

ments, and that takes up a considerable amount of our time. However, many ways will present themselves by which we can assist the war effort, and that is plainly our duty.

A real grievance exists on the goldfields with regard to developmental roads. A very small amount of money is set apart for the repair of this class of road on the goldfields. I can name many places that have a promising future and in time will no doubt be thriving goldfields towns, such as Mt. Monger, Celebration, Ora Banda and Edjuidina. These places can be reached only by vehicles that must pass over indifferent roads. The boards controlling the various districts have not sufficient funds to enable them to construct and repair these roads, and they have received Government assistance only to the small extent of £1,500 during the past few years. At the same time we are paying the Commonwealth Government £1,000,000 in gold tax; we should therefore be entitled to a little more money to develop these roads. I have nothing further to add. We are passing through strenuous times, but I sincerely hope that soon the dark clouds overhead will disperse and allow the sun to shine once more. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

On motion by Hon. W. J. Mann, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 8.42 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Wednesday, 13th August, 1941.*

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

### QUESTION—AGRICULTURE, WHEAT.

Mr. FOX asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Is he aware that there is considerable infestation of weevils in the wheat stored in bulk in Fremantle? 2, Has any difficulty been experienced with the Australian Wheat Board in respect to issue of Government wheat certificates because of weevil infestation? 3, Is the Government taking steps necessary to cope with the situation? 4, Is it a fact that Commonwealth authorities have reported adversely on Western Australian wheat? 5, If so, will he make this report available?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, It is known that weevils are present in some of the wheat stored in bulk at Fremantle. A reliable estimate of the extent of the infestation is not known. 2, No certificates for weight, quality and condition for bulk wheat from Fremantle have been requested by the Australian Wheat Board from the Department of Agriculture since December, 1940. Prior to this, inspectors did reject some wheat for export on account of weevil infestation. 3, The Government Entomologist, as far as he is able, has carried out investigations and advised remedial measures, but, as the wheat is owned by the Australian Wheat Board and controlled by their agents, Bulk Handling, Ltd., the Department is unable to take executive action. The Australian Wheat Board—in an endeavour to prevent or minimise weevil infestation—requested the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research to undertake an investigation into the problem in Australia. As a result a visit was paid to Western Australia by a Senior Research Entomologist of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research. Subsequently a local committee was formed consisting of a Specialist Officer of the C.S.I.R., the Government Entomologist (Department of Agri-

culture), and two representatives of Bulk Handling, Ltd. This committee is investigating at present all aspects of infestation of wheat with weevil in this State with a view to its control. 4, The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research made a report upon this matter at the request of the Australian Wheat Board, and, although this has been seen by the Department of Agriculture, the report remains the property of the Australian Wheat Board and is confidential. 5, See answer to No. 4.

#### **QUESTION—WATER SUPPLIES, TOTADJIN EXTENSION.**

Mr. BOYLE asked the Minister for Works: 1, Is he aware that a sum of approximately £4,000 was placed on the 1940-41 Estimates for the relaying of the Totadjin water supply extension on the Goldfields main? 2, As this work was due to have been commenced in March last will he explain the delay? 3, As there are admittedly serious losses of water due to the bad state of the present pipes, will he expedite the work of relaying the extension?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, Yes. 2, A more comprehensible review of the project indicated that with a view to future developments a more extensive scheme was desirable. 3, Yes, as soon as possible after a decision on the new proposal has been arrived at.

#### **QUESTION—RAILWAYS, LEVEL CROSSINGS.**

Mr. NORTH asked the Minister for Railways: 1, How many level crossings are protected by booms similar to those at Claremont? 2, Is any action being taken to render them more effective, particularly where children are concerned?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, None other than Claremont. 2, No. Various suggestions have been considered but each has objections which prevent its adoption. The only effective remedy is the closing of the crossing which was proposed in 1937 to the local governing authority, seeing that vehicular subways exist on both sides within reasonable distance, and a footbridge only 70 yards away. No agreement was reached.

#### **ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.**

##### *Sixth Day.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**MR. J. H. SMITH** (Nelson) [4.36]: I do not propose to detain the House for any length of time in making my remarks on the Lieut.-Governor's Speech, because, to my mind, we ought to be getting on with our job. The Speech contains reference to the part we are playing in this war in which we are striving for our very existence. Defeat will mean much to us. Our liberty will go by the board, and we shall be under the rule of a dictator. Things have never been so serious in the history of the British Empire as they are today, and instead of squabbling we should be united, each one pulling his weight and doing his utmost with one purpose in view, namely the winning of the war. Many months ago when the Menzies Government took office we were in a bad position, though the situation was not nearly as serious as it is today. Mr. Menzies broadcast a speech to the people of Australia in which he said the one important requirement was that Australia should give every assistance possible to the Empire. It will be remembered that he declared it was proposed to harness all the national resources, to take all the wealth that was necessary, and to use every effort to help the Empire to gain a victory. He said there was only one thing at which the Government would stop; it would not conscript men to serve overseas. What do we find? We have fallen down on our job on account of party bickerings. There is no room today in the public life of Australia or of the Empire for party politics. One becomes heartily sick of finding men putting their country last and their parties first in their grasp for office. Why was it not possible for us to have a National Government and let party politics go by the board, thus presenting a united front as an integral part of the Empire?

Many well-deserved reflections are cast upon members of Parliament. For those reflections the Government is to a great extent to blame. Instead of being in recess for several months, this Parliament should have been called together every month or every two months. I expect the Premier is in communication with the Prime Minister, and knows many facts with which other members of Parliament are not acquainted. The Government thought it important enough to

appoint one of its members a full-time Minister for Industrial Development. I thought the Premier would call us together and tell us what was being done in the way of harnessing our primary and secondary industries for the purpose of winning the war. When we go to our electors, they naturally want to know what we are doing about these things, and because we are not taken into the confidence of the Government, we are unable to tell them.

We have been disappointed in the matter of the manufacture of munitions in this State. Eastern Australia is flourishing, chiefly because of the large expenditure on munitions. I have been told that anyone visiting Melbourne and Sydney would scarcely believe that a war was raging. The industries in those cities have never been so prosperous, but while this is happening, we in Western Australia are struggling for a meagre existence. We have no war industries worth the name. I hope the Minister will tell us exactly what is being done here in the way of making munitions. If he is able to tell us, I repeat that the Government was lacking in its duty in not calling Parliament together earlier and making the information available. Is it any wonder that many people in the country cast reflections upon members and ask what they are doing?

The Speech contains several references to primary industries. I wish to speak of two in my district. I hope members will not think me parochial if I first mention the tobacco industry, from which we have been expecting so much. We believed that the industry in this State was about to make enormous strides. We have proved that we can grow tobacco equal in quality to any grown in Australia and perhaps in other parts of the world. Last year Australia produced about 6,000,000 lbs. of leaf, Western Australia's share being almost 1,000,000 lbs. The Commonwealth Government, however, has imposed a restriction. I thank the Minister for Agriculture for what he has done to assist tobacco growers. After overtures had been made to him last year, he assisted the growers in my area by providing sustenance. In the course of an interview with the Minister, I learnt that he was prepared to assist the growers again by providing sustenance so that they would be in a position to put larger areas

under tobacco. The Commonwealth Government, however, has imposed a limit on production; we are permitted to produce only a little more than half of what we grew last year. Here is an industry suffering from lack of consideration at the hands of the Federal Government. Seemingly we are rushing pell mell into unification. Why should the Commonwealth dictate to us as to what we do in this State? I am strongly opposed to unification, but the Commonwealth is daily poaching upon the preserves of the State. We must be prepared to resist such encroachments. That is why I think Parliament should sit almost continuously; we must fight for our rights. If we depend upon the Commonwealth Government, we shall get nowhere, because ours is a Cinderella State and our representation in the Commonwealth Parliament is small. As the member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Triat) said, nobody in the Eastern States seems to be aware that there is such a place as Western Australia. We shall have to fight for our rights and combat unification by all the means in our power.

We were expecting much from the tobacco industry. It was one industry we thought would expand quickly because we could grow an enormous quantity of leaf. This effort, however, has been burked by the Commonwealth's action in restricting the acreage to be planted. I know the Minister for Lands is doing all in his power to help the growers. Since hearing the Speech, I have written to the Manjimup Road Board asking it to get into touch with the growers and send a deputation to the Minister with a view to lodging a protest against the restriction. This will strengthen the Minister's hands when he puts the case to the Commonwealth Minister for Commerce.

Another matter that affects my district only is the water supply at Bridgetown. I wish my remarks to receive publicity through "Hansard" because otherwise the people might think that nothing is being done. When the people do not know what action is being taken, a stigma is cast upon the member for the district and the repercussions are felt by the road board. We had a deputation to the Minister this morning, and he promised to do all he can in the circumstances. Bridgetown has

an annual rainfall of 30 inches, and yet the residents are limited to seven gallons of water per head for the home. The water has been cut off at 10 a.m. and turned on again at 6 p.m. Members will realise how inadequate such an allowance is for people who have installed septic tanks. When the water was turned on in the evening, it was not fit for consumption. In fact, it was not fit for diluting whisky. We had to use rain water to dilute our whisky, though goodness knows there is already enough water in the whisky that is sold to-day.

The Bridgetown water scheme was not established to supply the town; originally it was intended to supply railway requirements. The town grew and we were influenced to have the mains laid in the two principal streets. Once the reticulation was carried out, the Works Department loaded the whole cost of the scheme on to the people. The pipes have been extended for two or three miles and there is not sufficient water to supply consumers. Industries lack the requisite water; we cannot establish a butter factory because of the shortage. People want to establish industries there and cannot do so. The supply is a disgrace to a place of the importance of Bridgetown. As soon as the war is over, provided the fates are kind and we win, we shall have thousands of people settling in the south-western part of the State because there will be nowhere else for them to go—they are not likely to seek land elsewhere. Bridgetown and other centres will double their present population, and we shall need a storage of 100,000,000 gallons of water in that area. An influential deputation waited on the Minister this morning and I shall be pleased to report to my district that he has promised to give the matter favourable consideration. He recognises that the town must have an adequate water supply.

The flax industry is one of which the Minister and the State have reason to be proud. This industry is being established in the Upper Blackwood and Boyup Brook areas. Farmers there, from a sense of loyalty and in order to aid the Empire to the best of their ability, have planted 3,000 acres of flax. One farmer has 800 acres and others are growing areas of 200, 300 and 400 acres. When I left my district, most

of the crops were looking exceedingly well. A flax mill is to be erected at Boyup Brook which will employ two hundred men. We hope the industry will expand and that before long we shall have 6,000 or 8,000 acres under flax. Such an industry should remain for all time. To grow flax successfully it is necessary first to grow good oat crops. That district is particularly adapted to the growing of oats, and it is nothing to have an average of two tons to the acre.

Mr. Stubbs: Do you not require swamp land for flax?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Just the reverse. It is not necessary to have moist land, but good agricultural land, and soil that is not too heavy. I am told that the land of which I have been speaking will grow good oats, and is suitable for the growth of flax. As I have said, some 3,000 acres of flax have been put in this year, and probably a greater quantity will be planted next year. All concerned have great hopes of making a success of the industry.

I wish to refer now to the apple and pear industry. Those engaged in it are having a particularly bad time. With the idea of keeping the industry in existence and tiding it over a difficult period, an apple and pear board, with an acquisition scheme, has been set up. Had the producers been able to export their apples and pears to the islands north of Australia and elsewhere there would have been no need for the establishment of that board. As, however, it was impossible to export these products, and the position was reached when there were 1½ million cases of apples that could not be disposed of, the Commonwealth and State Governments came to the assistance of the growers and established that board. It is generally agreed that that will be the salvation of the fruitgrowers in the South-West. Very few discontented persons have made themselves known, and it is generally agreed that the vast majority of the growers are in favour of the board and the acquisition scheme. Some growers have not been in the industry very long, and have been inclined to oppose the scheme, but they are few in number. It is easy to destroy but very hard to build. I was interested to hear the remarks of the member for Irwin-Moore (Mr. Berry), who said that buyers of apples had been refused the right to send fruit to Singapore and the islands in the Near East, although a good market was

available for that produce. In the past the most suitable apples to send to those markets were the early varieties, big Dunns and Cleos, etc. We understand that apples are fetching an enormous price in Singapore and the same thing can be said of potatoes and other lines of produce. People in those parts of the world cannot get those things because of lack of shipping conveniences.

I was very concerned when the hon. member referred to a letter he had received from Messrs. Joyce and Watkins. I got into communication with the Apple and Pear Board to ascertain what the position was. The superintendent assured me that everything possible had been done to arrange for the despatch of apples to Singapore and other markets, but that insufficient shipping space had been available. The fruit was frequently taken out of cold storage and put back again because of the difficulty of getting it aboard ship. The same thing applies to attempts made to export potatoes. Mr. Harris on one occasion had an order for 100 tons of potatoes destined for Singapore. He had them held on the wharf in store for weeks, but could not get deck space for them. Ultimately he was able to send only 80 tons away—20 tons being destroyed—but when they left the wharf after weeks of delay there were sprouts upon them six inches long. Everything possible has been done in an endeavour to dispose of apples in the markets to which I have referred. Practically the only disgruntled growers are those who have been in the habit of sending a few odd cases of Northern Spy apples to various places, and who have now been precluded from doing so on account of restrictions. The board itself has done wonderful work.

I was interested to hear the references of the member for Irwin-Moore to the possibility of ships being built in this State. Had we a fleet of wooden ships, if only 1,000 tons in weight, our producers could have taken advantage of the markets that are now available in the Near East. I agree with the member for Roebourne (Mr. Rodoreda) that ships could be built here. Men I know of have built boats in inlets in the South-West, such as yachts and launches of upwards of 40ft. in length, and have done so with local timber. They have carried out the job themselves, and fitted the engines

without the aid of any shipwright. Those men merely had a knowledge of carpentry and of how to use an adze, but they built most seaworthy vessels which have been able to go out to sea. Mr. Swarbrick is one of the men I have in mind. So we see that ships can be built, and can be constructed of local timber. Both karri and jarrah are suitable timbers for shipbuilding, but probably the former is more durable and stronger than is the latter. I do not, however, question the value of jarrah for the building of vessels. The member for Irwin-Moore was quite right to draw the attention of the Federal Government to the need for establishing a shipbuilding industry in this State, and he and his committee are to be commended for the action they have taken. We are too lax in these matters. Parliament should have been called together ere this so that the Minister for Industrial Development might have told us what is happening with regard to shipbuilding and the manufacture of munitions. We all have different ideas as to what should be done for the welfare of the country. The war is coming very close to us, and it may be that it is coming closer to Western Australia than to any other part of the Continent.

What are we doing in the matter of air raid shelters? Last year a Bill was passed dealing with that subject. As a result of that legislation people were authorised to establish dug-outs in their own backyards and use them as shelters. I have been thinking of a plan that might appeal to the Government, one that would also be of great benefit to the City of Perth, and enable the local authorities to do away with the rumble of trams and the congestion in Hay-street. Could not the engineers arrange to run the trams underground? We manufacture cement locally, and the prisoners that are likely to come to these shores could be employed in carrying out the work. The suggestion is a sound one. A start could be made at the car barn, from where there would be a continuous line up to Thomas-street. If the trams were undergrounded between those points, an air raid shelter would be provided large enough for the population of Perth, and the trams could be run on double lines up and down without any congestion. I commend the idea to the Government. Prisoners coming to this State could well be employed in

an undertaking of that sort. There would be nothing to buy and very little cost involved in the matter of labour. At some time in the future it will be compulsory for the authorities to remove the tramways from Hay-street, and the best way to do so is to put them underground. That is one idea for the consideration of the Government.

Mr. Needham: Free of charge?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Yes. Post-war problems will have to be dealt with, and will have to be tackled before the end of the war. Many thousands of people will be flocking to Australia because of their discontent in the parts of the world in which they have been living. In my opinion this State is destined within the next 10 years to enjoy a population, not of less than 500,000 persons, but of anything up to 1,000,000 or 1,500,000, thus bringing us nearly to the level of the populations of Melbourne and Sydney. Our climatic conditions are excellent and our land is good and productive. If we fight hard for them we can build up our secondary industries, but we cannot achieve that end until our primary industries have been established on a proper basis. Thousands of people will settle in the south-west, and it will be necessary to have a better understanding with the Forestry Department and the Lands Department. Many thousands of farms could be established in that district, nor would they interfere in any way whatever with our forestry schemes. I would not sacrifice our heritage of timber. That will help to solve some of our post-war problems. We must place our primary industries on a proper basis and the only way to do so is to have a guaranteed price for our produce. Why should the farmer always be under a stigma? Why should he be termed a "cocky"? Why should he not be able to draw adequate wages for his labour? Because the Government of the day is apathetic towards his welfare! The Government does not care a hang what happens to the farmer. He must produce, yet everybody, including the machinery merchants, banks and other financial institutions, has a shot at him. We shall have the spectacle of thousands of men leaving their holdings unless we do something for them. The only way to keep them there is to guarantee them a price for their produce. Droughts and other adverse conditions cannot of course be

avoided. Our Arbitration Court makes awards for workers engaged in other industries, ensuring them adequate recompense for their labour and proper conditions of work. But what have we done for the man on the land?

Mr. Fox: What was done for the onion growers?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The hon. member had a hard fight to get them what they are now receiving. I want him now to help the man on the land, because everything depends upon the fruits of his labour; our food and our clothing are produced from the soil. Our primary industries, including our gold industry, are the source of our national wealth. They help to keep city people living in comfort. Why should not the man on the land enjoy similar privileges? It is no use talking about orderly marketing unless there is a guaranteed price. The man on the land should not be forced to accept starvation wages and work 16 to 20 hours a day, and then—after years of toil—because of drought or other adverse conditions, have his holding sold by the Agricultural Bank, to which he has been struggling to pay interest. We must do away with the cursed interest. We should finance from the credit of the country in the same way as is done by other nations. I always freely express my views. We should be able to say to Jack Jones or to Ted Robinson, "Come and work on our farm; we will not pay you £1 per week and expect you to work 10 or 12 hours a day, but will pay you the basic wage and give you good living accommodation." The farmer cannot do that, however, unless he receives a guaranteed price for his produce.

I have another matter upon which I desire to castigate the Government. The Government had a surplus last year of £11,111. How was that achieved? By taxing the people! One would think the Government would reduce taxation so that the Commonwealth Government could obtain more money to carry on our war effort. To me, the surplus of £11,111 is the gravest indictment of the Government, because to-day we still have men in sustenance camps many of whom are working only two days per week.

Mr. Cross: Not many.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: In my electorate alone there are about 200, and there are men in other electorates. Immediately these men attain 65 years of age they are not allowed

to work the two days per week, but must apply for the old-age pension of 21s. per week. One would think that the Government, with this surplus, would have said to these unfortunate men, "We will better your conditions." Many of these persons could be retained at 65 and perhaps would do more work than could be done by some young men of 20 to 30 who to-day are wandering about the towns. That position is bad enough, but what is worse is the part-time employment still prevailing. Is this Government humanitarian? We were told yesterday the Government stood for the uplift of the people, and the betterment of their conditions, yet to-day large numbers of men are still working part-time. Is that not a serious indictment of the Labour Government? Again, all those men are compulsorily unionists. They must pay 25s. for union dues out of their meagre earnings. There is another matter over which I want to castigate the Government.

Mr. Needham: Hear, hear!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I feel the Government stands for poverty. Its desire is to push further down the man on the lower rung, without taking into consideration his past services. What has happened to our railway employees, the fettleers, locomotive drivers and others who have been deprived of their pensions? A resolution was carried by Parliament instructing the Government to pay those railway employees a pension. I myself was one of those employees; and, had I remained in the service, I would have been retired at the age of 65 years. I was in the loco. department, and would have been scrapped like an old sock and perhaps have been forced to apply for the old-age pension. Many of the employees I have mentioned have reared big families—with no child endowment—and they did their best to educate their children. This and other living expenses absorbed all their earnings. But this Government does not think anything of the man in dungarees or overalls. It is concerned mostly with men who wear a white collar, the salaried staff.

The Minister for Mines: A white collar worn back to front!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I have the utmost respect for men who wear a white collar back to front. Although I am not of a religious turn of mind, I often say a prayer—as I hope every other member of Parliament does—for our boys at the front and

for the speedy termination of the war. I am not an unbeliever. This Government, however, discriminates between the man in the overalls and the man on the salaried staff. The Government says to the salaried man, "When you reach 65 years of age you will get a pension." That is the position, despite the resolution that was carried by this House, and also passed by another place, agreeing that these men should be granted a superannuation allowance. The Government has not complied with the terms of that resolution; the reply is, "It is a question of money."

The Deputy Premier: What wages did you receive?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: When I joined the Railway Department I received 6s. per day. I left the department to better myself. As I say, the Government's reply is that the money is not available. Must we plead with the Federal Government to provide the money? How long is this money god to be held over us? How much longer must we suffer? The member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. McLarty), who is a really hard old shell, when speaking to the Address-in-reply last night, said that we must have monetary reform. When the hon. member speaks in that way, there is a ray of hope, and I trust that we shall get a new order very soon.

Mr. McLarty: I hope it will not be according to your ideas, anyhow.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The hon. member is looking for information, but I am not telling him what my ideas are. I will remind him, however, that last year a motion on this subject moved by the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) was passed almost unanimously.

I wish to refer to the by-election for Yilgarn-Coolgardie, the seat which was held until his death by the late George Lambert. I did not think it possible that I would miss a man as much as I miss him. Time marches on, however, the grim Reaper comes along, and we must all go in our turn. All the big guns went up to that electorate; there were three or four Ministers, who were followed by a barrage of lesser lights; yet it looks as if this seat will be lost to the Labour Party. I am reminded of an old saying, "You can fool some of the people some of the time, but not all the people all the time." To me it looks as if the writing is on the wall. At last we shall have a change of Government. At last

the people of Western Australia are throwing off the yoke about their necks. The County Party and the National Party are a united force; in the past we foolishly divided our forces, but at the next election the Government will be scrapping for its life. We have an indication now which way the wind is blowing. We have gone into the fray and have come out with flying colours. We have done what the Government never thought could be done, but it is only a forerunner, a small taste, of what is to come. Let not Government members be too despondent! During this year we hope legislation will be introduced as the result of which members of Parliament may have the right to superannuation. A scheme of that description should have been introduced 20 years ago.

Mr. Wilson: Goodbye, Jack!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I have not left this Chamber yet.

Mr. Thorn: Do not you think the Government should resign?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: If Ministers followed the footsteps of Beasley and others, they would do so, because they are in the same position as is the Federal Government.

The Minister for Mines: You are not game to do that.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: We are sincere on this side of the House. On the other hand, we know there is nothing but subterfuge and cunning displayed by members on the Government side. We know the Minister for Mines and those with him merely serve the public with platitudes. I have given some indication of what I mean by that. Government members say they are going to uplift their fellowmen, but I have shown that their actions are indicative of a contrary result. Instead of the wage-earners being helped to a higher rung of the ladder, they find themselves still on the lowest. The Government party has no use for old Bill Bowyangs. They want the other fellow!

There should be no necessity to refer to another matter, but I shall do so in passing. We know what action the Federal Government has taken regarding petrol supplies, and the public has been urged to make use of substitutes. In that I see the South-West securing at last one industry of importance. The only proper position for a power alcohol factory is at Collie in the South-West. An abundance of wheat runs through that centre daily during the haulage season. There is a bountiful water supply and coal necessary for the production of

power. In fact, everything essential for the requirements of a power alcohol factory is available at Collie. I am satisfied, therefore, that at last we shall have in the South-West one important secondary industry.

I think the Premier and his Ministers owe Parliament some explanation in connection with harbour facilities for the South-West. Some explanation is certainly due to those who have met in conference in the South-West for years past. For as many years we have been fighting to secure an outlet for the products of that section of the State. We do not seem to be able to get any further with our proposals. It is said that to construct a proper harbour at Bunbury is quite impossible. The member for Albany (Mr. Hill) will always be prepared to endorse that statement.

Mr. Wilmott: What about Busselton?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The position at Busselton is a damned sight worse, because there is nothing there at all except a long jetty that stretches out into the ocean. The fact has been established that the timber industry is progressing by leaps and bounds. Over-time is being paid throughout, and it is almost impossible to secure the necessary timber workers. Three additional larger mills are being provided in my district. Two have already been built and another is nearly completed. They will provide additional employment for hundreds of men, and as a result of the expansion of the trade, there will be room for many thousands of settlers in the wonderfully fertile country in the forest belt. As a matter of fact, there is a fine harbour available almost at our very doors.

All our products can go right past Bunbury and find an adequate outlet elsewhere. If it is impossible to provide satisfactory harbour facilities for Bunbury, we are not much concerned, for we do not owe Bunbury anything. What we really require is a harbour so situated as to avoid all the heavy haulage costs that are now incurred. We have such an opportunity in the direct route from the timber mills to Flinders Bay. Within a radius of 40 miles all the products could be despatched to that bay where the facilities are so extensive that the whole of the British fleet could anchor there with safety. That bay should have been developed years ago, and that is what we must still strive to achieve. Doubtless vested interests will oppose the project, and we shall have to fight

hard to secure our end. That may not come about in my time, but ultimately Flinders Bay will be the harbour through which all the products from that part of the State will be shipped. I have nothing more to say, Mr. Speaker, except that if I have ruffled the feelings of some of my friends opposite, they will appreciate that I never scratch their backs, as some other members do. If I have indeed ruffled their feelings, I advise them to take a course of "Warner's Safe Cure."

**MR. CROSS** (Canning) [5.20]: Since we met last session I regret, in common with the member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith), the passing of our former colleague, the late G. J. Lambert. I feel that the State has sustained a loss through being deprived of the advantage of his knowledge of the minerals of Western Australia. A long time will probably elapse before we will have the benefit of another member with an equally extensive knowledge of the outback areas. We also miss another old friend in the former Chief "Hansard" Reporter, Mr. Ramaciotti, who has retired from that position. I sincerely hope he will be spared for many years to enjoy good health and rest.

I regret, too, the fact that we enter upon the present Address-in-reply debate while the world is still under the shadow of war. Although hostilities have been in progress for over 20 months, I find it difficult to suggest whether the war is much nearer the end than it was in the earlier stages.

**Mr. Wilson:** Give us some optimism!

**Mr. CROSS:** Members will recollect that in November, 1939, I forecast that the war would be decisively fought out in the Middle East and that involved in it would be Russia, Persia, Iran and the countries contiguous to the Black Sea. What influenced me in that prediction was that Germany, having no lubricating oil, would be bound to endeavour to secure supplies sooner or later. Contrary to the views expressed by the member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Triat), who suggested that the war would end in a few months' time, I believe that developments within the next two weeks will determine whether the war will proceed for a few months or for a few years. The position is indeed critical, and it behoves every member of Parliament to do his utmost in advancing the nation's fullest effort to

bring the present great war to a successful conclusion. Although it has been in progress for nearly two years, we are possibly in greater danger now than we were earlier in the piece. Obviously a nation north of Australia now menaces our shores. While a great deal has been done by the Federal Government in a muddling way, I am afraid its effort to assist in winning the war has involved the making of many mistakes. At this stage it is just as well for even the State Parliament to take stock of what is likely to happen, and make provision for the future. To attempt to indulge in forecasting may be considered foolish, because the unexpected always happens in wartime. Respecting what may happen when hostilities cease, in some directions we can be sure, just as we know that the sun will set tomorrow. During the current debate references have been made to rises in the basic wage. Just as certainly as the sun will set tomorrow, we can be confident that the longer the war continues the greater will be the increase in the basic wage. There is again a tendency to refer to the vicious circle and allusions to the basic wage beginning to chase its tail, represented by rising costs.

**Hon. C. G. Latham:** It has been doing that all the time. You have not awakened to it; that is the only difference.

**Mr. CROSS:** Recently the President of the State Arbitration Court had something to say along those lines when announcing an increase. In the report in the "Daily News" we find the following:—

So the destructive race continues of wages chasing prices until something is done to stop the vicious spiral.

That is the view of President Dwyer. Rising prices are due to a definite cause, and, in my opinion, the removal of that cause is entirely outside the power, or province, of any Government, State or Federal, either here or in Great Britain. I believe the increase in the cost of living is the result of a definite process, and that the increased cost is not due to the fault of any Government but is attributable entirely to the increasing volume of the national debt with the consequent augmented interest charges. Members can turn to historical records to learn the lesson involved. Should they do so, they will find that for hundreds of years a process of depreciation in the

purchasing power of money has been proceeding continuously. This has been caused by the increased public debt and the added interest charges involved. In every country, as the public receive the benefit of increased wage or salary payments, so the value of money has decreased. War always tends to give this process of depreciation a tremendous flip, and it is entirely outside the power of any Government to prevent what is really a natural process. As soon as any nation embarks upon war, it commences to raise huge sums of money. As a sequence, interest charges increase, with the natural result that taxation is largely augmented. That not only happened during the last war, but is happening again in this war. Naturally the workers of the community, having to pay increased taxation, which definitely raises the cost of living, demand increased wages, in order to keep up with the increased living cost and counter the fall in the value of money.

To illustrate my point I will go back in the history of Australia. I will prove definitely that never again will Western Australia, or Australia, revert to pre-war basic wages or to present rates of wages. The total public debt of Australia on the 30th June, 1913, was £7,430,949. After the conclusion of the last war, and getting down to the 30th June, 1929, the total of Federal and State debts of Australia had increased to £1,116,834,298; and by that time Australia had to face an annual interest bill of £28,181,000. From then up to the 31st March, 1941, the combined national debts of the States and the Commonwealth, inclusive of some £43,000,000 owing to New York, amounted to £1,402,700,352, and the annual interest bill was £49,139,729. I wish it to be noticed that even in peace time Australia's annual interest bill had increased by nearly £21,000,000. Since the present war began, huge sums of money have been borrowed. Our national debt is increasing and taxation is increasing as well. Thus it will obviously be impossible for our people to revert to pre-war rates of income and continue to live at the same standard, and also to pay current taxation. That is not peculiar to Australia. The same thing has happened in Great Britain. Indeed, it

affects all countries, irrespective of whether they take part in the war or not. In order to prove that the same position obtains at Home, I mention that in 1913 Great Britain had the largest revenue in its history, amounting to some £199,000,000. In 1918 Britain's public debt, which prior to the last war amounted to £400,000,000, had grown to £7,821,000,000. Britain's interest bill in 1918 was more than twice the amount of her revenue in 1913. That year's interest bill amounted to £453,000,000. Three weeks ago the national debt of Great Britain stood at £1,500,000,000,000. It had nearly doubled since the commencement of the present war. And as the war continues the indebtedness will increase.

Mr. Sampson: In what manner?

Mr. CROSS: I shall give a simple illustration showing that it is impossible for the wage earners of this country to revert to pre-war rates of income, while paying the new rates of taxation which will be needed to keep the nation on an even financial keel. For the sake of argument let us assume that prior to the war a man had an income of £3 per week, which he divided into four equal parts, on three parts of which he had to live, and the remaining part going to the Government by way of taxation to meet interest and sinking fund charges. In that event the Government would get 15s. per week from the man. But this is what will happen; the basic wage will increase and rates of wages will increase, so that the man will just be able to retain the same percentage, but will be no better off, because the value of money will have depreciated. Assuming that he then receives £5 a week and still splits his income into four parts, the Government taking one-quarter, then the Government, instead of getting 15s. per week, would get 25s., and thus be enabled to meet its debts. That process has been going on unaltered for hundreds of years.

Mr. Sampson: What do you suggest to stop it?

Mr. CROSS: In the past some countries have used dubious methods in order to rid themselves of their national debts, because those enormous debts with their heavy interest charges would become a millstone round the neck of every industry, particularly those industries compet-

ing with the outside world in the race for trade. Members will recollect the action taken after the last war by Germany in order to rid herself of her tremendous debt. Germany speeded up the depreciation process. Members will recall that the German Government took charge of all exports for the purpose of securing and controlling exchange. Nothing could be sent out of Germany unless the exchange passed through the Reichsbank. The German Government depreciated the mark over night, and in that way, although the process ruined millions of the German people, the country quickly got rid of its internal debt. What did the Germans do then? Instead of putting their money into industry, they used it mainly to build up that military machine which to-day menaces the whole of the civilised world.

I hold that the time is ripe not only for the Federal Parliament but also for this Parliament to take steps for the setting up of an authority to prepare for this, one of the greatest of post-war problems.

Mr. Wilson: What would you do?

Mr. CROSS: Whatever we do, we cannot arrest this process of depreciation in the purchasing power of money. It will continue. What is the real value of our money now, since the last war? Although an effort was made, nothing could be done to stop the fall in the value of money, because the bankers, and financiers in general, probably realised too late that the purchasing power of a good deal of their cash was gone. It is important to note that the change in money values is unable to do three things: it cannot destroy the fertility of the soil, it cannot destroy our man power or our factories or our machines. It represents merely a relative change in values. All sorts of schemes will be put up in various countries to get rid of the burden of debt. There may be a suggestion to wipe the slate, and that might be a good thing if the whole world did it. But the position has to be faced; we have to meet what I say will definitely happen. The position will have to be met by the export industries of Western Australia in particular. The export of wheat, wool, metals and other things is going to constitute a race with other countries for the trade of the world. Those countries which are in the best position by reason of the smallness of their internal

debts will succeed most quickly. Every country will be affected.

I consider that we should have an authority to prepare for meeting that position. That is one of the greatest post-war problems we shall have to face. In my opinion it is of the highest national importance that we take the right steps to recover the markets we have had. But we shall be faced with something more. During the last war this State sent some 32,000 men overseas. The present war is not over, and by this time we have already sent nearly 29,000 men overseas. When this war finishes, many of those men will return, and we must be ready to rehabilitate them in profitable industries. Therefore if an authority is set up, we should make plans for that eventuality now. Profitable works should be put in hand. In my belief all the European countries will be compelled to embark on huge building schemes. Western Australia should prepare a large housing scheme, for I believe the war will be followed by a great deal of emigration. Many new people will be looking for a new life in Australia. We have to be ready to receive them. We must ascertain what industries are best to develop so as to absorb those migrants.

Mr. Sampson: We should also give our own boys the chance to learn a trade.

Mr. CROSS: Many other things could be taken into consideration. Although a tremendous amount has already been done by the Australian Governments, especially the Commonwealth Government, one of whose tasks is to conduct the war, our Australian Governments, like most British Governments, have made serious blunders. Members may recollect that I had something to say early last session with regard to the then petrol position. The war had been going on for a good many months before the Federal Government woke up to the importance of liquid fuel in the life of our nation. When the Government first started petrol rationing it issued a decree forbidding any man to keep more than 40 gallons of petrol in his garage, on penalty of a heavy fine. I condemned that attitude, holding the opinion that since petrol is the lifeblood of any nation, steps should be taken to secure and store as widely as possible all the petrol we could obtain. But the Federal Government bungled the matter and has been bungling it ever since. The action taken in regard to petrol

supplies will go down as one of the biggest bungles of the war. Let us examine the existing position.

The Federal Government appointed a Liquid Fuel Board and a branch of that board was established in this State. Western Australia lent some of its best officers to control the situation here. However, the Federal Government did not say to the representatives of the board in this State, "You have so much petrol and you know the requirements of Western Australia. Treat the State as fairly as possible in the best interests of the whole community." Instead, the Federal Government said "You have no discretion." Another decree was issued to the effect that people in a certain category should receive so much petrol and that on the 1st August certain sections should have their supply diminished. There was to be no variation. It was a decree. What was the effect? It was simply stupid. Chaos was created and the decree will go a long way to ruin people who should not be ruined. I will give an example of what has happened in my own electorate.

One primary producer in my district has one of the State's largest dairies. The firm has a big delivery round and, in addition, cools and transports the milk of several other producers. As no other transport is available this firm, in order to save petrol for the other producers, carts their milk to the city. It used to employ two one-ton trucks and a Morris car. With a view to reducing the consumption of petrol, the firm re-organised its round and sold one of the trucks. At the beginning special licenses were necessary, but when the 1st August came no more special licenses were granted and the allowance of petrol for the remaining truck was cut down from 90 gallons to 54 gallons a month, and that was not the first cut. The firm was told that it would have to get a gas producer and the allowance for the Morris car was reduced from 31 gallons to 19 gallons. It was told that there would be no more special consideration. The Fuel Board declared it was governed by a decree from the Federal Government, and that no more special licenses would be granted until the firm could instal a gas producer. Consequently a gas producer was promptly ordered. I saw the Liquid Fuel Board this week and pointed out that a gas producer could be secured in six weeks. I asked if a special license could be granted until the producer was secured,

and was informed, "It cannot be granted." The result is that to-morrow the firm will have no petrol. That is the consideration the people of this State are getting from the bunglers in the Federal Government which has failed to give the Liquid Fuel Board any discretion, and governs the position by issuing a decree from Canberra.

Mr. McDonald: The board is given discretion.

Mr. CROSS: The board says it has none at all.

Mr. McDonald: It says it has and exercises it.

Mr. CROSS: For the information of the hon. member I might say the decree was read to me by the Chairman of the Liquid Fuel Board, Mr. Millen, and I repeat that the board has no discretion. The situation was clearly explained to me.

Mr. Needham: The board had discretion, but has been deprived of it.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The board has a limited discretionary power.

Mr. CROSS: It is very limited, then. Mr. Millen read the decree to me and I listened carefully. He said that in no circumstances—no matter what hardships might be created—could the allowance of petrol be increased.

Hon. C. G. Latham: He treated you pretty well.

Mr. CROSS: The fault cannot be laid at the door of the local officers, but at the door of the Federal Government that issued the decree. I understand the position. That is the story I had from the Fuel Board and I am satisfied that what I was told is correct. The decree came under the seal of the Chairman of the Fuel Board in the Eastern States. In some areas in my electorate there is no form of public transport but there are several storekeepers in the district who have to deliver their goods to customers who place weekly orders with them. Those storekeepers have also had their petrol supply reduced. The way in which the Federal Government has managed the petrol business is disgraceful. If the job had been done properly when the writing was on the wall 18 months ago there would have been ample supplies of petrol for all requirements in this State. The Government is making a holy mess of the distribution of the limited supplies that are available. I hope that the member representing the Federal Government on the Liquid Fuel Board will make representations to the Govern-

ment suggesting that the local board be given discretion to deal with the position as they know it to be. All that has been done has been done at the expense of the people of Western Australia and to the advantage of residents of Sydney and Melbourne.

There is another matter upon which I wish to comment. The Federal Government has bungled not only the petrol rationing. I heard the member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) saying nice things about the Apple and Pear Board. He is one of the few people who consider that the actions of the board have been a success in this State. People in the greater metropolitan area consider—and quite a number of people in the hon. member's electorate with whom I have discussed the position think the same—that when the board was faced with the position that apples could not be exported, it should have fixed a local price that the people of the State could afford to pay. Had the price been fixed at 5s. a case, thousands more cases would have been sold. As the shipping situation becomes worse and cold storage is increasingly limited I venture to suggest that the Apple and Pear Board will be compelled, in order to dispose of its surplus stock, to reduce the price to one within the means of the people.

The Apple and Pear Board has been responsible for another stupid action. In the past many growers were in the habit of giving windfalls to institutions, but that has been stopped. I went through the apple districts 12 months ago and saw thousands of tons of apples still on the trees and under the trees going to waste. That is the greatest scandal in the history of any State. The growers could not sell a case or even a pound of apples. I was told I would have to go to Bridgetown to be supplied and would have to pay 8s. 6d. a case. I was 60 miles from Bridgetown so I did not go there. There should be some change in the position.

Reference was made by the member for Nelson to the need for the construction of air raid shelters. I remind him that in the most vulnerable portion of the State—the metropolitan area—it will be an easy matter to make air raid shelters. The safest place would probably be in the people's backyards. Not much trouble would be involved in digging a trench in the sand and securing a few pieces of timber to put over the top. Experience in England has shown that when

air raid shelters have been hit by bombs considerable damage has been done and many people have been killed. Shelters are not meant particularly to prevent direct hits, but to protect people from flying shrapnel. Most people could construct satisfactory shelters, under the supervision of air raid wardens and A.R.P. workers, and that would be better than establishing big shelters in the city area.

I would like to know what action is being taken by the Federal Government to stop bombers from coming here. I do not think there will be any considerable invasion of this State by bombers, but what may happen, particularly if the Japanese enter the war, is that Japan may send one or two destroyers down the coast and from about 100 miles out at sea the vessels will catapult two or three planes to bomb Perth and Fremantle. I do not know how many anti-aircraft guns we have in this State. I have not seen any in Perth, but if there are not any we should have some because the provision of effective measures to hinder the enemy's progress is the best means of preventing any damage to the city and injury to the people. There may be plenty of fighting planes, but I think we would feel a lot safer if we knew—and the people all over Australia would like to know—that measures are being taken to ensure that all the States are being adequately protected by effective anti-aircraft guns and other defensive weapons. The fire services of the metropolitan area are reasonably adequate for peacetime conditions, but if three or four planes scattered incendiary bombs we would not have enough fire-fighting machines or men to cope with the outbreaks. The existing equipment would probably be able to deal with three or four large fires in the metropolitan area, but a hostile attack might result in a hundred fires being started almost simultaneously. To protect the lives and property of the people against enemy attack is the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government, and I would like to know what steps are being taken by it. The Federal Government should immediately arrange to obtain more machines, though difficulty might be experienced now in getting up-to-date fire engines. Action should have been taken long ago to make provision for meeting a contingency of this kind.

I direct the attention of the Minister for Child Welfare to the fact that the Child Endowment scheme, long overdue, has been put into operation by the Commonwealth. What action is being taken by the State Government to ensure that the endowment payments are being made to the institutions that care for children? Such institutions as the Methodist Children's Home, Salvation Army Home, Clontarf Orphanage and even Sister Kate's Home, should get the benefit of the child endowment of 5s. per child per week. These children have been maintained by contributions from the State, and with all the calls on the pockets of the people for patriotic purposes, the institutions have found it hard to get sufficient money to augment the Government grant so that the children may be properly cared for. The institutions need the extra few shillings represented by the endowment, and the State Government should endeavour to get the Commonwealth to make the money available.

Even though war is raging oversea, there are some works that should not be neglected. During the last week or two my attention has been drawn to the condition of three school playgrounds, one in my district and the others in Victoria Park. During the wet weather recently experienced a ferry boat was almost necessary to negotiate sections of playgrounds where the heavy rains had washed away the gravel. At one school a brick wall was washed out. A bricklayer effected repairs but left a hole from which he had taken the sand required, and anybody crossing that part ran the risk of breaking his neck.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Is that a war matter?

Mr. CROSS: It is a pity the hon. member is not at the war. Many pounds may often be saved by finding a little money for immediate repairs. I hope action will be taken to deal with the problems I have mentioned. Other questions affecting my electorate will be dealt with by me when the Estimates are being discussed.

**MR. ABBOTT** (North Perth) [6.6]: His Excellency's Speech points out that the war situation continues to be very serious. Every member feels desirous of doing everything possible at this stage to help his country. One member has decided that the best way he can help is by serving in the A.I.F. We can assure his constituents that their interests will not suffer from the fact that

their member has thought it his duty to undertake strenuous service oversea. Other members of Parliament and their women-folk are feeling deeply the present troublesome times. On this account nobody should criticise the Government, whether Commonwealth or State, on party lines. Anything I say will be offered by way of suggestion to the Government, hoping that it may be of some assistance in dealing with the affairs of the State in these critical times.

My first suggestion is that the Government should set up some permanent committees consisting of members of this House. One useful committee could consider legislation of a non-party nature that would be of advantage to the State. A joint select committee sat during the recess to consider the provisions of the Companies Bill, which I understand will be dealt with this session. As a member of that committee I feel that a very successful job has been done for the State. Other necessary amending measures should receive careful consideration before they are introduced, and, if a committee were appointed to consider the proposals, beneficial work could be done. The Bills of Sale Act has been in need of amendment and consolidation for years. As a professional man, I know that many citizens are put to great expense because various laws are not sufficiently clear and definite regarding the intention of Parliament.

Much has been said about petrol rationing. Gas producers will probably have to be used more extensively, even for work in the city. I do not know what advice the Minister for Industrial Development has had about gas producer plants, but I understand that there is a tendency for a gas-driven engine to stall and that a good deal of trouble is involved to get it running again. The Government should consider whether the traffic regulations could be eased. I should like to see an experiment made to determine whether pointsmen are necessary. If some of the present restrictions were removed, gas producer plants would probably be used more largely in the city.

In some parts of the world it has been demonstrated that national governments are more efficient in times of stress than are party governments. I suggest that a national government would be more efficient at any time. I should like to see adopted the sys-

tem of elective ministries. The democratic system is on its trial; the electors are very tired of party politics. It is generally admitted that for war purposes at least a dictatorship is more effective, but I believe that an elective ministry, probably on the Swiss principle whereby the best men in Parliament could be elected by the House, would give a better form of government.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That does not exclude the party system. The two Houses meet and select the Ministers.

Mr. ABBOTT: But the Ministry does not resign after an adverse vote in the House. If a Ministry were elected by secret ballot and did not have to resign after an adverse vote, organised bodies could not exert on the Government the pressure that is brought to bear under our system. Any party is liable to be influenced by large followings that are closely organised.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Mr. ABBOTT: I suggest to the House that the principle of elective ministries would be an improvement on the present position. All through the past, evolutions of Parliaments have occurred. In the 14th century I believe there was a Parliament known as "The Drunken Parliament," because the majority of members, including the Speaker, were habitually drunk. Later on there was what was known as "The Diabolical Parliament." That was even worse than the other. It was tantamount to getting the death penalty to oppose anything the authorities wished to have done. That was not so good. In the 17th century there was a Speaker who had the misfortune to be obliged to accept a motion that he had been guilty of bribery. I understand the motion was carried unanimously. I think when we look round this Chamber we can all agree that a considerable improvement has taken place since the days of which I speak. There is, however, room for further improvement.

The Minister for Lands: There was a legal Parliament, too, at that time.

Mr. ABBOTT: I did not like to mention it. As the Minister for Works has often said, it is the responsibility of the Government to govern the country. That means a coterie of Ministers is dominating this Chamber, which is supposed to govern the country.

Their own members follow them like puppets, having very little to say and very little to do. The Opposition is able to say what it likes, but can play very little part in the actual government of the country. Such a State of affairs would be altered by a system of elective ministries. Members of the public are very tired of petty party politics, of people saying things with their tongues in their cheeks, well knowing that what they say is not the truth. We often hear outside Parliament people saying, "That must have been done purely for party reasons." The public is more and more prone to select candidates not so much for the political party they follow as for the value of the individual. I suggest to the Government it has had rather a bitter lesson in the results of the Yilgarn-Coolgardie election. The electors refused to accept a man who was thrown at them, but have accepted a local resident who is probably well known in the district.

The Minister for Mines: It is a long way between Ora Banda and Southern Cross. There is not so much in the locality question there.

Mr. ABBOTT: A good deal has been said about the new order. The Minister for Labour is reported to have said that if there was to be a real change and a new order after the war, there must also be a spiritual or mental change on the part of the people.

The Minister for Mines: Quite right, too.

Mr. ABBOTT: The proper time to start such a change is with the children of to-day. The homes of some children are sometimes lacking in the guidance that is necessary if they are to get the best out of life. Youngsters are constantly being sent home from school because they are said to be too dirty to sit in class. Time after time children are sent home, and complaints are made by the teachers to the Child Welfare Department. The officials of that department say that that is not necessarily a sign of neglect, and that therefore the matter has nothing to do with them. What must be the effect upon the mind of the child who has to be sent away from his or her classmates through, what I submit, is neglect on the part, probably, of the parents? The Government might be well advised to have welfare officers appointed, whose duty it would be to see the parents of such children, and ascertain from them what the trouble is and why the youngsters are neglected.

Mr. Fox: Where do these things occur?

Mr. ABBOTT: If the hon. member will see me afterwards I will give him particulars. I have not overstated the position.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: We must get that file.

Mr. ABBOTT: If the hon. member will do that, he will see what is upon it.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: We can do that.

Mr. ABBOTT: When the Minister for Labour stated that we must first secure a change in the spiritual and mental outlook of the people, he spoke the truth. The great majority of the members of the community do not ask for a great deal of the country, but they do ask for the opportunity to be given constant employment so that they may be relieved of the worries of procuring enough income on which to maintain their homes. That is essential. It is the accepted policy of every Parliament that people shall be given means to enjoy a reasonable amount of recreation. I suggest that opportunities for reasonable recreation are not given as yet to many people.

Mr. Needham: What about reasonable remuneration?

Mr. ABBOTT: I want both those things for the people, but they should first have recreation. Of what use is an extra 6d. a week to them if they have not time for enjoyment? Many people, also, have no opportunity to indulge in a fortnight's holiday per annum, during which they may have rest and recreation. That is something they should be able to look forward to.

Mr. Doney: I hope you are referring to farmers.

Mr. ABBOTT: They need a holiday as much as does anyone else. People want to have a feeling of security, and the peace of mind that goes with it. They want to be able to enjoy life as others do, but all too few persons are able to do that at present. Very often when sections of the people do get an increase of 6d. a week, I think it would be better for them if they had a fortnight's holiday instead.

**MR. WITHERS** (Bunbury) [7.40]: Portions, at all events, of the Lieut.-Governor's Speech appear to take a trend similar to that which has been taken in years gone by. I find it very difficult during the trying period through which we are passing to concentrate very much on State politics. One's mind is attracted to national and international affairs

to such an extent that State politics sink into the background. That is demonstrated by the fact that we are to-day more than ever subservient to control by the Federal Administration. The Federal Government has taken upon itself the responsibilities attached to the war on behalf of all the States, which are expected, however, to carry on their ordinary governmental activities during the war period. The States, of course, have their limitations, more than is apparent at any other time. With all due respect to the talk from the Opposition about taxation, I say it must be realised that we are not getting from the Federal Government the money that we received in the past. The Premier is now attending Loan Council meetings in the Eastern States, and we understand that Western Australia has had to suffer a further cut in Federal grants.

Mr. Seward: You must admit that he has done well.

Mr. WITHERS: I do. When the Premier returns, he will doubtless be able to explain the position. All this may be clear to members who are more or less conversant with the trend of affairs concerning the carrying on of governmental activities. People outside, however, may not possess the same knowledge that we do of what is happening. When they hear it stated, as has been said in the past, that the Premier has had to forgo a certain amount of money from the Loan Council in order to assist the Federal Government in its war effort, what are they to think? We in this House understand the reasons for that. The man on what is known as relief work, he who is not getting full-time work, asks, "Why is this money forgone to the Federal sphere when our own State has not sufficient with which to keep its people in full-time work?" The Premier will doubtless be able to answer that question. It is essential that he should do so, seeing that there are people who are not engaged in full-time work because that the State has not sufficient money with which to provide that employment. I understand that by reason of our foregoing so much money to the Federal sphere, the Government of Australia has made itself responsible for providing full-time work for a considerable number of men who were being employed by the State on relief undertakings. If that is so and it is made known to people outside, I think they will be getting their quid pro quo for the money that has been given up by the Premier.

I shall now deal with the Lieut.-Governor's Speech. As it was read on the opening day, it may not have appealed to individual members; but fortunately copies were delivered to us.

The Minister for Mines: And we ceased to listen.

Mr. WITHERS: Yes. In my opinion, the Speech, so far as concerns its ideals, surpasses any that we have previously listened to. But where will ideals get us if we have not the ability to realise them? I admire the sentiment of the Speech and trust that, when peace comes, we shall be able to achieve the laudable objects mentioned in it. I propose first to deal with civil defence. The Speech in this connection states—

The Civil Defence Council, appointed under the powers conferred by the Civil Defence Act passed last session, is steadily evolving measures for the protection of the civil population, and public and private property. The organisation is progressing smoothly and effectively and is achieving good results.

I have taken an active interest in civil defence since its inception. Having attended the first course of lectures, I claim to know a little of the inside working of civil defence from a warden's viewpoint. I draw attention to the question recently asked by the member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan) and to the reply of the Minister, relating to Government expenditure under the Civil Defence (Emergency Powers) Act. In his reply the Minister said the sum of £2,458 10s. had been spent on equipment and £684 on salaries and allowances. I question whether there has been sufficient expenditure on civil defence. My experience has been that the greater part of the money has been spent in the metropolitan area. For two years past we in Bunbury and other out-centres have been doing our part in connection with air raid precautions work. At first we found it difficult to get the people at Bunbury interested. Then we got enough people to form a class and soon we were able to form an additional class. At present in Bunbury there are 100 trained wardens, of whom 60 are in active work. Although the operations in the metropolitan area are satisfactory—

The Minister for Mines: I would not quite say that, either.

Mr. WITHERS: Up to a point they are. That does not apply to the out-districts. Whilst attending a course of lectures under Captain Dean, I realised that we were study-

ing a work applicable to London and other huge cities, and possibly to Perth, but certainly not to small country centres. Perhaps it was thought that there would be no need to take air raid precautions in remote places. I was head warden for about six months until the commencement of the last session of Parliament, when I had to relinquish the position. I received messages and letters from the head office with respect to a certain organisation that had not been established, but when I asked for further information it was not supplied. I discussed the matter with the head warden in Bunbury only recently and he is experiencing the difficulty I passed through.

The Minister for Mines: He cannot get satisfactory replies to letters?

Mr. WITHERS: He receives letters, but they are not applicable to the district. I am not blaming Professor Bayliss, Mr. Wilkinson and other people connected with the inner organisation. I am aware of their difficulties, but I realise that the money now being expended will not bear the same fruit as it would if some of it were allocated to the out-districts. I received a report last Wednesday upon the exercises by the A.R.P. men at Bunbury; they had been out digging ditches. They are doing all they possibly can to acquire experience, but the information they get is not up to date. Possibly some of this money could be made available to our head warden to permit him to come to Perth and obtain additional training; or perhaps someone could be sent from Perth to Bunbury to help our organisation. We do not know, nor can we obtain the information, who is responsible for certain operations should anything actually happen. Our traffic is not controlled by the police but by the municipal council and we have only one traffic inspector. When we asked the head office of the Civil Defence Council who should take control of the traffic, we received the reply, "Carry on as usual." Imagine what that means! Bunbury has a population of 6,000 people; it has only one traffic inspector, who would have to take charge of 700 or 800 motor vehicles. He knows nothing about traffic control beyond what is contained in the traffic regulations. He has had no A.R.P. training whatever. I say to the Minister that that state of affairs must be altered.

Mr. Doney: The hon. member would find that the people would all get away from

Bunbury by the same route. They would travel inland.

Mr. WITHERS: That is all very well. Should a fire break out, our organisation would have no control over the fire brigade. We are not actually co-operating with the brigade, nor are they co-operating with us. We do not know what is defence work, what is police work, what is firemen's work, and what are the duties of the A.R.P. wardens. We have men who have devoted their evenings for the past two years to a study of A.R.P. work and to taking courses in first aid. They have passed examinations and are doing everything they possibly can, but they do not know what their obligations will be should anything actually happen. I give this information to the House so that the Minister will know that everything possible is not being done for A.R.P. organisations. Recently I went to Geraldton—I was wearing my badge at the time—and found very little organisation there. I spoke to a prominent person from Albany and he told me it was the dead season in Albany. At least we in Bunbury have taken great interest in this work. My desire is to impress upon the Minister the position in which these organisations are placed.

I shall now deal with war work. The Speech says—

Comprehensive evidence was presented to a committee established by the Commonwealth Government to inquire into the productive possibilities of the State in relation to war work, and important results have already been achieved.

This is the part that appeals to me—

The greatest credit is due to the men who are giving so freely of their knowledge, time and skill to ensure that everything will be done to support the fighting services with the best that can be supplied.

Why is that so? To help the nation because it is at war! But is not this nation ours when not at war? Should not these men give of their best in peace time for the benefit of the nation? Is a blood bath, a world war, required to make us realise that we have men of ability? Is it only during a war that we should ask them to do their best? The nation is in peril to-day because it is at war. The nation was in peril years ago when we were at peace, and when we were, in some respects, passing through a worse time, because but

little money was in circulation. To-day money is in circulation. The same people are in the world to-day as were in it 10 years ago; the same people who to-day are finding the money created a world depression 10 years ago. We had peace then, but we also had poverty. God forbid that those days should ever return! What is said in His Excellency's Speech about the post-war period should be taken seriously. We should not at this time be talking here to our electors. The day of electioneering speeches in the House is past. We have something more to do. Our job, post-war reconstruction, is before us. Do not let us make a failure of it. Let us have a world that is worth while; let us have an objective to work for. Not only should we suggest that, but we should endeavour by all means to achieve results. We have men trained in industry, organisation, finance, and in other spheres. Their services have been availed of by the nation for the purpose of assisting in the war effort, while our other men have gone out to defend our democracy. The democracy that calls for defence in war time is also worthy of aid in times of peace. I shall deal with that phase in relation to technical education later on, but I shall pass over it for the moment. I find this in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech—

Post-war reconstruction will involve the placing of many men in industry. . . .

I hope it will. That is what we require.

Mr. Wilson: Have you work for them?

Mr. WITHERS: We should not say that post-war reconstruction "should" involve the placing of many men in industry. We should see to it that it will, and careful preparation and foresight will assist in that direction. Here is another extract—

In the meantime no opportunity is being lost to develop and expand the normal industries of the State. A number of new ventures give promise of success, and others are in course of exhaustive examination.

That is all right, but here is something of major importance—

Machines previously imported are now being manufactured successfully within the State, including electric motors, special purpose lathes, tool-holders, rock drill parts, conveyors, water meters and concrete mixers.

Great God, why have we only discovered we can do these things because there hap-

pens to be a war on? Have we only just made that discovery?

The Minister for Mines: It looks like it.

Mr. WITHERS: A blood bath is required to make us realise we can do these things for ourselves. Why have we not done it for years past? We now find we are capable of doing a great deal.

The Minister for Mines: Of course.

Mr. WITHERS: It shows we have been asleep for years.

Mr. Warner: For nearly a decade.

The Minister for Labour: For more like a century.

Mr. WITHERS: Talk about our dormant potentialities. To my mind influences have been at work to ensure dormancy.

The Minister for Mines: Now you are talking.

Mr. WITHERS: These undertakings can be carried out, and we are doing it. I was brought up to an understanding of the Bible and I do remember something about the Good Book. I remember it tells us about doing unto others as we would have them do unto us. That is the spirit we want in our associations with one another. We should do unto others as we would they should do unto us. Have others acted in that way? We should take that Biblical quotation seriously to heart. Recently I attended the opening of a co-operative concern at Bunbury. Where is there a finer term in the English language than that of "co-operation"? Does that not exemplify our responsibilities one to the other—to co-operate and help one another? Do we? We have many misabused words in the English language.

Mr. Doney: Do you imply that you want another language?

Mr. WITHERS: Hardly! Many things in His Excellency's Speech appeal to me. It indicates things we should do, and intend to do, but what concerns me is why we have not done them years ago. The Speech is well written from the intentional point of view; we must see to it that effect is given to those intentions. Then again I read—

Close attention is being given to the possibility of producing sulphur requirements from local deposits of pyrites.

Necessity is the mother of invention, but the necessity was apparent long before the war, and the mother of invention seems to have been sadly neglectful.

Mr. Fox: You are not reflecting upon anyone, are you?

Mr. WITHERS: What can we do? The war commences, and we set out to establish industries and discover the virtues of phosphatic rock, alunite and other minerals. Does this mean that when the war is over, we shall merely sit back complacently and say, "Well now that is over, we can sit back and rest as usual."

Mr. Seward: I thought you wanted a new order.

Mr. WITHERS: I read an article in last Saturday's "West Australian," in which reference was made to some ancient person. It was said that when he had achieved what he wanted he would sit down to drink and be merry. The writer wanted to know why we could not do that now. That is what I want to know. Why wait? Let us get on with it and do it now. Then again I read this in His Excellency's Speech—

The main objective within Australia as affecting this State is to endeavour to secure as much stability for primary industries as the circumstances will permit.

Quite right! Incidentally, during my temporary absence from the Chamber I understand that the member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) intimated the transference of his affections from the Bunbury harbour in favour of Flinders Bay. It is dreadful to think that a fellow South-West member should turn me down!

The Minister for Mines: What about the member for Albany?

Mr. WITHERS: Probably he considers he has a good case.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: What is wrong with the Flinders Bay proposition?

Mr. WITHERS: A glance through the Lieut.-Governor's Speech disclosed to me that I had an opportunity to assist the member for Nelson in advocating the claims of his district in relation to some of the propositions. I felt proud that I would be able to help him to secure an expansion of local industry. I shall not show resentment at his affront to Bunbury, but will be generous and turn the other cheek. I find in the Speech the following—

Australian requirements of tobacco approximate 28,500,000 lbs. per annum, and the production is only 5,500,000 lbs.

A little under one-fifth of the huge quantity of tobacco that is consumed is produced in the Commonwealth, and of that only 900,000

lbs. are produced in Western Australia. We have sufficient suitable country in the electorate of the member for Nelson to produce tobacco adequate to meet the requirements of Australia. Are we for ever and aye to send oversea for our tobacco requirements and send our money out of the country, or are we to give effect to the objective indicated in His Excellency's Speech and provide our own tobacco supplies? There is ample room for an expansion of the industry in this State. Personally I do not regard it is an essential industry, for I do not smoke. Naturally I cannot control the personal expenditure of others; so I am content to advocate the extension of the tobacco industry. I could also refer to the production of alcohol, although it is not mentioned in the Speech. Hops could be grown successfully in some districts. I am merely referring to the salient features of the Speech that appeal to me this year. If other members gave the same thought to it in relation to the requirements and potentialities of their districts, much good could result in consequence. I shall not refer to the wheat and wool position, because others more fully conversant with the necessity for those avenues of production are quite capable of making the requisite representations.

The unemployment problem is also dealt with in the Speech, and while the improved position is very gratifying, as suggested by His Excellency, the alteration is doubtless due to operations associated with our war effort. The member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Triat) predicted that the war would be over within nine months. I certainly hope that is correct; but should that be the position, what will become of all those men who will return from the war or cease from their war-time operations within our own boundaries? There is no doubt they will return to go on the dole, unless we take active steps between now and the cessation of hostilities to prepare for post-war reconstruction. We know what happened after the 1914-18 war—men who were crippled and maimed and others fit for work returned hoping for employment and failing too often to secure it. Are we to permit that experience to be repeated? Are we sincere in all we say? We should view this position in all seriousness. That is why I am so glad that His Excellency's Speech is worded as we find it. We should be most anxious to help those who were willing to go away

and fight for our liberty. We should see to it that democracy provides an opportunity for those men in return for the peace we hope will follow. I shall not refer to the Bible again beyond saying that people sometimes remark how hard it is to keep to the straight and narrow path, and how easy to follow the wide open course.

Mr. Sampson: Are you making a confession?

Mr. WITHERS: What people say is perfectly right. That is why we want the Parliaments of the Commonwealth and the people generally to be sincere in their professions. We should not slip back to our former state of complacency. I hope the rising generation will not live to witness still another war.

The Minister for Mines: That was said after the last war.

Mr. WITHERS: We have that lesson before us, and we should profit by it. I realise that it involves the overcoming of human tendencies, and how that can be done I do not know. I know that it is impossible to make Christians and teetotalers of our people merely by passing an Act of Parliament. The Good Book has not been very successful in inducing a majority of people to tread the straight and narrow path. Nevertheless, it has always been a wonderful guide for us. But I do not think many of us treat life as seriously as we should when it comes to doing that which we ought to do for our fellow-man. Sometimes I despair of Parliament. I am now in the eighteenth year of my membership. I realise that I have suffered disillusionment since I first came to this Chamber. Like other members, I have thought of leaving Parliament and looking for a hard job. Still, I would not at this stage like to leave my constituents to the mercy of some one who might not be as regardful of their welfare as I am. If I had the wherewithal to walk out into the street and leave Parliament behind me, I think I would do it. Otherwise I would have sufficient independence to say what I think.

Mr. Sampson: How long have you had those thoughts?

Mr. WITHERS: If I possessed the wealth of some members, I would show my independence—and not from a party point of view. I am subservient to my master the State of Western Australia, which gives us

members our little pittance which some say we do not earn.

Mr. W. Hegney: Speak for yourself!

Mr. WITHERS: We are expected to give the pittance back in donations and otherwise. The people are unjust to us and possibly sometimes we are unjust to the people. For some years, however, I have felt concerned about our Parliament. This is a period when we should say, "Now that we have got the people looking in the right direction, let us keep them looking in that direction in future. Do not put this forward as a mere objective." I have been pursuing objectives all my life. Some of them have been attained. But the same objectives still face the people. The task is heavy, and those in authority must be sincere. Members of this Chamber must be sincere. I do not say that they are insincere, but we know that in the past we have not done those things which are essential to the objective of post-war reconstruction. The time has come when we must reject war and think of peace. When peace comes, let us be as humane as we are to-day. Let us not merely sink back into the oblivion from which we came, and to which frequently we return after a crisis. I recall, before the last depression, a prominent member of this House, on an evening when we rose early, saying to me, "Fred, there will have to be a reduction in wages." I said, "Do you mean to tell me that we are to forgo what we have fought during years past to obtain?" He replied, "We cannot carry on with the present wage system; wages have got to come down." This was the late Mr. T. A. L. Davy. I said, "There is only one way in which wages will ever come down, and that is by the loyalty of the workers themselves if a financial crisis or a war ever strikes Australia. The workers of the world are as loyal in a financial crisis as they are in a period of war, and those are the only means by which wages will be reduced. You are not going to ask these people to forgo voluntarily something which they have spent their lives in fighting for; but when the crisis comes, you will find the workers as loyal as are any other people." I had no idea then of the financial crisis that overcame us in the form of a depression, the same thing in a different guise.

Where is the money coming from today? If the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall)

were present, he might tell us again about the monetary system. We have had an eye-opener. Ten years ago the world suffered the worst depression ever known. Money is being spent today in millions, not in years but in days, after three years of depression. There is something wrong. Mankind must overhaul itself. No one else can do it. We must not allow ourselves to slip back into the abyss. We shall go on and on, and people to whom we have promised so much in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech will have to be considered. If we do not consider them, we shall have to take what is coming to us. That is putting it in plain language. Those people will create for us a day of reckoning if we have not maintained the standard set forth in His Excellency's Speech. The Speech is full of good goods; it is one of the best opening Speeches I have ever read in this Chamber. Let us have a national outlook. For that national outlook we need a national character; otherwise the outlook will be of no use. We must carry on for the benefit of the people of Australia and the people of the British Empire after this war is over.

The subject of mining I shall leave to the mining representatives, but there is another important item of the Speech—technical education. What does that term mean? I have heard technical education spoken about ever since the days of my boyhood, though I never had any such education, I am sorry to say. What would it have meant, though, if technical education had gone as far in the days that are past as it will go in days soon to come? For once I agree with the Leader of the Opposition: we ought to have trained men in industry. He alleges that I am responsible for the absence of men trained in industry. I said last session that there should be technical education for our youth. Before I deal with the subject as mentioned by His Excellency, I wish to draw members' attention to the technical education being given to our adults now, through this war; education given to men who have passed adolescence, men 25 and 30 years of age. Such men are now becoming highly trained technicians. Recently I received from Melbourne some information giving astounding particulars of the training an adult, 28 years of age, was to be given for six months; including the junior uni-

versity certificate, for the purpose of helping in certain divisions of the war work. That is a highly trained profession. Is it not pleasant to know that this man is not the only trainee, but that thousands like him are being trained in Australia today? It is costing a good deal more to train those men now than it would have cost during their adolescence. Unskilled workmen have obtained what I may term professional proficiency, and been paid for it, while there is a war on. But then comes the question, are those men going to get professional jobs of that kind when the war is over? No. They will be given the unskilled jobs they had before the war. Had those men been trained before the outbreak of hostilities, it would have been very handy to have that skill available at that time.

Mr. Seward: Apply the same reasoning to universal military training!

Mr. WITHERS: I do not object to that. The Speech says of technical education—

The war has amply demonstrated the urgent need for technical education.

The war has amply demonstrated it? Was not that need demonstrated before the war, the need for technical education in this country? It appears to me that we must have a blood bath, a world war, before the necessity for anything is realised. Necessity is, like the poor, always with us. Sometimes I have spare moments and I go to the pictures. Some of the "March of Time" series are truly illuminating. I would say to my friend the member for Toodyay (Mr. Thorn) that they are an education, and I would advise him to see some of them.

Mr. Thorn: I will try to find the time.

Mr. WITHERS: I saw one the other night. The member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Doney) was with me.

The Minister for Labour: Oh!

Mr. WITHERS: Yes, we do try to teach each other something sometimes.

Mr. Doney: It was a highly diverting evening.

Mr. WITHERS: The picture showed what was being done in the biggest machine factory in the world, and it was really illuminating. It was enlightening to see the skilled work being done in the production of weapons of destruction. A few years ago something was done in Western Australia which I suppose has gone down

in history as an act not to the credit of the Labour Government. I refer to the establishment of the State Implement Works at Rocky Bay. Those works were established for the specific purpose of helping Western Australian people to have a locally-made article. But what assistance did we get from the people who were expected to use those implements, or from those we expected to distribute them? If the distributors could obtain bigger dividends and more profits from the distribution of imported American-made machinery, ours was not wanted. That was a blot on the history of the Western Australian people. We can make those implements today, and we could have made them then. If our articles were not up to standard, we could have secured efficient tradesmen to come here and bring them up to the required standard. It was up to the people of Western Australia to see that when something was done for their benefit, advantage was taken of the opportunity offering, and the Parliament of the day should have seen that the machines manufactured were such that they could compete with similar products from overseas. We know what happened. When the war is over, will the people of this State take advantage of the expansion that is taking place in the Rocky Bay workshops today? Will they take advantage of what is happening in the Midland Junction workshops? If we start shipbuilding during this period, are we going to stop when the war is over and no ships are required?

Mr. Berry: Are you looking at me?

Mr. WITHERS: Yes, I am looking at the member for Irwin-Moore.

Mr. Berry: We will need a lot of ships after the war.

Mr. WITHERS: I hope we shall.

Mr. Fox: We shall have steel ships then.

Mr. WITHERS: I do not care whether they are steel ships or wooden ships so long as they are built in Australia. Why should we worry? If they are built in Western Australia, so much the better. We are told we can make engines for ships being built elsewhere. We have been told what can be built at the State Implement Works for war purposes. I guarantee that if we are given the opportunity we will turn out as good a peace-time article. But

will those controlling industry give us an opportunity to take advantage of the skill and ingenuity of our men to produce such commodities in time of peace?

Having said so much and done so little—which I suppose is the usual thing parliamentarians are believed to do—I desire now to become not exactly sentimental, but a little parochial. I wish at the outset to give credit to the Government for having provided additional educational facilities in my electorate. I cannot thank the Government too much. What it did in my district is something that will stand to its credit for all time. I refer to the extension of the high school building to provide for technical education. That cost a lot of money but we in the South-West have been given a school that will last us a long time. I mentioned year after year that the school was cramped because it had over 400 scholars in a building meant to accommodate a little over 300. I am grateful to the Government for what it has done to afford relief in that connection, and for providing us with room and facilities to give technical education to youths in the South-West. Still more requires to be done. I do not wish to give the Government excessive praise for fear it should think it has done too much already. We have been advocating the removal of the central school from its present site. It has stood there for years, and was an old building when I went to school, which is many years ago. I do not know why the Government has not taken advantage of one or two offers of sites that I have received and make provision sufficient for our purposes for all time. On the last occasion I referred to this matter, I spoke of a property that could have been purchased for a nominal figure. Since then ten or eleven houses have been built on that block. The Government declared it was not worth while resuming the land. If it wants the property now, it will have to resume the buildings as well and pull them down. If the Government likes to do that, I do not mind. However, there is another site not far removed from the one I have mentioned, but although I have made representations to the Government I have not been able to obtain the satisfaction my people require. The Government should look ahead. I assure members that the district is the most progressive outside the metropolitan area, except the goldfields.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Hear, hear!

Mr. WITHERS: The member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) says, "Hear, hear!"

Mr. J. H. Smith: I would not except the goldfields.

Mr. WITHERS: What I have said is a fact and we must look facts in the face. We cannot retard progress. The Government should be interested enough to give consideration to proposals submitted by members in all sincerity; not that I suggest that members do not submit all their proposals in all sincerity, but this is an urgent need and I want the Government to purchase a site for a future school. I do not claim that a school should be built immediately the site is bought, but if the site offering today is not secured, in another four years 15 to 20 houses will be built on it and then the Government will have to resume the houses as well as the land if it wishes to use the site. A school cannot be pushed into the wilderness. It must be in the central portion of a town.

I have already submitted a proposition in connection with the laudable object mentioned by the member for Irwin-Moore (Mr. Berry), namely, the establishment of shipbuilding in Western Australia. I have proposed that such ships should be built at Bunbury. I have been in touch with the Federal authorities and have received a reply to the effect that Bunbury will be considered amongst other sites when the time comes for the building of these wooden ships. We have timber in the South-West for this work. We have not deep water for a harbour at Bunbury but we have protected water sufficient to put in a slip for shipbuilding. If we are going to forge ahead with shipbuilding as we should do in Western Australia, it is no good trying to build half-a-dozen ships in rotation on the one slip when half-a-dozen ships could be constructed at the same time on half-a-dozen slips. I have today received a communication from a friend of mine in Busselton—and I do not want the member for Sussex (Mr. Willmott) to take exception to this—who tells me that a proposition is being put up for a similar activity to be started in Busselton. Why not? Why not a slip in each of those places, so that half-a-dozen ships may be constructed at a time instead of doing all the work at Fremantle where it would be necessary to wait for one

vessel to go off the slips before another could be laid down?

Mr. Hughes: Why not have a slip at the Bunbury bridge?

Mr. WITHERS: We shall see that the ships do not sink, because there is not too much water for them to sink in.

Mr. Wilson: How are you going to get them out?

Mr. WITHERS: We will lift them out. The other day, the following paragraph appeared in the "West Australian":—

A sum of £2,000 has been made available by the Treasury to the Forestry Department for the purchase of certain equipment for charcoal burning and to provide some working capital. The money will be controlled by the department for the burning of charcoal at Manjimup, Denmark, Wokulup, Margaret River and Northcliffe. The charcoal will be offered for sale to distributors, but some time will elapse before it becomes available. The equipment required consists mainly of steel sheets to line the burning pits.

That brings me to this point. We have been advocating, through the South-West Industrial Development Committee, that this industry should be established at Bunbury. If Collie coal can be used advantageously for blast furnaces for steel manufacture and the use of the charcoal processing is possible, what better place than the South-West could be chosen for the establishment of this industry? If money were spent in Bunbury—not to the same extent, by any means, but in proportion to that spent in Newcastle and other parts of New South Wales—for the purpose of establishing steel works in Bunbury, and we treated our ore from Yampi Sound, there is no reason why considerable progress should not be made with this industry in Western Australia.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You will remember I wanted your help once in that connection, and you would not give it to me. You wanted to export the iron ore.

Mr. WITHERS: I can hardly imagine the Leader of the Opposition saying that. There is no point in labouring the matter. We have an Industrial Development Committee representing the whole of the South-West and its purpose is to help the Minister for Industrial Development in his effort to establish secondary industries in this State. We desire to have this work done in the South-West. I have been in touch with Senator McLeay in connection with the establishment of a power alcohol distillery.

I was at Collie at an executive meeting last Sunday week in connection with this proposal and a claim was made for the distillery to be established there. A wonderfully good case was put up. I would not be jealous of Collie having the distillery, although of course I would like to see it in my own electorate. When all is said and done, this is a South-West project, and the best place in the South-West will be selected to the satisfaction, I hope, of everyone. I know the member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith), the member for Sussex (Mr. Willmott), the member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. McLarty), and in fact, all South-West members will be pleased if the industry is located in our section of the State.

Some reference was made during the debate to child endowment. I was surprised to hear one member say that in view of that provision, sufficient reason was forthcoming to extend the school-leaving age to 16 years. I have vivid recollections of criticism levelled against the Government on the score that 7s. a week in respect of children in our institutions was totally inadequate, and, in those circumstances, I fail to understand how far the child endowment provision will assist in maintaining a child between 14 and 16 years of age. Something more than that is required. I certainly favour the school age being raised wherever possible. I have had a bitter experience of the effect of the present system. Time and again I have been approached by honest, straightforward young men for references to enable them to apply for positions. When they have applied for work they have discovered that they did not hold the certificates that employers require. People have asked me to secure the release of their boys when they are 14 years old in order that they may secure jobs. Why was that? The explanation was that the money earned by the children was needed to assist in maintaining their homes. Child endowment itself is not sufficient to provide for the extension of the school-leaving age to 16 years. The whole problem will have to be considered along different lines. When it is dealt with, I hope provision will be made to ensure that the young people will receive such an education as will enable them to take their places alongside those more fortunately circumstanced who have been able to secure the advantages of higher education. Often the former may possess the better capabilities. I support the

motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

**MR. WARNER** (Mt. Marshall) [8.49]: I shall not take up much time with my contribution to the debate. Members who have already spoken have traversed many and varied subjects, and much as I would like to touch upon some of them, what I would say would merely represent so much repetition, and so I shall refrain. I was very pleased to hear the remarks of the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Tonkin) regarding our first V.C. hero, whose people reside in that hon. member's electorate. We join with him in his congratulatory remarks to that hero and his family. We trust that Acting Wing Commander Edwards will be spared to return and enjoy some of the consideration that his distinction warrants. I believe, from the Premier down to the newest member of the House, all will desire to convey our congratulations to those of our number who have volunteered for the various services. Unfortunately, we have no convenient means of conveying our congratulations, except through the courtesy of the Press in broadcasting our approval of, and pride in, their activities, and our best wishes for their speedy and safe return.

The fighting spirit of the Australian soldier in this war is in consonance with the traditions created in the 1914-18 campaign. Their deeds afford ample proof that the best soldiers in the world are born under the banner of democracy and freedom, and that they are superior to those emanating from subject countries not enjoying the liberty and freedom that characterise the British Empire. I do not know what will be the outcome of the present-day hostilities. We are told there will be a new order. Most members have made some reference to that prospect. We have been told that the new order will comprise something good and great for those who have helped to win the peace. The prediction is that there will be a country with laws and living conditions that will be fit for those heroes to live in and enjoy everlasting peace. I endorse the remarks of the member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Triat) who said that if the new order is to be the outcome of the present upheaval the move must be inaugurated now while the war is proceeding; after the war, as he further pointed out, it will be too late, for

back we will go to the old order for certain. The soldiers of this war will have one advantage over those who returned from the 1914-18 campaign, in that they will find an organisation already established to help them in looking after their interests. That will be certainly a fine starting-off point. I am firmly convinced that unless an early commencement is made to establish the so-called new order, present-day soldiers will return and find that the only new order for them will be that which they can make for themselves in civil life.

The Minister for Mines: Tell us what you think the new order is to consist of.

**MR. WARNER**: I want to know what the new order is to comprise. We in Parliament are supposed to assist and guide the people of the State. Are we to appoint a committee to make suggestions for the inauguration of the new order?

The Minister for Mines: Do not ask me.

**MR. WARNER**: I do not know that there is to be a new order. If there is to be, it must be started now. It reminds me very much of what the undertaker said with regard to his bill. He said, "Collect your bill while they are all crying. If you do not, you will find it hard to get the money afterwards." If there is to be a new order we must fight for it now. Unless we do so, when hostilities cease we shall drift back to a state of complacency, and every digger will have to scrap for himself. The organisation already in existence will do much to help the newly returned men by establishing a bond of brotherhood for mutual aid.

If our wishes were consulted no doubt the war would cease quickly. I sincerely trust the member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Triat) was correct in his prediction that hostilities would end within nine months. As the Speech indicates, many industries are in contemplation or have been inaugurated in connection with our war efforts. We hope that these will afford opportunities for the employment of our men in the post-war period. I understand the annex being constructed at the Midland Junction Workshops will enable the State Government to carry out work essential for the State and semi-State instrumentalities. I trust the Minister for Industrial Development and those associated with him will do their utmost to see that our small arms factory and other plants will be so erected and

equipped that they will be available for use in peace-time activities. I hope the factories will be located in the most suitable sites so that full advantage can be derived in the post-war period. I am sceptical regarding the attitude adopted by combines and the wealthier section of the community in other parts of Australia. Unless we watch the situation very carefully, quite possibly the factories erected here will not be utilised as we would desire in the years to come. It may be that influences will be brought to bear to prevent the expansion of secondary industries in this State and relegate us once more to primary industries alone.

The shipbuilding industry was dealt with at some length by the member for Irwin-Moore (Mr. Berry), and I support many of his suggestions. No Australian should be foolish enough to say that we were not entitled to build ships in this State. Within my 45 years of experience, luggers and schooners have been built at Fremantle and elsewhere and have done good service on our coast. We have also been told about the "King Bay" and other ships as well. The contention is that we have the timber, the materials, and the men capable of carrying on the industry. I do not know whether jarrah is a suitable timber for boat building, but if people with the requisite knowledge say that it is, we should put our weight behind the committee and help it to carry its project into effect. Jarrah might be suitable for certain parts of a ship such as the keel and knees, but whether the whole of the planking could be of jarrah must be left to the decision of people with greater knowledge than I possess. The question has been raised as to what use the ships would be after the war. I can imagine that there would be use for them. We do not know how long the war will last, and we should bear in mind that in the early days of the State, quite a number of small vessels operated on the coast. As the member for Roebourne (Mr. Rodoreda) remarked, he would like to have a few of them on the coast now. I am sure that he and the Minister for the North-West, who know the coast well, would appreciate having a few small ships to carry on trade after the war until larger ships could be made available. I support the proposition for ship building in this State, and hope something tangible will come of it.

A pleasing note was struck by the member for Claremont (Mr. North). He gave the House an excellent lead if only members choose to follow it up. I refer to his reply to criticism levelled at members of Parliament by a section of the general public. I hope someone more gifted than I am, someone with longer experience of Parliament, someone who has saved more money out of his Parliamentary salary than I have been able to do, will take up the matter. The hon. member spoke of some of the nasty anonymous letter-writing people who criticise members generally.

Mr. Sampson: And without full knowledge of the facts.

Mr. WARNER: Without any knowledge at all. To criticise members of Parliament is easy. To make the bald statement that members meet for only a few months in the year, work only a few hours a week in each of those months and draw £600 a year for it, is as easy as it is unjustified. Most metropolitan and country members attend the sittings regularly, and they have far more to do than sit about and amuse themselves when the House is not in session. Most of them fully earn the salary paid them or, perhaps I should say, the amount that is left to them after they have given away a large portion of it to meet the numerous demands that are made on members.

Mr. North: Reference was also made to members' gold passes.

Mr. WARNER: I have had a few train rides on my gold pass, but usually I have to use a motor car in order to economise time. Now that petrol has been rationed, I have to do a little begging as well as a little more spending. I cannot believe that members avail themselves much of the gold pass to travel on railways because the amount of work they are called upon to do when they visit country districts could not be compassed in the time if they had to rely upon the train service.

The district I represent requires of me to deal more particularly with matters coming under the jurisdiction of the Minister for Lands and Agriculture and the Minister for Water Supplies. The Agricultural Bank, of course, is the chief institution to which my constituents have to pay attention. I wish members to understand that I am not criticising Ministers or the Bank to the extent that might otherwise appear from my re-

marks. My criticism is directed rather against the Acts and regulations under which they and the department have to work. The conditions that are bringing suffering to the farming community today are the outcome of those Acts and regulations governing the Bank. I freely admit that I have received the greatest courtesy from Ministers and the Bank Commissioners whenever I have had occasion to discuss matters with them. Rarely have I been unable to interview the Commissioners or the General Manager upon request. Still, I have not always been satisfied with the decisions they have given, though I have been convinced that the Acts and regulations could not be overridden to grant my requests. I could criticise severely the Acts and the regulations under which the Bank operates, and I am prepared to fight in the hope of getting amendments made to such an extent as will enable the people I represent to gain sufficient from their labour to live in a state of decency. How often members of this House, especially those from wheat-growing areas, put up a fight for those they represent! The member for Avon (Mr. Boyle) last evening drew a picture of the conditions in his district. I support his remarks and must speak in a similar strain. Our districts adjoin, and our constituents receive similar treatment from the Agricultural Bank. Many of our settlers are men who fought in the 1914-18 war. When they returned to Western Australia, they were told that this was to be a land fit for heroes to live in. Those heroes have been living on the land ever since, but if the treatment they have received is considered good enough for heroes, goodness knows what treatment should be meted out to other people. Some of the conditions under which they have suffered and some of the relief dished out to them represent no recompense for either hero or heroine. I classify the wives of the diggers who live with them on the land, as heroines. They have suffered like the diggers have, have worked alongside them on the land. In many cases the men were married when they enlisted. Others married after the last war. Both descriptions of digger rear families and, like father, like son, the boys have joined up in this war. For most of those boys it was a happy release from the farm. While living on the farm the boy got no recompense for what he

was doing, and he saw his parents in the same unhappy plight. That is why I mention the cry of the last war, "A land fit for heroes to live in!" The present cry is, "A new order!" I hope it will prove something vastly different from what followed the last war.

Many of those diggers on the land did well until seven or eight years ago, when the depression arrived; and then came the drought years, and there was yet another drought last year. Those men and their wives and children have lived in the lowest hell of poverty and distress. They had to seek assistance from the Agricultural Bank by way of money granted by the Commonwealth Government and other moneys provided by this State. As already mentioned by the member for Avon (Mr. Boyle), many of them were existing on allowances of £6 per month. If they had a child or two, possibly they got an additional allowance of about 10s. per month. Entrancing pictures have been painted of a farming community enjoying luxuries on the farm. That picture, however, applies chiefly to wheat, wool, and oat-growing districts. Kitchen gardens may be added on the wheat belt for a little time in the winter, but as regards the butter and cream and eggs and other niceties we hear so much about, a few of these settlers have a little of them at times, whereas some have none at all. They have suffered the disabilities which I have described for nine years in this Chamber. They have suffered so much that it is difficult for any member sitting on the other side of the House to refrain from using every endeavour to aid us in having the position altered. I know the cry of the workers' representative that he will see no man in this country short of food. We look to that representative for support. We are not here clamouring all the time for something on behalf of the farming community. I do believe that after hearing the speeches of members of this Party members opposite know that those speeches present the truth. They state nothing but facts. They are nothing in the nature of propaganda. We are honest in our endeavours.

The only means of assisting Agricultural Bank clients is an alteration in the policy of the Government enabling the Agricultural Bank to increase the amounts made

available to these settlers. Increases have been granted to workers on the basic wage, but a man who does not participate in the basic wage is lost sight of. The small monthly amounts made available to settlers are utterly insufficient. The member for North Perth (Mr. Abbott) spoke about a holiday. He said it was better for a man to have a sprat a day extra because every person was entitled to a holiday in the year. The people in the wheat growing areas have not had a holiday for 10 years. The member for Subiaco (Mrs. Cardell-Oliver) has met a number of women from my electorate down for several weeks, with assistance from a fund for the purpose, and she knows about the position. If the member for North Perth (Mr. Abbott) believes this, why does not every other member on that side believe it too? I appeal on behalf of the people in the farming districts. On many occasions we have read that the volunteers from the country excel the volunteers from the cities. The pride in people from our bush has been sung by the bush poets of the past. They describe the man living in a free and happy way on the land. The last years, however, have been so hard that one is surprised to find our soldiers from the bush displaying the physique they do possess.

I do sincerely trust that the Minister for Lands and the Minister for Education will use their persuasive powers to effect some alteration in favour of these men on the land. Especially should those Ministers urge that Agricultural Bank clients should receive more than the pittance granted to them now. I do not assert that all the farmers in my district are in that position. Some of them are in a fair position. But the number in a happy position will not be great as long as they know that other farmers have the same hard work and are living in misery.

Another note I would like to strike is this. I believe that the large majority of wheat-growers in the wheat belt, when employing labour, would love to see a union of farm labourers entailing a reasonable wage so long as a reasonable return is given for it. There are very few men in the country who care to see a man work for less than a living wage, but they fail to see how they can pay a living wage when they are unable to obtain sufficient food for themselves and their fami-

lies. The point about the allowances from the Agricultural Bank is that these do not represent a free gift, but are moneys advanced to carry on. An allowance is only a loan which bears, I believe, full Agricultural Bank interest. That makes the position harder. I plead with the Minister for Lands to see whether something cannot be done in the near future to enable those settlers to carry on.

There are many other things I would like to touch on this evening, but will not detain the House, as I can deal with them when the Annual Estimates come before the Chamber. So I content myself with these remarks and leave my plea with the Minister for Lands.

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

*House adjourned at 9.18 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Thursday, 14th August, 1941.*

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

### QUESTION—PRICES FIXING COMMISSIONER.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT asked the Chief Secretary: 1, What salary or allowance is attached to the office of Prices Fixing Commissioner under the Profiteering Prevention Act, 1939? 2, What salary or allowance was paid out of State funds to the late Prices Fixing Commissioner during the year 1940-41?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, The Profiteering Prevention Act, 1939, provides that the Governor may fix the remuneration of the Commissioner of Prices. Pay-