Legislative Council,

Thursday, 15th August, 1940.

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

QUESTION—LANDS, MARGINAL AREAS.

Transfer of Settlers to Denmark.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE asked the Chief Secretary: 1, How many settlers from the marginal areas have been transferred to blocks in the Denmark area? 2, Have any of the settlers so transferred since left the blocks on which they were placed, and if so, how many? 3, If any have left, were any reasons given by such settlers for leaving, and what are the principal reasons? 4, How many cows were supplied to marginal settlers who had been transferred to Denmark, and what was the average valuation of those cows per head? 5, Have any of those cows since been disposed of, and if so, what was the average price received per head? 6, Is the cost of cows being debited against the settlers' accounts? 7, Is the cost of superphosphate supplied to date being debited against the settlers' accounts?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Twenty-eight. 2, Yes. Six. 3, Transferred property to another. Vacated, no reason given. Dispossessed; did not work property or look after stock. Single man, vacated through inability to do the work. Vacated to enlist. 4, 593 head. Made up of—388 head ex depots and 205 head purchased. Issues ex depots averaged £7 per head. Issues ex purchases averaged £11 per head. 5, Yes. 83 head at £2 10s. These were generally heifers ex depots failing to get in calf, and in poor condition owing to feed position. 6, Debited at present, but will be freed by Commonwealth funds. 7, As in 6.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Eighth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. E. H. Gray—West) [4.35]: I propose to make a full statement dealing with the unemployment position, and to give satistics that will enable members to sum up the position generally. The first figures I will give are as follows:—

EMPLOYMENT AND SUSTENANCE POSITION OF MEN AT BEGINNING OF WAR, 2ND SEPTEMBER, 1939.

Sustenance.			Relief Work.			Grand Total.
Married.	Single.	Total.	Married.	Single.	Total.	
883	172	1,055	4,996	729	5,725	6,780

THE COMPLETE POSITION AS AT 10TH AUGUST, 1940.

Sustenance.			Relief Work.			Grand Total.
Married.	Single.	Total.	Married.	Single.	Total.	
562	158	720	4,367	604	4,971	5,691

The tables show that there are now 1,089 fewer unemployed men than twelve months ago when the war began. The new married cases receiving sustenance since the beginning of the war must be taken into consideration. These total 271 for the metropolitan area and 154 from the country, making a grand total of 425 married men who have become a charge upon the Government since the beginning of the war, and who were never on relief work or sustenance before. The following figures show that these numbers are increasing:—For the first four months of the war there were 87 new married men's cases in the metropolitan area which came on the Government for relief and 40 married cases from the country, a total of 127. For the four months ended the 31st July new married cases were:—From the metropolitan area 99, and the country 64, a total of 163.

For the purpose of comparison the following figures indicate the number of men who have been engaged in the fighting forces from the beginning of the war to the present time:—

Enlistments and Trainees, etc., in Camp.	
A.I.F. (embarked)	1,937
A.I.F. (in camps)	5,003
10th Garrison	628
R.A.A. Force	2,370
Navy	987
Trainees (fluctuating)	954
Others (Home Services for duration of war)	2,044
	13,923

An examination of those figures discloses that, despite nearly 14,000 men being taken out of industry in this State, and although the employment position has been eased to a small extent, as I have already indicated, the comparatively large number of men who have lost private employment and been forced to secure sustenance from the Government, is a matter of grave concern.

I will now deal with the general criticism indulged in by members of both Houses and others as well with regard to the rates of sustenance paid by the Government. Prior to 1929 the granting of unemployment relief, where necessary, was confined to the winter months. The rate of sustenance was the same as that offering to-day, namely, 7s. per unit. That policy has been rigidly adhered to by all Governments.

Hon. J. Nicholson: When you mention "per unit," would that mean that the man, his wife and four children would each count as a unit?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes, and in such an instance the sustenance would be £2 2s. per week. A man with three children would be entitled to 35s. a week, and would be eligible for full-time relief work. Continuous relief throughout the year has been in operation since 1929. The basic wage declaration in that year was for £4 7s. and not £3 8s. per week, as stated by various critics. The fact must be borne in mind that it has never been contended that a payment of 7s. per unit is sufficient to enable unemployed married men to maintain their families—it would be a matter of impossibility for them—and the policy of the Government is to provide work in preference to making sustenance available. The average wage received by relief workers can be estimated fairly accurately, and a conservative estimate fixes the amount at between £160 and £170 per annum. That would represent the actual wage. An examination of the position has been made and the estimated average wage I have mentioned is regarded as conservative. To that amount must be added the ration allowance received while men are out of work. Members will understand that, especially where work on main roads is concerned, there is frequently a waiting period between the finishing of one job and the commencement of another. Then again a man who has been working full-time and has a family of three or more, would be entitled to rations a week after he left his job. However, the rate of wages I have quoted does not include the rationing provision. Naturally, it is very difficult to estimate the position regarding individual cases. Many men earn more than the amount stated, while others earn less.

Immediately the figures I have mentioned are quoted, cases will be instanced of men who have not earned anything like £160. Some men, on account of physical disabilities, may be restricted by the District Medical Officer to certain classes of work. Members will be aware that there are what I might describe as "shrewd-heads" who are apt to approach members of Parliament and make various statements to them. When many of these statements have been made, we have found that the men have been in receipt of worker's compensation payments for weeks or perhaps months. A small proportion of the men apparently take delight in making mis-statements to members of Parliament, representatives of organisations and private citizens, which provide a misleading impression, unconfirmed by the facts. Apart from men who possibly may have been in receipt of worker's compensation payments for months during the early part of the year, others may have had two or three short-term jobs, followed by periods of sustenance. Various factors apply, but an examination of the recorded earnings of a large number of relief workers indicates that the figures I have mentioned are fairly accurate.

Consideration of the activities of the Government in regard to indigent and unemployed persons will demonstrate that the Government has made progressive improvements in the condition of those unfortunate people. For the past two years, special attention has been given to the comparatively large number of "C" class men who have been classified by the District Medical Officer as unfit to do able-bodied work. I may explain that every relief worker who is not able-bodied and is therefore not an "A" class man, is examined by the District Medical Officer who determines whether the man shall be rated as a "B" or "C" class worker. Generally "C" class men suffer from some disability, while others, from causes arising out of the depression have, so to speak, dropped their bundles. Long before the depression made itself felt in our economic life, this problem was very difficult to deal with. Prior to that period most of these

men earned a very precarious livelihood. Being in receipt of sustenance, their mode of living was on a far lower level than was enjoyed by those better situated, and a similar difficulty had to be faced in every country throughout the world. I claim that the Government of this State has tackled the problem far more satisfactorily than is apparent in any other part of the British Empire, including New Zealand.

About 12 months ago I was placed in control of the Employment Department and my objective ever since has been to maintain close contact with organisations and individuals interested in ameliorating the position of these unfortunate people, particularly the "C" class men. In the course of my work, I have been able to get into touch with many organisations and churches, and on more than one occasion I have been asked the question, "Why do you not publish information to show what you are doing?" Members will agree that it does not pay to do that. When I have concluded my remarks, members may be able to sum up the position and realise how the Government has to balance the position in the country in the light of the basic wage. As a matter of fact, great care has to be exercised before we put men on relief work. If we put them on indiscriminately, a shortage of farm workers might result. All sorts of factors compel the Government to work quietly and efficiently, saying nothing of what is being done. A few days ago a deputation representative of the churches and headed by the Anglican Archbishop, waited upon me to discuss the unemployment position and we had a full and free discussion. I gave the clergymen full particulars regarding what the department was doing and endeavouring to accomplish. At the conclusion of my remarks, the members of the deputation acknowledged that they had had no idea of the ramifications of the department and the work that was being carried out.

At the present time there are 329 "C" class men, and of these 255 are employed on work specially designed for them. All things considered, this scheme has proved an unqualified success. The men are engaged on clearing operations, fencing and so on, and the results to date in every way justify the scheme. Those men are paid the basic wage and work under industrial agreements. I suppose that may furnish grounds for criticism, and I dare say that if we were to investigate the work done by the men and compare the cost of that work with that relating to similar operations carried out by experienced clearers, the scheme might be regarded as expensive. On the other hand, there is another aspect to be considered. When assessing the cost of the clearing work, the provision for sustenance allowance must be deducted in order to arrive at a true representation of the cost of the work. Those men could not be absorbed in private industry and, if not engaged upon the class of work provided for them by the Government, would be a charge on the State to the extent of 7s. per unit. Therefore, in dealing with the cost of the undertaking, no member can say that it costs so much per acre unless from that amount is first deducted the total sustenance payment that would have to be made to the man, his wife and children. The remarkable thing about the scheme is that few people realise that the jobs have been provided specially for these men. We started at Wooroloo and then commenced a scheme at Whitby Falls under the aegis of the Health Department. Now we have opened a big camp at Wokalup where the new mental institution is being erected. Those men have been working continuously. We have provided more continuous work for "C" class than for "A" class men. Whereas the former have had employment week after week, those engaged on road work have had to stand down for varying periods because of the fact that such jobs come to an end more quickly than those on which the "C" class men are engaged. We have provided work for "C" class men under conditions and for wages superior to those of "A" class men. It must be remembered that if this work were not made available, those men would have to endure a miserable existence on sustenance or under the Child Welfare Department. The provision made for "C" class men is one of the finest pieces of ameliorative work in operation in this State. There is a certain number of men for whom we cannot find work. Some of them are receiving medical attention from public hospitals and are unable for various reasons to leave the metropolitan area. Others are unable to do the class of work offering. But every man who is passed fit by the doctor and is prepared to undertake the work offered can obtain employment. That brings

me to the case of the single men. There is a mistaken impression that these men are mainly young. On the contrary they are mostly men of middle age and past middle age. Each is required to find private work on farms and in other places if he is able to do so. Many of those men are approaching pensionable age and obviously are far better occupied on work of this character than they would be endeavouring to obtain a precarious existence in the city. Some of them are engaged in reconditioning group settlement areas. I have inspected their camps, and the work being done, and they are performing a valuable service. They have done splendid work on the Denmark State Farm and the improvements effected are excellent in view of the small amount of wages they receive. They work for two days a week and are very comfortable They would like to have an eight-hour day and a five-day working week, but we cannot employ them under those conditions. Most of them, however, prefer to work two days a week rather than come to Perth and receive the bed and meal tickets with which we would have to supply them. Moreover, in coming to the city they would be exposed to all its temptations. We are giving them an opportunity to earn their own living, and the fact that they are domiciled in the country is a preventive of crime. That is an aspect of our activity that must be taken into consideration. If there were a thousand men drifting around Perth, dependent on the Government for bed tickets and sustenance and obtaining an abundance of cheap beer from sympathising comrades, there would be a great increase in crime in this city. The Police Court records indicate that there is a considerable amount of juvenile crime, and that has caused great concern to every public man and public body in this State. But if the men to whom I have referred were loose in the city with nobody to look after them, the situation would be far different because there would be a great increase in petty crime.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Are you suggesting that these men are potential criminals?

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member would be a potential criminal if he were idle in the street. No member knows what he would be likely to do if he were down and out. Nobody can accuse me of casting aspersions on any of these relief workers because I take a particular interest in them and know what a fine body of men they are. Most of them are old bachelors who have given signal service to the State and are worthy of consideration.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The Minister knows the weaknesses of the hon. member.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: He does not know his own.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I am very conscious of them. Mr. E. H. H. Hall made some caustic comments about allowances granted by the Child Welfare Department. A comparison of the past and present policy with regard to widows and children under the Department is worthy of attention. In 1911 the rate of sustenance to women upon whom children were dependent was increased from 2s. 6d. to 7s. per head.

Hon. J. Cornell: That is equivalent to 5s. or 6s. to-day.

The HONORARY MINISTER: No, it is not.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: People were more liberal before the Labour regime. They had more money.

The HONORARY MINISTER: From our present-day standard it would seem incredible that any Government should have been allowed to give so small an amount as 2s. 6d. per head, but this was the only sum allotted prior to 1911.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Have you considered the purchasing power of the pound then and now?

The HONORARY MINISTER: A slight mathematical calculation will indicate to the hon. member the improvement that has been effected by increasing the amount from 2s. 6d. in 1911 to 15s. to-day.

Hon. G. W. Miles: You said 7s.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The amount was increased in 1911 from 2s. 6d. to 7s.

Hon. W. J. Mann: That is the amount paid now.

The HONORARY MINISTER: No; the amount paid now is considerably greater. The average is 9s. for a child and 15s. for the woman upon whom the child is dependent. Hon. members will realise what a vast improvement that is on the position in 1911.

Hon. J. Cornell: Some of us can recall the days when nothing was given.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes; I can remember that time, too. My object in mentioning this matter is to reply to the hon. member who thinks that what we are doing to-day is "awful." I repeat that in 1911, for example, the rate of sustenance to women upon whom children were dependent was increased from 2s. 6d. to 7s. per head. That is a very big improvement on the old rate. From our present-day standard it would seem incredible that any Government would be allowed to give such a small amount as 2s. 6d. per head, but that was the only amount allotted before 1911. The amount of 7s. was increased by 1s. in 1919, and in 1920 it was again increased to 9s. per head. In 1932 a new formula in the assessment of relief issued to women upon whom children were dependent was introduced by an anti-Labour Government which slightly reduced the amount of assistance. Subsidy rates payable to foster mothers caring for State wards were reduced by 1s. per head for all those children placed after the 1st September, 1932. Subsidised institutions were also reduced by 1s. per head, and special grants reduced by 20 per cent.

Hon. J. Cornell: Members of Parliament also suffered a reduction.

The HONORARY MINISTER: From the 7th November, 1938, the rate of assistance was increased mainly to benefit the smaller families. The employment position, as disclosed by the facts I have cited, is a very difficult one to deal with. Care has to be taken in the country that men are not weaned away from the agricultural and pastoral industries. Contrary to the general impression, there is not a shortage of agricultural workers at the present time. There are more farm workers offering than there are jobs to fill. Some members have suggested that the Government should place some of these men on farms and subsidise the farmers. That was tried out at the inception of the depression by an anti-Labour Government.

Hon. W. J. Mann: It will have to be tried again if the war continues.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It was a failure, a disastrous failure, and the present Government is not again likely to try the experiment.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: It was not a failure.

The HONORARY MINISTER: At any rate I do not think the Government will attempt to repeat the experiment. It would be foolish to re-introduce such a policy. In Great Britain when there was a shortage of farm labour, the local authorities were approached and asked to supply it, and that was done during the harvesting period.

Hon. W. J. Mann: The farmers here do not want more land cleared; they want to work the land that is already cleared.

The HONORARY MINISTER: In Great Britain the local authorities freed their workers so that they might carry on farm work. I admit that the position with regard to farm labour is serious, but that is due mainly to the precarious position of the industry. If farmers were able to pay decent wages, there would be no trouble, but there are many in the position that they are not able to pay at all. If in this State farmers are not prepared to approach the Arbitration Court, they should follow the example set in the Old Country to which I have referred.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Take up more land?

The HONORARY MINISTER: No. In the Old Country every farmer guarantees his employees a decent wage and eight hours' work.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Farm hands?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes, that is done in the Old Country and under difficult conditions. If that were done here, the foundation would be laid for an improvement in the position regarding the employment of efficient labour on farms.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: What is the price of wheat in the Old Country?

The HONORARY MINISTER: There are more prosperous farmers here per head of the population than there are in Great Britain.

The PRESIDENT: I suggest to the Honorary Minister that he should make his speech without taking too much notice of the interjections.

The HONORARY MINISTER: If assistance has to be given, that assistance must come through the Agricultural Bank or the Industries Assistance Board. To adopt any other way would be disastrous. First of all an agreement must be arrived at respecting the wage to be paid, next we must decide where the money is to come from, and thirdly, we should initiate a scheme whereby young men could be trained in agricultural centres in the work of handling machinery, driving tractors and generally learn the technical side of farming. Of course it is

not to be expected that farmers can afford to employ inexperienced men to drive and attend to machinery. The Government in this State has endeavoured to improve the labour problem as it affects farming. We have up-to-date premises at the corner of Wellington and King-streets as a new Labour Bureau and we are endeavouring to meet the requirements of farmers free of cost. In a few weeks' time we hope to have the Women's Labour Bureau more centrally situated and every effort will be made to meet the demands of those who need domestic labour. There will be no fees imposed on either the employer or the employee in connection with the provision of labour.

I wish to compliment Mr. Wood on the sympathetic manner in which he referred to the relief workers. A suggestion was made by Mr. Seddon that there should be an analysis of the occupations of the unemployed. I can inform the hon. member that the department has in its possession reliable general information of the occupations of those men. Most of them are unskilled workers. A percentage of them from the Old Country came from cotton mills and other industries and there is no possibility of their following their former occupations in Western Australia. It can definitely be stated that the big majority of the men continuously on relief work are unskilled labourers. There is a percentage that will be competent to do munition work when munition manufacturing starts in Western Australia, but the percentage will not be large. In the metropolitan area labour requirements by private enterprise for casual employment must be safeguarded. Men have to be given every encouragement to seek private work, and we must not penalise those who are striving to obtain private employment. It is not our desire to molly-coddle anybody and so we do our utmost to induce men to strike out for themselves. "C" Class men have to be looked after and every possible effort made to bring them from "C" Class to "A" Class conditions. In this the department is obtaining successful results. It is not the sole responsibility of the State; others must come in and do their share. There are organisations that are rendering assistance and I appreciate their efforts very much. Committees of men and women are in existence and they provide special assistance for sustenance workers. I appreciate also what is being done by B class broadcasting stations 6AM, 6PM and 6ML. Under the guidance and direction of Auntie Peggie of 6AM and 6PM, and Auntie Laurel of 6ML, women and girls are busily engaged in making baby outfits and other garments for the wives of the unemployed. Already they have delivered to the King Edward Memorial Hospital over 25,000 garments—a marvellous achievement by these two admirable women and their volunteer committee. Repeatedly we call on them in an emergency, asking, say, whether they can supply Mrs. So-and-so with a baby outfit. Within five minutes a baby outfit is available. Having seen these garments, without any exaggeration I declare them to be such as are fit to be used in any household, even the Royal household. The quality of the garments has been a revelation to me, and the needlework is the finest I have ever seen.

Hon. A Thomson: That is children's work?

The HONORARY MINISTER: It is needlework done by the voluntary organisations of women, whose exertions are worthy of enthusiastic recognition. To men on sustenance, supplementary relief is given. In winter months free firewood is supplied. Again special assistance is rendered all the year round to expectant mothers. The Employment Department works in close co-operation with other organisations to safeguard the welfare of women and children of men who cannot, for various reasons, obtain employment. Immediate assistance is forthcoming where required. However, suitable work instead of sustenance is the department's aim.

I now turn to Sir Hal Colebatch's speech, to which I listened with the greatest interest. The words of such a man, who moreover has come so recently from the heart of world affairs and has travelled throughout the countries which now have again been ravaged by the horrors of war—such horrors as the ordinary human mind cannot visualise—must command our respect and close attention. Sir Hal has the ability to assimilate what he sees and to reproduce it eloquently. His speech in this debate was one of the finest I ever heard. However, one sentence in that speech jarred harshly on the ear. That was when he solemnly and sincerely declared that, to his mind, the sustenance camp here is only a little less demoralising than is the concentration camp in Germany.

It may be that in the flight of his oratory Sir Hal was carried away by his own eloquence and failed to realise what he was saying; otherwise, nothing could excuse the statement. Even going back to the bad old days of the Blackboy Camp, where men were doing nothing and were merely getting fed, and other camps in this State, no comparison between them and the concentration camps of Germany is justifiable. While Sir Hal was declaiming the words to which I allude, there flashed before my eyes a picture of a little man living not far from here, who, when asked, will bare his back and show his scars, but when asked to tell again how he got those scars turns pale and shivers, and no word will come from his trembling lips. That man is only one of the many refugees from German concentration camps who have found a semblance of peace in this wonderful land Western Australia, where freedom to live one's own life and to think one's own thoughts, to marry, and to rear families is denied to no one—be he Jew or Gentile, be he black or white.

With Sir Hal Colebatch's words still echoing in my ears I went home and, sitting in front of the fire that night, I picked up the "ABC Weekly" of the 10th August, and there read a discussion between four Germans now resident in London. One of them is now a lecturer in law at University College, London; one, a former German judge, is now a member of the English Bar; the third was a solicitor in Germany; the fourth was Frau Irmgard Litten, whose son was a Gestapo victim. The article is entitled "Hitler calls this Justice," and is well worth reading:—

Frau Litten: My son Hans was a practising lawyer; he was chiefly engaged upon criminal cases. He was arrested during the night of the Reichstag Fire in February, 1933.

Neither he nor I was ever informed of the cause of his arrest. Nor was his case ever investigated by a judge.

I once tried to brief another lawyer on his behalf, but Dr. Conrady, who was in charge of the concentration camps at the time, told me: "Legal representation is not allowed in the case of your son. But even if it was permitted, you would not, in the whole of Germany, find a single lawyer who would dare to undertake his case."

Before the Nazis came into power, my son acted as counsel in many cases of street fights and other armed clashes between the Nazis and their opponents. In one case he intended to prove that the use of force was part of the official Nazi policy and he called Hitler himself as a witness, and cross-examined him severely for two hours.

Judge: The arrest of your son in 1933, then, was an act of personal revenge on the part of Hitler? What happened to your son after his arrest?

Frau Litten: He had been defending a workman who had been accused of having killed a Nazi stormtrooper during a street brawl. That was the so-called "Felseneeke Case." The Court thought there was not enough evidence for a conviction, and the Nazis wanted further evidence. So they took my son to the concentration camp at Sonnenburg and maltreated him terribly. They wanted him to say that he knew his client had murdered the stormtrooper.

When I saw my son again four weeks later in another concentration camp, I hardly recognised him. One jaw was broken, one eye and ear injured, many teeth broken, his legs severely injured. But he had not betrayed his client.

He was then again questioned by the Gestapo, and threatened with even more terrible tortures. He remained steadfast. He was then taken to one of the Gestapo's torture chambers. There he yielded to torture. Against his better knowledge he said what he was forced to say.

He then wrote to the public prosecutor, revoked his false evidence, took poison and opened his main arteries, because as he wrote, he did not feel he could face the consequences he had been threatened with if he revoked his evidence. He was then saved, and I saw him when he was still between life and death. He said to me: "If they had only shot me. But these horrible tortures were too much for me." After this he was questioned again and again, and so for months. But he remained steadfast.

Judge: Could you do anything to help your son?

Frau Litten: I tried it with many influential persons. Some of them saw Hitler personally. Without success. He shouted at one of them: "Whoever mentions Litten's name to me goes straight into a concentration camp, I don't care who he is."

In February, 1938, after almost five years of terrible suffering in many concentration camps, my son died in Dachau camp. I was told that he had committed suicide. I don't believe it, but even if it was true, does it matter if he was driven to death or murdered?

Since receiving that article, there has reached me a White Paper presented by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to Parliament by command of His Majesty, King George VI. It is headed "Germany No. 2 (1939). Papers concerning the Treatment of German Nationals in Germany, 1938-1939." The introduction explains that even before the war, and continuously ever since its outbreak, the German Government has almost daily issued propaganda accusing

Great Britain of atrocities in South Africa 40 years ago. I quote from the introduction—

In view of this shameless propaganda, which is wholly devoid of any foundation, His Majesty's Government think it opportune to publish some of the reports they have received of the treatment accorded in Germany itself to German nationals.

Even my reading of cruelties that were practised before civilised, or allegedly civilised, times told me nothing more horrible than the things that have happened in the concentration and other camps in Germany.

In this White Paper Sir Neville Henderson forwards to Viscount Halifax an anonymous letter received by him, signed "A German Mother, who is of one mind with very many Christian parents." This is a cry from a woman's heart, and epitomises the tragedy of the labour camps in which young and impressionable minds are moulded, like clay in a master potter's hands, into cracked and warped vessels. She writes—

But almost more important still, it seems to me, is the demand that the systematic alienation of our youth from Christ shall be stopped.

We parents surrender our 10-year-old children to the control of the Hitler Youth, the League of German Girls, and later on the Labour Service. Our exceptionally gifted boys must attend the Adolf Hitler Schools and afterwards pass on to the National Socialist Schools of Political Training, there to be prepared for future leadership in the State and the party. In all these institutions a great deal that is excellent, and which we parents welcome with joy and gratitude, is offered to youth. But they one and all serve, as well, to exert upon our youth an influence hostile to Christianity! Perhaps it may be possible to forward this letter, which expresses every Christian mother's way of thinking, despite its anonymity to your revered Queen. She, as a Christian and a mother, will understand our anxiety for our children.

It is not, however, quite correct to say, as I have done above, that the question at issue is the private concern of the German people; for, if in the heart of Europe a rising generation is brought up not only in indifference to Christianity but all too often in hatred of it, the future will be fraught with disaster, not only for Germany but for Europe. At the present time the ancient Christian traditions of grandparents and parents have a restraining influence still—but woe to Germany, and woe to Europe, when these traditions shall have passed away.

Your Excellency, many German mothers will be grateful to you from the bottom of their hearts if you could bring these lines to the notice of your Foreign Minister, Lord Halifax, who has been brought up in the spirit of Christianity, and, if at all possible, of your Christian Royal couple as well. We hope for England's help in our hard fight against the forces hostile to Christianity which are threatening our pastors and our youth.

What a true prophecy is contained in this letter! Unless the British Empire is victorious in the present conflict, this abominable enemy to civilisation will bring the world down in ruins.

I now turn to the German labour camps. Sir Hal Colebatch had the opportunity of spending half-a-day in one of them. The product of the labour camps are the young men who trained their machine guns on defenceless men, women and children who were fleeing for their lives and were mercilessly mown down. Please God that the youth of Australia may never see the inside of a labour camp. I saw a film last Saturday night—a British film—which depicted people in Belgium fleeing from German soldiers. I never thought I would live to see such a picture. Women were trudging along, some with a few belongings and others with children in their arms, babies perhaps only two or three months old. It is our duty to exterminate those German leaders who are responsible for degrading Germany and the rest of Europe. I shall now read some extracts from the White Paper dealing with the same concentration camps to which Sir Hal Colebatch referred. The following extract deals with a concentration camp at Buchenwald—

Herr X, a well-to-do Jewish businessman, was for six weeks in the concentration camp at Buchenwald. In order to preserve a semblance of legality, police records are searched through and the slightest bad mark against a Jew, sometimes a trifling offence of 40 years ago, is made the excuse for the arrest.

Herr X said that the working hours were 16 per day, Sundays and week-days alike. During these hours it was forbidden to drink, even in the hottest weather. The food in itself was not bad, but quite insufficient. Weak coffee at dawn and a half litre of soup at midday; bread allowance for the whole day 250 grammes. (Men who had any money could sometimes buy condensed milk, etc., from the canteen.) While he was there the work of Jewish prisoners was doubled, and their rations halved. The work, of course, consists in moving heavy stones, often far beyond the strength of even a normal well-fed man. The Jews were sneeringly told by their guards that they were only experiencing the same treatment as their forefathers in Egypt, and that Pharaoh had not gone half far enough.

The men were kept standing at attention for many hours on end. Floggings were very frequent, for such small offences as drinking water during working hours. The usual punishment was 25 strokes given alternately by two guards. This often produced unconsciousness, but the Jews were told that the Fuehrer had himself given orders that the Jews might receive up to 60 strokes.

Herr X was in a group of 480 men who had only one tap at which to wash and drink for a quarter of an hour on getting up. Later even this was stopped. During the six weeks he was in the camp Herr X saw neither soap nor tooth-brush.

There were about 8,000 men in the camp when he was there, but it was rumoured that the number was shortly to be increased to 20,000. There were 1,500 Jews and 800 International Bible students. The rest were politicals, so-called criminals and gypsies. Each man wore a badge—Jews yellow with the star of David, Bible Students violet, etc. The Communists and others who were prisoners of long standing, acted as sub "warders." Jewish prisoners wrote and received letters twice a month. The Bible Students were allowed no communication with the outside world, but on the other hand, their rations were not cut down. Herr X spoke with the highest respect of these men. Their courage and religious faith were remarkable and they professed themselves ready to suffer to the uttermost for what they felt God had ordained for them.

Deaths took place daily in the camp. (Their relatives were often first informed of this by a call from an official who said they could have the ashes on payment of three marks.) Herr X—a man in the sixties—had a complete collapse after his release, and was three weeks in bed. Another man was taken to the City Hospital with such high fever that he was not expected to live, and another, released at the same time, was in such a state of nerves that he could not cross the road.

Herr X made the statement—which was fully confirmed on inquiry—that no Jewish prisoner is ever released unless he can produce evidence that he is able to leave Germany. There appears to be no release from this system of deliberate torture of mind and body but death. Herr X entreats that some way may be found by which these men could be released en bloc and placed in some kind of humane concentration camp in another country while their ultimate destination and fate was being decided. He realises that such a proposal is quite beyond the scope of any private Refugee Committees, and needs international planning, but he begs that it may at least receive careful and sympathetic consideration.

The following is another extract. It consists of a statement by a Jewish-Christian prisoner:—

One-and-a-half hours to Buchenwald. Awful condition of camp. Filth and mud up to the knees in places. Many trees had been cut down but stumps left. Almost impossible to walk. A man with heart trouble who cannot walk is dragged along by the feet by other prisoners (S.S. men do not touch Jews). The flesh is torn from his face. He is so disfigured as to be unrecognisable. (Other examples similar to this.) Three hundred and fifty of the new arrivals lodged in the basement of the barracks. (In the whole camp there were about 10,000 men, 100 straw sacks and no other furnishings.) Three men to each straw sack in four rows. Obliged to lie on our sides; and crosswise over sack so as to make room; packed like sardines; lying on the back forbidden or blows given with a club. The men directly in charge are older prisoners. The "Black Superiors," themselves "professional criminals," sleep with us. Their word is absolute law.

The following extract is a description of some of the punishments inflicted in these camps:—

The floggings take place at the afternoon roll-call, the individuals having to step forward. The penalties are read out (being fixed beforehand). Normal punishment is twenty-five strokes on the seat, carried out by two guards standing on each side with riding whips. The prisoner is lashed to a board. If he cries out the strokes are increased up to thirty-five. The guards use all their force, sometimes springing into the air so as to bring the arm down with increased momentum. Few days pass without cases of flogging, and the number may be from two to ten. After the flogging the men have to stand to attention with face to the wall to the end of the roll-call. Then the sanitary officer comes round and puts ointment on the wounds.

The other punishment is hanging up 3 metres from the ground by the arms, which are violently bent back for the purpose. This is done by express orders from the commandant given through a microphone. Special men are employed to carry out these punishments and they do nothing else. The hanging lasts for ten to twelve hours and is in public. Another form of it is to have the arms round the trunk of the tree with wrists hand-cuffed. The feet are off the ground, but it is regarded as milder punishment and the S.S. men can inflict it at any time.

I quote another extract from page 14 of the White Book——

The S.S. men employed in the camp were mostly very young men of 17 to 20 who had been specially "trained" for the purpose. But they were already so brutalised and sadistic that it was a constant wonder to Herr Z how it could have been brought about (and what would their mothers think?). They seemed to revel in inflicting torture.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Are you not flogging it?

The HONORARY MINISTER: No, I am not.

Hon. V. Hamersley: We know all about it.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Many people do not.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: It is not very helpful.

The HONORARY MINISTER: What does the hon. member mean by its not being helpful? These camps have been compared to sustenance conditions in Western Australia.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: You are the only one suggesting that.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch: No such comparison was made by me.

The PRESIDENT: The Honorary Minister will resume.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The following is an extract from a report by Consul-General Carvell to Viscount Halifax, dated at Munich, the 5th January, 1939, with regard to the concentration camp at Dachau. The extract appears on page 24 of the White Book——

I have the honour to report that, notwithstanding the threats of dire penalties which would fall on those released from the concentration camp at Dachau if they did not keep silence about their treatment, sufficient information has leaked out to enable some account to be given of the treatment extended to Jewish prisoners since the 9th November last.

The Dachau Camp appears to have been the place of concentration for all Jews arrested in South and West Germany as far as Neuss and in Austria. According to some estimates, the maximum number of Jews in confinement was 14,000. Some 200-300 were released daily during December, and it was thought that above 5,000 still remain in custody. It is understood that all over 65 years of age and all ex-service men who served at the front have now been released. Boys of 17 from the Jewish seminary at Wurzburg and professional men between the ages of 50 and 60 are still without hope of any release.

Apparently the first day of captivity was one of indescribable horror, since no released prisoner has been able or willing to speak about it. It may be imagined that the prisoners, herded together like cattle in a stockyard, were tortured by the fear of the slaughterhouse.

Here is another extract—

They are also warned that if they should spread "atrocity stories" abroad, it would not be to the advantage of their co-religionists remaining in Germany. They are then required to sign a document stating that they have not been ill-treated, have acquired no infectious disease, and have received all their personal effects intact. They are then free to walk to the station and pay their own fares to their homes. Many are unable to walk and some have been carried to the station unconscious.

Here is a statement by a former prisoner at the concentration camp at Buchenwald—

In present-day Germany no word strikes greater terror in people's hearts than the name of Buchenwald. Only a few miles from Goethe's Weimar, situated in the midst of a pleasant beech forest, ringed round with barbed-wire fences, guarded by S.S. detachments and machine guns, lies the new City of Sorrow, the concentration camp of Buchenwald. . . .

During the night of the 14th June, 2,000 of us were transported from prison to the concentration camp. Before leaving the prison we were examined by an extremely youthful doctor, who passed everyone as physically fit for the rigours of concentration camp life, including the septuagenarians and a tubercular prisoner who was continually spitting blood. . . .

What was most difficult to bear was the fact that, in accordance with orders given by the S.S., a group of professional criminals was introduced into each shed and charged with the task of "maintaining order." These criminals, also under detention in the camp, were set over us as "n.c.o.'s.," and were given full authority to punish the other prisoners. The criminal in full charge of our shed was a particularly brutal specimen, who continually and shamefully mishandled us. . . . .

Twenty-five strokes was the favourite punishment at Buchenwald, but there were others. The "sweat-box" for example. It often happened that the prisoner was already dead before the "sweat-box" was opened to release him.

Another punishment was that known as "tree-binding" and the guards showed great inventiveness in developing the possibilities of this torture. If only a slight offence had been committed, the prisoners would be bound to the tree in such a way that they stood facing it, as if embracing it, their hands pinioned together. The straps that bound them would be pulled so tight that they could barely move. The guards would now play "merry-go-round" with them, that is, they would force them to make their way round and round the tree. If they could not move quickly enough, it was usual to help them by kicking their ankles.

There is much more along the same lines that could be quoted, but I think I have given sufficient.

Hon. A. Thomson: I do not think for a moment that anybody suggested that such a thing could happen in Western Australia.

The HONORARY MINISTER: But unfortunately Sir Hal Colebatch made this comparison.

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch: On a point of order, I wish to say that I never at any time made any comparison. All that I did was to suggest that there was a demoralising in-

fluence about the sustenance camp in which young men spent a great deal of their time, perhaps in unemployment.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Sir Hal enjoys a larger audience than do most people on account of his extensive travels and experience, and although I accept his explanation, I say that his words produced a totally wrong impression in the minds of everybody present. That is why I am dealing with the matter at some length.

So the sorry tale goes on— a tale that sickens the heart of man and fills him with horror and apprehension at the thought that there has been turned loose in this fair world of ours a race of human beings capable of such sadistic cruelty. These are the concentration camps in which Sir Hal spent half a day and to which he likens our sustenance camps as only a little less demoralising. As a matter of fact, ours are not sustenance camps. That is a misnomer, but I will adopt the hon. member's term. By way of contrast I propose to read some of the letters received by our supervisor, Mr. Rodgers, from men in the sustenance camps. This is necessary to enlighten the House as to the true state of affairs. One man, under date 25th July, 1940, wrote—

Two years ago I was an invalid pensioner, but in November, 1938, I was fortunate enough to be taken on as a "C" class worker at the clearing work on the Wooroloo Sanatorium Farm. Since then my health has so vastly improved that last week I was successful in passing the military doctor for home defence. I would like to express my heartfelt thanks for this improvement in my health, and would like you to inform the Minister for Employment of the great benefit I, along with many others, have received.

Hon. J. Cornell: Did you say that at one time he was an invalid pensioner?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes, two years ago. I can vouch for the accuracy of these statements.

Hon. J. Cornell: Then there must be something wrong with the medical profession.

The HONORARY MINISTER: No, these men derive benefit from the work in the country. Another man, writing on the 29th July, 1940, said—

I would like to thank you for the improvement in my health. Having had two operations, when I came to this camp to work in November, 1938, I could hardly be classified as even a "C" class man. Now, after 21 months' work here, I am restored in health and able to do anything, and had I been younger, would be willing to join the A.I.F. Please pass my thanks on to your heads, whom I do not know.

The departmental officers make inquiries of the foremen regarding the ability of men seeking employment. The Clerk in Charge of Relief sent the following letter to one of the foremen—

An application for assistance has been received from . . . . . , but the police report is to the effect that he is of light build, in poor health and only fit for light work. He has a wife and two children, and it appears that the family is under-nourished and in poor circumstances generally. Are you able to find him a job, please?

The reply to the supervisor was—

With reference to our conversation on your last visit here as to the general health and working abilities of the men on this job, I enclose a memo from Marquis street which I think will interest you. In reply to their request, I said I would give the man a week's trial. The subject of this memo was certainly very weedy and delicate-looking, but he soon gained strength and became quite a good worker.

I am pleased to inform you that . . . has now passed and will shortly be called up for military service. There are many cases of a similar nature to this, all of whom have certainly benefited in health while working here.

That man was given a job. I think I have read sufficient to show the results that are being obtained, and members can contrast them with the results of the German concentration camp system. I wonder whether any of the men in the German concentration camp visited by Sir Hal ever wrote to the authorities in a similar strain!

A prominent malcontent in Perth who over a period of years consistently refused work of any kind, being always "agin the Government" and who, I believe, served a term in gaol, was induced to go down to one of these camps in the South-West. He called at my office a few days ago, proudly announced that he had put on two stone in weight in the four months he had been in the camp, and expressed the opinion that the foreman was "not a bad sort of chap at all." I wonder whether any of the inmates of a German concentration camp ever spoke in that strain! The foreman said the man was a good worker and the man said he intended to return to the camp.

Let me mention another phase. Men with one arm, men with one leg, men suffering from various physical disabilities, men who through poverty, unemployment and other

causes had lost heart and were not fit to do "A" class work have been sent to these camps and provided with special employment. I wish to say, to the credit of Government departments and of employers in the State that of 2,162 men known to be resident in this State, with one arm or one leg, only six are on rations, and they cannot accept work because they have to receive frequent medical treatment. It is to the credit of all concerned that so many of these men have been found employment. I doubt whether similar results have been achieved in any other part of the Commonwealth, in New Zealand or in Great Britain. My only worry is that in the increasingly difficult times that are ahead, the Government will find it very hard to maintain what I contend is our present high standard of the treatment of the unemployed. I support the motion.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.57 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 15th August, 1940.

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

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Ninth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MRS. CARDELL-OLIVER (Subiaco) [4.33]: It has been said in this House that inflation is not the cause of poverty. I am indeed sorry that the member for East Perth (Mr. Hughes) is not in his seat, for I do not like passing remarks about his speech without his being present to hear them. If he had said that inflation was not the sole cause of poverty, my observations to-day would be unnecessary, but in my opinion inflation is one of the causes of poverty.

Mr. Cross: What is the cause of inflation?

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: If the hon. member will wait until I have finished my speech, I will meet him outside and answer all his questions. I wish to explain that poverty has many causes. They include unemployment, mal-administration of wealth, mal-distribution of goods, want of proper training, want of education, recklessness in finance, and thriftlessness and other numerous causes. I do not think anybody in this Chamber is competent to advise the people or the Government on the question of finance, or the best method to adopt in order to adjust the deplorable conditions in which we find ourselves to-day. The only reason why I speak on this question at all is that I do happen to know the practical results of inflation, deflation and devaluation, having seen those factors in operation in various countries. When socialistic Germany inflated, she did not control prices; and naturally disaster came.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: When was Germany socialistic?

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: During the year I was there—after the last war, of course. I was there at that particular inflationary time. When prices rose considerably, the printing press naturally was needed for inflation, so as to create currency to meet the vastly increased prices. I have in my possession to-day hundreds and hundreds of thousands of marks which, had they been of any value, would have made me a comparatively rich woman; but at the time they were issued would hardly pay for a week's board. In Germany I saw houses being given away if one would pay the commitments due on them in the way of rates. That disproves the statement that real estate is the one stable value during inflationary periods. Germany could not afford to experiment in financial methods, because the country was a manufacturing country and had few primary industries. When Hitler assumed control in 1933 —I was staying there then—he did control prices, and forced the public to consume less. He reduced wages to almost a minimum, and he compelled the people to export commodities which otherwise they would naturally