the termination of hostilities the clamour for land that will occur will so enhance the value as to bring a large

measure of profit to the people who are buying now. As regards the Minister's submission of the part he would have to play in regard to all these applications, most people will appreciate it, and I see no objection to the task of administering the measure being delegated to a responsible officer of the department. All said and done, the Minister would have to accept responsibility for whatever action his officer might take.

I support the second reading and have no objection to the amendments indicated by the Minister. I feel sure that the Minister's announcement of his intention to support the Bill will be acclaimed throughout the State; and not only in those quarters that are actively interested in the welfare of the returned men but also in those quarters which are concerned about the possibility of unjust speculative dealing, which might eventually impose a burden on the men and result in the Government having to bear additional cost when it comes to placing the returned men on the land.

MR. WILLMOTT (Sussex): I support the second reading, and hope that some of the amendments indicated by the Minister will be accepted by the Leader of the Opposition. Although I agree that some action should be taken by the Government to prevent speculation in land, there are certain cases that have come under the notice of members in which people manpowered for certain jobs and unable to join the Forces might be prevented from obtaining land if they require it. I think the amendments outlined by the Minister will overcome that difficulty. In my electorate there are cases in which hardship would be caused to men who require land and are anxious to get it. These men were manpowered to certain jobs and unable to join the Forces. I hope the Leader of the Opposition will see his way to accept the amendments forecast by the Minister.

MR. WATTS (Katanning—in reply): I thank the Minister for his reception of this proposal. There are one or two matters he mentioned in his speech on which I should like to comment. He referred to an application by a member on this side of the House in the matter of linking farming properties, which application would impinge upon the principle involved in this measure. I tell the Minister frankly that I have no under-

standing whatever of that reference. So far as I am concerned, I know of no such application that could, with one possible exception, have anything to do with the statement he has made. No doubt the Minister had his reason for making that statement and I am not going to dispute it. There may be people in other places or even in this House who have asked him to take action such as he suggests but, if he was making reference to me, he will find it difficult to prove, except in one instance.

The Minister for Lands: You are entirely exonerated.

MR. WATTS: I am glad to hear that. In the present state of the law, it is open to any member to approach the Minister in the course of his parliamentary duties and request him to exercise the law as it stands, and a member would not be doing his duty by his constituents if he failed to request the Minister lawfully to exercise any of the rights he now possesses. The hon. member referred to by the Minister, whoever he might be, will find himself probably supporting this proposal because he will see that it would at least clarify the law. I wish to turn for a second to the question of leasing properties. I appreciate the point of view of the Minister, but I think he is unwise to ask us to delete all reference to leasing. If the Minister had not put his amendments on the notice paper I had intended to suggest that an amendment might be inserted to provide for the exclusion of leases of more than two years. Leases should not be entirely excluded: it is desirable from the point of view of the maintenance of properties, especially Agricultural Bank properties, that leasing for a reasonable term should be permitted. Otherwise, the property would stand still or go back, whereas by leasing it can be occupied and kept in order.

If the Minister will accept my proposal that leases for two years be excluded, I will be entirely agreeable in all the circumstances of the case. Regarding his proposed amendment concerning a deputy to act for him, I am afraid the Bill has been drafted in its present form on some misunderstanding of the position. I have advised the Minister that I was informed that the Land Act as it exists would enable the Minister to delegate his authority under this Bill if it became an Act. How-

ever, I have no objection to the amendment in that regard proposed by the Minister.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Marshall in the Chair; Mr. Watts in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Certain lands not to be sold or leased without consent of Minister:

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of Subclause (1) the words "or leased" be struck out.

I mentioned on the second reading how necessary it is to have the facility to lease properties for short terms. I think it would be preferable for the Leader of the Opposition to accept my assurance that there will not be during the currency of this measure leases entered into for a period of more than one year, and instructions to this effect will be given by me. If we do not delete the words, it will mean that no lease can be entered into and we shall have properties on our hands that cannot be kept in good condition. We can imagine all sorts of difficulties arising, and the best way to avoid them and to prevent our putting certain properties out of production is to delete the words.

Mr. WATTS: In view of the very definite undertaking given by the Minister, it would be churlish on my part to refuse to accept his amendment. I have no objection to it.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move an amendment—

That at the end of Subclause (1) the following words be added:—"or of an officer duly authorised by the Minister to give such consent."

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move an amendment—

That in line 3 of Subclause (2) the words "or lease" be struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move an amendment—

That at the end of Subclause (2) the following words be added:—"or of an officer duly authorised by the Minister to give such consent."

Amendment put and passed.

Clause 4—Consent of Minister not to be granted except in certain circumstances:

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move an amendment—

That in line 1 after the word "Minister" the words "or of the officer authorised by the Minister as aforesaid" be inserted.

Mr. WATTS: I feel that the insertion of these words is not required in this particular case. All the references to consent in the paragraph of the clause with which we are dealing would be the consent of the Minister. The consent of the Minister's duly authorised officer is the consent of the Minister.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I disagree with the Leader of the Opposition. Section 13 of the Land Act provides that all leases, licenses, transfers and other instruments specified shall be signed or sealed or endorsed by the Minister, but may under his authority be dealt with by an officer authorised in that behalf. Under the amendment, No. 47 of 1934, it is necessary for the same authority to be delegated in the case of approval to applications, permits to occupy and other specified matters. If the hon. member will look at the end of the clause we are now discussing, he will find in the proviso that the consent of the Minister is particularly referred to. I submit that the addition of these words is necessary.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 the words "or lease" be struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move an amendment.

That in line 3 after the word "Minister" the words "or the said officer" be inserted.

Mr. LESLIE: I take it that the officer to whom the Minister will delegate authority will be dealing with the individual applications of soldiers as they are put forward. No doubt he will know the views of the Minister and will act upon them, but I think the decision as to the land to be selected for settlement should rest solely with the Minister as a matter of policy.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If this Bill becomes law, all land—until proved otherwise—is suitable for soldier settle-

ment. The authority will be delegated to the Surveyor General, and consequently the amendment is necessary.

Mr. WATTS: The difficulty I see is that if the amendment is passed it will enable a departure to be made from the practice which the Minister mentioned in his second reading speech. If the words be inserted, then the officer will have the same authority as the Minister himself and there will be no necessity to refer to the Minister. That was partly the reason for my objection to the insertion of similar words in a previous clause. I did not press my objection then because there was some doubt in my mind; but here, as I said, the officer would have equal authority with the Minister. There will not be the final refuge of an appeal to the Minister himself.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not wish to press the amendment, but it will be necessary for me to insist upon a subsequent similar amendment.

Mr. Watts: I agree with the Minister now.

Amendment put and negatived.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of the first proviso the words "or lease" be struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move an amendment—

That in line 4 of the first proviso after the word "Minister" the words "or the officer authorised by the Minister as aforesaid" be inserted.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 5, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—CRIMINAL CODE AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Order of the day read for the resumption from the 4th October of the debate on the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time

MOTION—SOLDIER SETTLEMENT.

As to Commonwealth Policy.

Debate resumed from the 4th October on the following motion moved by Mr. Thorn—

That Parliament views with deep concern the failure of the Commonwealth Government to announce some definite policy with respect to

soldier land settlement and what financial assistance will be available to assist ex-members of the Forces who desire to take up primary production. This apparent lack of policy is bringing hardship to many Western Australian ex-servicemen and it is also against the best interests of Western Australia where there is so much suitable land available at moderate prices.

MR. DONEY (Williams-Narrogin) [8.46]:

The object of the motion is to emphasise the extreme urgency there was, and still is, despite the recent pronouncement from Canberra, regarding the soldier settlement position in this State, and for that matter right throughout Australia. That urgency arises largely from considerations of the huge amount of investigatory and preparatory work that is inseparable from soldier settlement occurring here or anywhere else. It is, of course, admitted that some headway was made some ten days ago in Canberra with regard to apportioning the financial and administrative responsibilities as between the Commonwealth and the States. Nevertheless, there is still altogether too much concerning which we know practically nothing. There is this further to complicate the position, and render it necessary to persist with the subject-matter of the motion. I refer to the announcement that appeared in "The West Australian" of today's issue.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Members must keep order. There is altogether too much talking.

Mr. DONEY: The report in "The West Australian" reads as follows:—

The Bill to validate Commonwealth and State plans for soldier settlement is unlikely to be available for the Federal Parliament next month. It will probably be presented to Parliament at a later sitting, probably in February.

Mr. Cross: The war will last for another three years.

Mr. DONEY: That report plainly indicates that the Commonwealth Government does not view this matter as one of extreme urgency to the extent that we regard it in this State. In those circumstances it is not inclined to say exactly what stage the negotiations have reached, when the Government will be ready for applications or when the scheme will actually be launched. It is not in a position to say just exactly what will be the major financial and other considerations that the soldier settler will have to face up to. That, of course, has special reference to

the interest question and other problems such as whether Section 51 will or will not be enforced. There is also the problem of superphosphate supplies and other auxiliary factors of that type. We on the Opposition benches therefore are forced to adopt the role of critics not for criticism's sake but in order that we may induce the Government to tell us as much as it can as quickly as it can so that servicemen with a leaning towards the land may start now with their individual plans not only for the post-war period but for the period from now onwards. At this stage there is already a large number of returned soldiers in Western Australia who are anxious to commence operations on the land now.

The Premier: Is that so?

Mr. DONEY: I think the Premier has heard that statement made in this House before, and I do not know that the Government has contested its correctness.

The Premier: But you referred to a large number.

Mr. DONEY: I did not actually specify the number. I judge by the correspondence I receive from which I find that a man here and a man there is anxious and ready to go on the land if only the land were ready to receive him.

The Minister for Lands: Do you mean that there are a dozen or a hundred men ready to go on the land?

Mr. DONEY: I cannot say with any exactitude. I would suggest 10 or 12 as coming within my personal knowledge.

Mr. Thorn: Why guess at it?

Mr. DONEY: I am quite willing to be as precise as the actual state of affairs will enable me to be. As that has been my personal experience, I do not think it would be an exaggeration to conjecture that the total number of unsatisfied applicants may be in the vicinity of 150, a number large enough to be a problem. The number may be more or it may not reach that total. Be the number great or small, the Premier will agree that delays are extremely irksome and highly annoying and are calculated to destroy a soldier's keenness for a life on the land. It seems to me that it becomes our duty as an Opposition to apply discreetly no doubt, the spur and the whip as it were, leaving the Government to do the actual work. Of course, that is a situation that cannot be avoided. Although we are critics we are imbued with a desire to help. There must

be no shadow of doubt on that point. While that phase is in my mind regarding the delays that have occurred, I emphasise that the last man to be blamed in that connection is the Minister for Lands, particularly having regard to the important part he has played in his capacity as Chairman of the Rural Reconstruction Royal Commission. I believe members of the House generally will agree that his energy and initiative have been of a high order. I am sure that he will agree with me that there has been a heavy delay. In my opinion, if we are late with our arrangements for soldier settlement it will mean that we are likely to be too late.

Indeed, we want to be first in the market if it is at all possible, so as to be the first to take advantage of existing and new markets that will be available not only as soon as peace is declared but as soon as peace is within reasonable prospect of attainment. When that time arrives the primary producers the world over will have a very busy time. Judging from a paragraph that appeared recently in "The West Australian" a departmental officer of the Commonwealth Government, Dr. Coombes, proved the major obstacle to final decisions being reached by the Premiers on the question of land settlement. That happened at the conference before last. If Dr. Coombes could prevent a decision being reached by the Premiers of six States, he must be powerful. He might be regarded as being too powerful.

The Minister for Lands: I do not think that is how it worked out.

Mr. DONEY: I know the Minister for Lands had every reason for some feeling in this matter, and his feelings probably go a great deal deeper than do mine. He has probably spoken more harshly about the position than I have. My knowledge of this matter was gained from a report that appeared in "The West Australian" of, I should say, about a month ago. Anyhow, it appeared to me in view of the stand Dr. Coombes took at the conference of which I speak, that that official had the full backing of the Commonwealth Government. In the Press report the situation that had arisen with respect to Dr. Coombes and our own Minister for Lands in particular, was described as "an extraordinary situation." That is a disturbing term in times like the

present when urgency is the keynote of the matter. It might be that in the exercise of his authority, Dr. Coombes's attitude, probably accounted for at least a month's delay if not more.

The Premier: No, we just adjourned for three weeks and then went back and settled the matter.

Mr. DONEY: I do not know what the Premier may have in mind, but when he returned and the matter was settled, possibly Dr. Coombes had been given another job.

The Premier: No. He was still there.

Mr. DONEY: Apparently he was more amenable to reason on the second occasion.

The Premier: Possibly so.

Mr. DONEY: Then this conflict between the Minister for Lands and Dr. Coombes was settled.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Will the member for Williams-Narrogin address the Chair?

Mr. DONEY: Here we have the arrangements at a stage where an agreement is to be reached so that farm lands may be available, thus indicating that we have been faithful to the duties our pledges imposed upon us, and it is at that critical juncture that the major obstacle in the shape of Dr. Coombes arrives on the scene, with what result the Premier knows. I take it, however, in view of what we have just heard, that Dr. Coombes not only arrived but he has since departed. I do not know that we should blame Dr. Coombes solely for the delay that has occurred. He is the chief executive officer of the Department of Reconstruction.

The Minister for Lands: He is the Director of Post-War Reconstruction.

Mr. DONEY: Nevertheless, he is responsible to his Minister who is the Commonwealth Treasurer, Mr. Chifley. I take it Dr. Coombes would not act contrary to the instructions he received from his Minister so that any blame that may be attachable to action taken by Dr. Coombes in delaying the matter may justly be placed to Mr. Chifley's account. I do not know quite how other countries are situated in regard to the soldier settlement problem. Maybe many are no further ahead than we are; but it would appear as if Canada is right out in the van and we by comparison are just slogging along in the rear.

The Minister for Lands: Is not Canada making merely a cash payment and doing nothing beyond that?

Mr. DONEY: I know no more about Canada's position than was told us in this Chamber on the occasion of the visit of members of Parliament from the Old Country and Canada. A highly interesting speech was made by Mr. Ross, the leader of the Canadian delegation, and I questioned him then as to whether his country was at that moment in a position to absorb into rural industry the soldiers who were then returning; and he replied in the affirmative. I further asked him by what means this was accomplished, whether by existing statutes or some new laws. His reply was that the legislation which was made use of in 1920-21 was adjusted to meet the circumstances of today. I notice that throughout the report which appeared in "The West Australian" something more than a week ago, the main principles of the scheme as stated occupy 16 paragraphs. In paragraph 1 it is stated—

The number to be settled will be determined by settlement opportunities rather than by the number of applicants.

I am sure I do not know what that actually portends. It would seem to mean that not all the land required for soldier settlement has been found, or else that investigations in that respect are not completed. It certainly indicates a difficulty in finding land.

The Minister for Lands: That is for prospects.

Mr. DONEY: They are an additional question, of course. I would like to arrive at the amount of soldier settlement at this moment. Surely it is not going to be denied in this State that in the immediate post-war period and for, say, some 10 or 12 or 15 years after it there will be ample markets for primary products. If they are not going to be available in that period, when may we expect them to be? It seems that it is a poor outlook for Australia if today we are dubious of post-war markets.

The Premier: Fifteen years is a long time.

Mr. DONEY: It certainly is. Anyhow, whether that be so or no, may I say that when the soldier settlement scheme has been decided on, the biggest question will suddenly develop—whether the rate of interest shall be $2\frac{1}{2}$ or $2\frac{3}{4}$ or 3 per cent. I would

suggest 2½ per cent. We have been preaching low interest for years, and now we have arrived at the testing time. It will shortly be a question as to whether we shall be big and grant a rate of 2 or 2½ or 2¾ per cent, or whether we shall be small and timid and stupid, and say 4, 4½ or 5 per cent.

The Minister for Lands: Do you say that irrespective of the cost of money?

Mr. DONEY: Yes.

The Minister for Lands: Would you give a concession in perpetuity?

Mr. DONEY: Yes, so far as the Federal loans advanced for the scheme are concerned. I am not too easy at the moment regarding what our loans are going to cost us, but I reckon that if we are not big, or full-blooded—if I may use that expression—about this interest question any scheme of soldier settlement must largely fail. Nor do I see how it can well be otherwise. We know, of course, precisely what has happened in the past; and that is our only guide as to what is likely to happen in the future. The Minister for Lands might check me up on this, but of the thousands of failures by soldier farmers from 1920 onward, would it be extravagant—I think it would not—to say that for every one failure owing to poorness of land or sickness of the farmer or of his family, or isolation, or inexperience, there would be ten failures causing men to go off the land, because of pressure of interest accumulation?

The present interest rate for soldier settlement, I think, is 4½ per cent. Mr. Justice Pike was on the scene of operations here ten or more years ago; and I would be inclined to say that the major amount of suffering and the major number of dispossession and so forth have taken place since then. The interest rate for soldier settlement scheme farmers was, and still is, 4½ per cent. If 2½ per cent. had been charged, admittedly that would appear to represent a loss of 2 per cent., and it would of course in the aggregate amount to a very, very large sum. Yet that 2 per cent., I suggest, could quite reasonably be regarded as an investment; for if that loss is not accepted, I ask the Premier to consider what huge sums will inevitably be lost later. Thus will the initial small loss be an insurance against greater subsequent losses. I should have imagined that the Premier and the Minister

for Lands would have been found on this occasion readily agreeing that that is so, particularly having regard to the huge sums, the many millions, lost on account of being penny-wise and pound-foolish away back at the time when we charged 4½ per cent. instead of 2½ per cent.—or 2 per cent., which would have been far wiser.

The Premier: We propose to make a loss at the commencement this time.

Mr. DONEY: If the Premier is prepared to face a loss at the commencement of the scheme, then he is promoting a scheme in line with what I set out here. I am agreeing that otherwise the loss would certainly run into many millions and, worse still, ruin the lives of many honest settlers and their wives and their children. That would be a very poor recompense for all the sacrifices that those settlers are making and have made. I have referred, and I refer again now, to a statement in paragraph No. 1 setting out the conditions of land settlement agreed upon just recently by the Prime Minister. There we are told that the number to be settled would be determined by settlement opportunities rather than by the number of applicants. Maybe I misunderstood the position. I have remarked that this looks like a presentiment that there will not be sufficient good land for the applicants, though I can hardly think that. However, having regard to our boasts in the past about our huge unsettled areas and that sort of thing, that may be right. Mr. Justice Davis, the Canadian High Commissioner, whom I have met and like very much, apparently holds the opinion that there is land and to spare, millions and millions of acres, away in the centre of Australia. He may be right, but certainly not on the grounds that he advances. I will not weary the Chamber long, but just for a minute or two wish to read what Mr. Justice Davis had to say—

An Eldorado: Miles of grazing land. Central and North Australia. Central and North Australia were an Eldorado of potential agricultural wealth, said the Canadian High Commissioner (Mr. Justice Davis) today after a tour in which he visited military and air establishments. He drove over the highway from Alice Springs and inspected 1,300 miles of grazing lands. He stated that he had seen an undeveloped area greater in size and in possibilities than either the Canadian or the American west.

"I have seen an area where the stage of development is about equal, with minor exceptions, to what ours was about 1880," he said.

"I have seen a land where there will never be, in my opinion, a large population, but which is capable of producing wealth in such dimensions that it will support a great population in the rest of Australia. I have seen a land where the finest beef in the world can be raised at a cost which I believe no other nation in the world can touch, and where without much effort a cattle population many times greater than the present population can be carried with ease.

"I have seen a land which on the surface is largely waterless, but where a kindly Providence has put the water where it can best be conserved away from evaporation—under the ground. I know of no place on this globe where there are greater chances of development. Australians are favoured in the possession of this great national asset, and it should be a challenge to the Australia of tomorrow to develop it to the limit."

The Minister for Lands: I am sorry to say I do not agree with him.

Mr. DONEY: I do not agree with him either. I cannot for a moment believe that thousands of men of this our own country will have gone north and then gone south and east and west, and can have missed in all those years what this man claims to have seen during a quick journey in a straight line. The time during which he made his journey would be, I should think, the very best time for viewing that country, namely, mid-August.

The Minister for Lands: It is splendid there at that time of the year.

Mr. DONEY: Yes, but unfortunately the local people live there not only when splendid conditions prevail but during periods of less satisfactory weather. Many readers of that article would regard Mr. Justice Davis as a man who had only just to come to our Australian hinterland to see immediately the amazing possibilities which, we poor stupid folk have been overlooking all these years. I bring the matter up only for the purpose of indicating to any one who may care to read the Parliamentary debates that Mr. Justice Davis, who is probably quite a sensible and reasonable man in his own country, is not so when he travels. In order to bring the motion submitted by the member for Toodyay up to date and more into line with the pronouncement made recently by the Prime Minister, I intend to move a slight amendment.

Here, however, let me interpolate that it was very difficult to understand the conditions under which this announcement from Canberra was made known. We had a full

column in the paper following the last conference on soldier settlement, but all that was made known from Canberra in the Press was just Mr. Curtin's own private view as to what exactly was agreed upon. What I take exception to is that it only told half the tale, leaving the rest to be imagined. We can consider that the Premier and the Minister for Lands and all the other Premiers and the other Ministers present took part in the debate. They must have done so, because it was said they were unanimously in agreement on the scheme. Surely they said something worth listening to and worth putting in the Press! But if one can judge from what appeared in the Press, they said nothing at all worth listening to.

The Minister for Mines: Look how much is said here worth listening to that is not published!

Mr. DONEY: I would not like to enter into a discussion with the Minister on that matter. Having voiced my dissatisfaction at the method by which this matter was made public, I now move an amendment—

That in lines 2 and 3 the words "to announce some definite policy" be struck out with a view to inserting the words "quickly to complete the proposals" in lieu.

Amendment (to strike out words) put and passed.

Mr. DONEY: I move—

That the words proposed to be inserted be inserted.

THE PREMIER (on amendment): The member for Williams-Narrogin suggests by the amendment that nothing has been completed and he wants us to urge the Commonwealth Government quickly to complete the proposals.

Mr. Doney: No, I admit that one thing has been done.

The PREMIER: The hon. member uses the words "quickly to complete the proposals." General agreement has been reached in regard to the proposals. There was scope for this motion when it was moved, but we have since had a conference at which both the Commonwealth and the States were represented and a general understanding—which was published—has been reached; so it may be said that the proposals and how they are going to be worked out have been completed.

Mr. Doney: Only as to apportioning the financial responsibility.

The PREMIER: No. The hon. member read out the first sentences published concerning the main principles of the scheme. He quoted the following:—

Land settlement of servicemen will be undertaken only where economic prospects for the production concerned are reasonably sound.

Mr. Doney: We knew that all along.

The PREMIER: We did not know that all along. That is not what occurred the last time. Soldiers were put on the land who never had a possible hope of success. Men were put on the land who were physically, mentally and psychologically unfitted—

Mr. SPEAKER: I draw the Premier's attention to the fact that we are discussing the insertion of the words "quickly to complete the proposals."

The PREMIER: I am saying that they have been quickly completed.

Mr. SPEAKER: No, the Premier was discussing something that happened after the last war.

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Premier was discussing what had occurred with regard to putting soldiers on the land previously.

The PREMIER: I am comparing what was done during the last war and with what is proposed to be done now, and am pointing out that these plans have been quickly completed and therefore there is no need for the amendment, which I oppose. In fact, the utility of the whole motion has gone by the board, and it should be withdrawn because the representatives of the Commonwealth and State Governments have met and come to an agreement in regard to the matter.

Mr. Doney: Is the agreement complete?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. Doney: Then why is it that it has not been put into operation? What are we waiting for?

The PREMIER: I do not know whether the Speaker would allow me to say that.

Mr. SPEAKER: I will not.

The PREMIER: The proposals were completed.

Mr. Doney: The Premier cannot say that.

The PREMIER: If the Speaker would allow me to say what has been done—

Mr. SPEAKER: At this stage the Premier can only discuss the amendment.

The PREMIER: Very well! I will say there is no need for the words to be inserted inasmuch as the agreement and the understanding have been completed.

Mr. Doney: Oh, no!

The PREMIER: And there is no necessity for us to adopt the role of urger to induce the Government to do something that has been done.

MR. WATTS (Katanning—on amendment): I feel reluctant to allow the Premier to influence the House by saying that every effort has been made to complete the proposals, which is not correct if I can be guided by what I see in the newspaper. The member for Guildford-Midland said on one occasion that he had no means of verifying what was in the Press, so—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I must ask the hon. member to speak to the amendment and not about something the member for Guildford-Midland said.

Mr. WATTS: It has a direct bearing on the question, because I find that the failure of the Commonwealth Parliament quickly to complete the proposals is evidenced in the report appearing in "The West Australian," where it was announced there would be a meeting in November but it was not proposed to touch on the question of ratification of the agreement until February, or even later. That is my point. If there is to be a meeting in November, surely it is reasonable to ask that consideration should be given to the ratification of the proposal at that time and not four months later, or possibly later still. The people of Australia, and the people of Western Australia in particular, are entitled quickly to be told whether or not the Commonwealth Government and the Commonwealth Parliament propose to implement these proposals. That is the reason I rise to suggest that the House should agree to insert these words. I want Parliament to stress the need for urgency because I think the quicker the proposals are put into a form in which they can be acted upon and understood as the law of the land by the people of this country and of this State in particular, the better it will be for soldier settlement.

The Premier: This motion deals with the announcement of a definite policy.

Mr. WATTS: Those words have been deleted. We no longer desire an announce-

ment of a definite policy because we understand a policy has been announced. I am prepared to concede quite readily that that has been done because of the services rendered in the matter by the two hon. members who sit opposite me—the Premier and his deputy. We know that a policy has been announced, but that cannot be given effect to unless it receives Parliamentary sanction, unless and until it becomes the law of the land. The indications before us—gleaned from the only source available to us—as to the intentions of the Commonwealth Parliament are that it will not meet to consider this matter until February, or possibly later. It will meet in November but will pass all this over. It may meet in February to consider it, or it may not. I venture to suggest it is fair and reasonable that we in Western Australia, in this House, should back up the consistent, determined and so far successful efforts of the Minister for Lands and his colleague the Premier, to have some forward move made in a manner suitable to Western Australia in regard to soldier settlement. If we do not take up that attitude, we are not doing our duty by the returned soldiers of this State. Many of them have been waiting since their discharge, approximately two years ago. Many of them are interested to know whether or not they can go on the land.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! That has nothing to do with the amendment.

Mr. WATTS: It is necessary to assure these men as quickly as possible that something will be done for them, and I therefore ask the House to support the amendment.

MR. THORN (Toodyay—on amendment): I support the amendment and agree with the Premier that the words that have been deleted are no longer required. But we still feel great concern over the announcement in the Press this morning about the Bill to validate the agreement. That is why we are so anxious to have these proposals quickly completed. There are men today who are waiting for them to be finalised. They want to settle on the land and they have been inquiring about this. I shall have something to say on the reply to the motion, if we get to that stage, but I think that this amendment is most essential.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (on amendment): The proposals referred to in this amendment cover very wide aspects of soldier settlement. They include all the preparations to establish returned men on the land. In the proposals must be considered the many and varied cases which must receive attention quickly. Some of these proposals will involve returned men who are returning to farms of their own, which farms have suffered severe depreciation during their absence. One of the most important decisions to be made by the Commonwealth Government, and made quickly, is the decision that will define what assistance will be given to men returning to depreciated properties. An experienced farmer must get some contribution from the Commonwealth towards his re-establishment on his own land. That is a very important matter in connection with proposals and it needs very definite decision very quickly.

Then we have another case that requires early consideration, namely, that of a man who is returning to a farm owned by his father, his father having been unable, in his absence, to maintain the property. The soldier, being a qualified farmer with a depreciated property, is entitled to some consideration. I point out to the House that within the scheme the Commonwealth Government has finally accepted there is no provision for many types of cases that will require early consideration and quick decision. I am not so concerned with the proposals that involve the men who have to be trained or partly trained, or with those in connection with men who are anxious to take up virgin land or to establish themselves for the first time on the land, as I am over the proposals for the men who formerly were farmers and who are entitled to some consideration within any Commonwealth scheme. So I am not averse to the addition of these words if the motion is to be carried, which I submit is not necessary, to complete the proposals quickly, because in the proposals there are many difficult cases and many types of cases that will test the capacity of any officer charged with the responsibility of directing soldier settlement.

Amendment (to insert words) put and passed.

MR. SEWARD (Pingelly): I do not intend to delay the House for many minutes,

but I would like to add my support to the motion. The concluding remarks of the Minister for Lands form one of the big factors that make me support this motion. The Minister referred to the two difficult types of cases with which he has to deal, namely, the farmer returning to his own depreciated property and the farmer returning to the depreciated property of his father. Those people have to receive assistance to put their respective properties into production again.

The Premier: We have received definite assurance that decisions will be given on those points.

Mr. SEWARD: That is necessary, and that is largely behind the mover in bringing this motion forward. The operations of this scheme will be dependent on the passing of the Bill. I cannot see how we can go on with the scheme until that Bill is passed through the Federal Houses. The Commonwealth Government has committed itself to that Bill and will, I expect, endeavour to the best of its ability to have it accepted.

The Minister for Lands: It has agreed to the scheme subject to ratification by Parliament.

Mr. SEWARD: Another point is this, that we all hope that the war will not last much longer. How long it will last none of us can tell. I have held for some time that the earlier we can get this scheme into operation the more successful it is likely to be. Let us take these two cases mentioned by the Minister for Lands, and to which I have referred. He is not sure how much finance is to be given or how these properties are to be brought back to a satisfactory condition. If the problem presented by them can be tackled now when we have relatively few cases to deal with, then it can be worked out in greater detail and with more chance of success than if the European war were to end suddenly, and we found ourselves with such a number of men returning that the position would tend to become like it was after the last war. If we get a large number of men rushing on us all of a sudden the matter will have to be concluded and we will have to work out some kind of trial and error scheme. If, however, we take it quietly with a relatively few cases we should be able to perfect a scheme before the men return in large numbers. The

Premier, by interjection when the member for Williams-Narrogin was speaking, wondered whether a large number of soldiers were waiting. I have it on good authority that anything up to 200 returned men are anxious and waiting to get on the land.

The Minister for Lands: It is a pity they could not hear some of the speeches of Opposition members. They would never want to go on the land then.

Mr. SEWARD: That is the reason why we are anxious to get this scheme into operation. There were many defects in the old schemes. I have a letter that reached me today. It is as follows:—

Many thanks for your assistance re tractor business. I appreciate it very much and I think I stand a good chance of getting hold of one, as I understand they have arrived. Will be in Perth next week. I want to get full details of the soldier settlement scheme. Perhaps I could see you while in town. Am anxious to know what they are going to do and when things are going to start. I hate this marking time.

The writer of that letter is a returned man. He took up a block just before he went to the war and naturally is anxious to get started again. I have another letter from a man at Kulin. It was written on the 7th of this month and contains this paragraph—

As you were interested in my case when I first submitted my application (June, 1943) I hoped you would perhaps advise me as to whether I should place another application or send another memorandum, whichever might bring about an early review of the application.

Those are two of many cases of men who are anxious to get back on the land. That being the desire of the men, they should have an opportunity to get back on the land. When men return from the war, they feel to use common parlance, fed up with the Army. All they want to do is to get back to civil life. If we can take them at that period, the opportunity of getting them re-settled into civil life will be relatively easy but, if there is no scheme under which they can be settled, they will become discontented. When their money has become exhausted, they will get temporary jobs and then probably lose all desire to go on the land. What we ought to do is to get them on their return when they have a firm desire to go on the land, and any money they might have saved would then be available to put into their properties. I maintain that the Commonwealth Government

has shown itself very dilatory in finalising the scheme, and I hope the motion will be carried and that it will have the effect of preventing this matter from being further pushed aside by the Commonwealth authorities.

MR. THORN (Toodyay—in reply): I am very pleased with the reception accorded to the motion. As I said when moving it, I did not expect any opposition because it is framed in such reasonable terms. It does not cast a reflection upon anybody, but simply points out the urgency of dealing with this important question. I am of opinion that the State Government is ready to tackle the problem, but we feel concerned about this further delay in validating the agreement. When in today's paper we learnt that there was to be this further delay, we decided to amend the motion. I am not going to attempt to guess the number of soldiers waiting to be settled on the land. I know there are many, because I am a member of the State R.S.L. land committee, and we have dealt with several requests for land settlement. We have men who said they had been to the Repatriation Department and that the department had authority to make advances for the purchase of tools of trade, machinery and, I believe, of furniture, but there is no land scheme in being for the settlement of these men. We had a request from a man who wished to start poultry-farming. The department offered him everything except the essential assistance he required, namely to purchase the land. Therefore the House will agree that whether it be 100 or 200 men who are waiting to be settled on the land, it would be better if we were prepared now to settle those men and get them out of the way before the war finishes.

MR. SPEAKER: Order! I think the hon. member is introducing new matter and not replying to the debate.

MR. THORN: I was not aware of it. I was explaining the necessity for amending the motion.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member is only entitled to reply to what was said in debate.

MR. THORN: The Minister for Lands went all around the world.

MR. SPEAKER: He was entitled to do that, but you are not entitled to go outside of what was said in debate.

MR. THORN: The Minister covered the position fully. The matter is very urgent. We should finalise the soldier settlement scheme and provide for those men who are waiting to be settled on the land and, the sooner we do that, the better.

Question put and passed; the motion, as amended, agreed to.

MOTION—OLD AGE AND INVALID PENSIONERS.

As the Earnings and Basic Wage Equivalent.

Debate resumed from the 11th October on the following motion by Mrs. Cardell-Oliver:—

That, as this House approves of a living wage for all citizens, and realises that, in many cases, the income of pensioners does not allow for a decent standard of living, it urges the Commonwealth Government to take steps to raise the rate of pensions to those who are aged and infirm, and to allow all those pensioners able to work to earn an income, including the pension, equivalent to the basic wage.

MR. GRAHAM (East Perth) [9.48]: Because this motion affirms that this House supports a living wage for all citizens, it is impossible for members to oppose it. All said and done, it might be described as a pious resolution. I feel that the motion is not only pious, but also clumsy and impertinent. I say that because—

MR. THORN: Because you were not consulted.

MR. GRAHAM: —because it seeks to tell the Commonwealth Parliament what it should do in a matter which is exclusively the prerogative of that Parliament. I can imagine the attitude members of this Parliament would take if the Commonwealth carried a motion to the effect, for instance, that the allowances paid by the Child Welfare Department should be increased.

MR. THORN: They are always interfering with our business.

The Minister for Mines: What is our business?

MR. SPEAKER: Order!

MR. GRAHAM: It is a simple matter to submit motions when there is no responsibility to be carried by those who foster them. While the motion might achieve the purpose of securing a certain amount of publicity and notoriety, it does not achieve any useful purpose, such as conferring the material benefit that is apparently sought

by the motion. There are aspects of the motion with which I find myself in conflict to some extent. For instance, if the provisions suggested are given effect to, it means that there is an inducement to pensioners to work after they have qualified for the pension, an inducement to work when in effect they have been retired from work, when the laws of the country have stated that they have rendered their period of useful service to the country and should be given a period of rest and retirement.

Mr. Mann: On a starvation amount of money!

Mr. GRAHAM: That is perfectly true; and because I wish, as I suppose everybody does, a living wage to be granted to these people, and all other people, it is particularly difficult for me to vote against the motion. I feel that the motion in a way seeks to authorise pensioners to go seeking employment, and quite possibly a number of them who are not fitted physically to undertake work might suffer harmful results. It is not a factor of paramount importance at this moment, while there is such a shortage of manpower, but in more normal times, when there is a surplus of labour, such pensioners will be in competition with those who depend solely on their labour to gain a livelihood. That is where the danger lies. Furthermore, the motion deals only with a section of pensioners. Whether or not it is intended to include those who are qualified wholly or partially for an invalid pension, it entirely overlooks widows in receipt of pensions. I say it does that because a widow does not have to be beyond the stage of working for a living in order to qualify for a widow's pension. Therefore a percentage of pensioners has been omitted from the motion.

I have a further objection, that the motion seeks to allow those who are able to work to receive additional income without its affecting their pensions, with the proviso that the basic wage shall be the limiting factor in that regard. It means, therefore, that the effect of the motion, if it were entirely implemented, would be that those persons who are physically capable, or able to find employment for themselves, would be enjoying an advantage by way of income that other pensioners would not be able to obtain. Accordingly I think it

would be far sounder in every respect if we were to insist upon a decent living wage being granted to the pensioner, so that there would be no necessity for pensioners to seek employment outside in order to supplement what is the very humble sum upon which they are now expected to live. There is the other feature, the limiting factor, the basic wage. As members know, the basic wage is supposed—I use the word “supposed” advisedly—to be a reasonable competence for a man, wife, and two children; and therefore it is a new departure if we insist that single pensioners shall be enabled to draw a sufficient, or what is assumed to be a sufficient allowance for four persons. The motion is anomalous in that regard. Those are the comments I desire to make. Without expressing approval for a living wage for all citizens it is impossible to oppose the motion. If given effect to, the motion will bestow benefits on some pensioners, and thus it is possibly worthy of support. Accordingly, I shall vote for it.

MR. MANN (Beverley): I support the motion. I wish to reply to the statement of the member for East Perth that this Parliament has no right to dictate to the Commonwealth Parliament. However, we elect the members of the Commonwealth Parliament. On the part of the member for Subiaco there is no desire to seek any notoriety through the motion. Today we find the unfortunate male pensioner 65 years of age receiving a mere pittance of £1 7s. per week; and today a Labour Government which preaches the new order keeps him on that starvation rate. Because it may be important for an individual pensioner to make a few pounds over and above his pension, the pension is taken from him if he does so. A pitiable spectacle, undoubtedly! The member for Subiaco has been perfectly right in this matter. Are not some members on the other side of the Chamber afraid that their union will say, “This pensioner is not a member of our union.” There is a scarcity of men and women to help the country, and an old age pensioner may still have a few years' work in him, still be able to serve his country in time of war; and he is to be denied the right to earn a little more. I congratulate the member for Subiaco on bringing down the motion to help at least a man who is regarded as a friend of the

Government and not as a friend of ours. I support the motion.

MR. J. HEGNEY (Middle Swan): It was interesting to listen to some of the speeches made on this motion, which contains some inconsistencies. In the first place, this Parliament does not approve of any living wage. Does it intend to do so on this motion? If so, what examination has it given to what is a living wage? There is nothing in the motion to indicate what a living wage would be according to the declaration of this House. No machinery has been set up for that purpose. I remember some years ago when an authority was set up in the Commonwealth, Mr. A. B. Piddington, of Sydney, being commissioned for the purpose of ascertaining what would be a living wage in Australia. Mr. Piddington made recommendations to the Commonwealth Government as to what the living wage should be compared with the basic wage then existing. But none of the Governments of the day gave effect to his recommendation, because it represented an amount substantially higher than the existing basic wage, but for years the Party to which the hon. member belongs sabotaged child endowment.

Mr. Mann: That Party brought it in.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I must ask the member for Middle Swan to confine himself to the motion.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: Yes, Sir, I will do so. If this House were to declare a living wage, I guarantee that members opposite would, through their organisations, be up in arms tomorrow against such a step made by Parliament. Every employer in the State would rise up in opposition. What is the basic wage? The basic wage mentioned in the motion is the amount to be paid to a man with a wife and two children. How strenuously was an increase in the basic wage opposed recently!

The Minister for Works: It would be interesting to know what the member for Beverley pays!

Mr. J. HEGNEY: Yes. Only a few years ago there was strenuous opposition to an order made under the National Security Regulations providing for an increase of 5s. to the workers of this State. That increase was denied to the workers by what, in my opinion, was a wrong decision by the Judge. We should not raise false hopes in pensioners by passing a motion such as this,

which will not have the effect of increasing their pensions at all. The motion is merely a bald declaration. We are aware that recently the Commonwealth Government set aside the sum of £30,000,000 for social services, including pensions for widows. We also know that the opponents of Labour denounced that action of the Commonwealth Government. Mr. Menzies, the Leader of the anti-Labour forces, denounced it at the Referendum. Personally, I would like to see the pensioners get as big an increase as possible under existing conditions, but we should not raise false hopes.

The pensions bill today is £11,000,000; if we raised the pension from 27s. to the basic wage, which is £4 19s. 11d., the increase would be nearly fourfold—£44,000,000 per annum. Does the hon. member consider that at this stage there is any possibility of the Commonwealth Government increasing pensions to the amount of the basic wage? Of course not. The Party to which she belongs was in power for years in the Commonwealth Parliament and never lifted a finger to increase the pension rate. When the Curtin Government assumed power a few years ago, it immediately increased the pension by 2s. 6d. a week, besides making provision for variation should there be an increase in the cost of living. The pension was increased until it reached the sum of 27s. During the recent State election there was a decrease in the cost of living and an amount of 6d. was to come off the amount of the pension rate. Everybody in the country was horrified to think that the law should be put into force. In the meantime, the Pensioners' League got into negotiation with the Commonwealth Government with a view to having the pension fixed at a certain amount. The League was successful, and the pension was not in future to be affected by any increase in the cost of living.

Mr. Thorn: What really happened was that the Commonwealth Government knew that a State election was proceeding.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: No.

Several members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. J. HEGNEY: The hon. member ought to be fair. The law had to take its course and the adjustment has been made. That did not prevent my opponent from circulating all kinds of rumours.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I think the hon. member is getting away from the motion.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: I am coming right to it.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is distinctly away from the motion. He must confine himself to it.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: Complaints were made about the decrease in the pension.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order in discussing the last State election on this motion.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: It would be interesting to discuss it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. J. HEGNEY: What is a living wage? This House has nothing before it upon which it can declare what a living wage is. If we fixed the living wage at £7 a week there would be a hue and cry against the adoption of a living wage compared with the basic wage. Coming to the latter part of the motion, the member for Subiaco has overlooked one phase, namely, the widows' pension. If the old age pension is increased the widows' pension also should be increased. A widow may be a young woman with a number of children to maintain; her difficulties would be the greater because she has to rear a family. We should not deceive ourselves and try to hoodwink the electors by passing a motion such as this.

Mr. Mann interjected.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: The member for Beverley is cunning. He understands politics; but if he were compelled to pay a living wage to his farm workers tomorrow, as distinct from the basic wage, I have no doubt he would be just as critical as thousands of other persons in the State would be. Unfortunately, the amendment moved to the motion was defeated and no other amendment can be made at this stage. I have no doubt that the Commonwealth Labour Government, at the earliest opportune time, will increase pensions. That Government has shown evidence of its desire to do so, and I have no doubt it will continue to do so. This is a matter within the domain of the Government. We should not pass a pious motion like this merely with the object of trying to gain some kudos and notoriety. We should not stand for that kind of thing, nor should we try to raise false hopes in the pensioners.

MR. SMITH (Brown Hill-Ivanhoe): I do not think it will make much difference whether or not the motion is carried, but personally I think that the carrying of motions is one of the weaknesses of democracy. The weakness is not so much the carrying of them, but the lack of examination of what they mean and the carrying of them very often on the principle that, if they do not do any good, at least they will not do any harm. In consequence of that attitude towards motions generally, and the lack of an intense examination of them, not much effect arises from their being passed. We realise that nothing effective will result from the carrying of this motion because it deals with a matter entirely outside the province of this House. As a matter of fact members of the Opposition cannot bring down legislation in this Chamber increasing the burden of the people in this State and to assume that they can give a direction to another Government to increase the burden of the people is simply preposterous and, as the member for Middle Swan said, raises the false hopes of those whom the motion sets up some pretence of assisting.

The hon. member threw this motion at our unoffending heads and said God help us if we did not have enough intelligence to understand what it means. I do not think I have ever been confronted with a motion that was so badly phrased as is this one. It is built up on wrong premises from the very beginning. The member for Middle Swan has already said that this House has never declared that it approves of a living wage for all citizens. It has never even said by way of resolution, so far as I know, that it approves of a living wage for all wage earners. But there is an entirely different meaning between a living wage for all wage earners and a living wage for all citizens. A wage is something that is paid to a servant for services rendered, and I interpret the commencement of this motion as a subtle and surreptitious way of getting this House to make open confession that it is in favour of all undertakings being publicly controlled and all citizens working for wages. What other literal interpretation of the commencement of this particular motion can we expect? A living wage for all citizens! I know many citizens who are not prepared to work for wages.

Entrepreneurs who want to run their own business would be entirely opposed to a proposition that all citizens should work for wages, whether a living wage or any other sort of wage. So I resent this subtle way of getting me to make an open confession that I am in favour of some form of communism under which all undertakings are publicly controlled and everybody works for wages as they do in Russia. Further along in the motion, it is quite clear that the hon. member has overlooked the necessity for some increase in the pensions for widows. It is quite clear too that she is not in favour of old-age pensioners and infirm people getting a pension that is equivalent to the basic wage. I think that is a very desirable ideal—that people who have done their bit for this country should, if possible, be retired when they reach the age of 65 on a pension equivalent to the basic wage. But the hon. member is opposed to that because, she says, in the latter part of her motion, that she wants those who are able to work to get the basic wage, including the pension. So the motion postulates that the pension shall be less than the basic wage.

This question of old-age pensions and social security generally is a very big question that will have to be discussed in a great deal of detail, and quite possibly in the near future, in order that it shall be properly based and the money given to people as a right for their services to the country when they reach a certain age without any means test whatever. I was quite intrigued with the New Zealand system of old age and invalid pensions which is incorporated in the Social Security Act of that Dominion and which is contributed to, to a certain extent, through taxation because everyone pays a certain amount of taxation that makes provision for the benefits that come to him ultimately under the social security laws. There, in connection with old-age pensions, in the first year under that Act pensioners were to get £12. I think it was fixed at 30s. per week but they were to get £12 without any means test and the balance subject to a means test. In the next year it was to be £24 and the balance subject to a means test and so it went on increasing each year by £12 until, unless the war has interfered with arrangements, the amount will ultimately be £78 a year without a means test.

That is something in the right direction, but the whole question of pensions for old age and invalid pensioners is going to be affected quite possibly in the near future by the declining birth rate and the reduced numbers of that section of the community who are able to work and earn wages or income. That is one of the objections that was raised against the Beveridge Plan—the possibility of the old age people being so numerous as compared with that section of the people who are young enough and able to work and would have to contribute to the fund that would pay the pension. So this question of old-age and invalid pensions is not a small one. It raises great problems concerning financial considerations that cannot possibly be examined in a discussion by members of this Chamber who know nothing of the possible resources from which such pensions or increases of pensions could be drawn. As I say, I am not particular whether the motion is carried or not. I reiterate that it is badly phrased, and I say again, and if I have not said it already I say it now, that when a member of this Chamber presents a motion of this nature, or any other, to the House and expects to receive the support of members, it is effrontery on the part of that member to get up and throw the motion at us and say, "God help you if you do not understand it."

On motion by the Minister for Lands, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.21 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 19th October, 1944.

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