

who wanted it abolished, could advance their arguments, and then the matter would be settled for all time.

On motion by the Honorary Minister, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 5.30 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Thursday, 3rd August, 1944.*

	PAGE
Electoral: Swearing-in of Member .....	74
Questions: Post-war works, as to Western Australian programme .....	74
Goldfields water supply, as to north-eastern wheatbelt pipes .....	74
Address-in-reply, fourth day .....	75

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

### ELECTORAL—SWEARING-IN OF MEMBER.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am prepared to swear in the member for Collie, who was returned at the last general election.

Mr. Wilson took and subscribed the oath and signed the roll.

### QUESTIONS (2).

#### POST-WAR WORKS.

*As to Western Australian Programme.*

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Referring to a question concerning post-war works answered on Tuesday last, will he give the date on which the list mentioned was forwarded to the Commonwealth Government?

(2) Has his attention been drawn to the following statement from Canberra stated to be made by a Government spokesman and published in "The West Australian" newspaper of the 28th June, 1944:—

Concern at the dilatoriness of States in submitting to the Commonwealth Government their lists of public works to be carried out during 1944-45 was voiced to-day by a Government spokesman.

(3) As no mention was made in this statement regarding this State, is it true that this State has been dilatory in regard to this matter?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied:

(1) 12th June, 1944.

(2) Yes.

(3) No.

### GOLDFIELDS WATER SUPPLY.

*As to North-Eastern Wheatbelt Pipes.*

Mr. LESLIE asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Is he aware that the water pipes on branch lines from the Goldfields Water Supply, and from the No. 1 water scheme, serving farmers in the north-eastern wheatbelt, are so seriously corroded and deteriorated that stock-owners were, during the summer just past, unable to obtain anything like adequate water supplies?

(2) Is he further aware, that owing to the increased demand for water during the summer months, in consequence of the large increase in stock in those districts, the existing pipes on the branch lines, even if in good condition, are not of sufficient capacity to carry the amount of water required by stock-owners?

(3) Is it his intention to remedy these defects before the coming summer?

(4) If so, what action will be taken, and if none, why?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied:

(1) The Minister is aware that owing to the abnormally long dry summer, the corroded condition of some of the extensions, the heavy stocking by farmers, and the substantial draw by farmers not connected to the systems from free water standpipes, the reticulation was unable to cope with the abnormal requirements.

(2) If the present heavy stockings by farmers are to be maintained permanently, the demand in some districts in very dry seasons would be beyond the capacity of the present reticulation.

(3) and (4) Enlargement and improvement proposals have been designed and are under consideration. Progress on approved work of this nature is dependent on available manpower and material.

The advice of the Agricultural Bank Commissioners is being sought as to the relative urgency of the various proposals.

## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Fourth Day.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**MR. GRAHAM** (East Perth) [4.36]: At the outset I would like to compliment the new member for Nelson on the very fine address he delivered on the occasion of his maiden speech to this House. While it may be unusual I desire, too, to welcome the new member for Avon, who has had the rather uncommon experience of having been elected twice before assuming his seat in the Chamber. We can trust that the contributions to the deliberations of this Chamber of those two members, together with those of the new members for Mt. Marshall and Swan, will be of advantage to the interests of this State. As is probably known to very many members, the former member for Swan, the late Mr. R. S. Sampson, was for many years closely associated with my father, particularly in matters pertaining to local government. It is somewhat a sad stroke of fate that within a few months of each other both of them, who had for so long been associated in important work, departed from this life. So for the electorate of Swan there is a new member who, like myself, was formerly engaged in the State Public Service. We were then known as civil servants and I suppose in the order of modern language we were both bureaucrats. That, however, we have now ceased to be.

The Government is to be congratulated on the fact that after a term of ten years of office it has been returned to this Chamber with an increased membership. That, without any question, makes history as far as Parliaments of Western Australia are concerned. I suggest, however, that having achieved a majority is no ground for complacency or a feeling of self-satisfaction with regard to a job well done. Here, as in other parts of Australia, is a growing insistence on the need for change and reform in our economic set-up. Rightly or wrongly, the people of Australia at present look to the Labour Party as being the most likely party to institute those reforms for which all are clamouring. Time will tell whether or not their hopes are justified, but I feel that they will be.

A matter was mentioned, particularly by the member for West Perth, which reminded

me of the old query as to which came first, the chicken or the egg. Exactly the same query arises as to which comes first, industries or population. Possibly there will have to be a similar amount of energy expended in the scratching of the head to determine that problem. The two phases are closely related to each other. I regard population as a vital matter. I feel—I consider it is commonly accepted, too—that the greatest contribution to the solution of the problem will come from the natural increase in our population. It may be objected that that procedure is too slow and certainly statistics bear out that contention with respect to Australia. I appreciate the fact that economic circumstances have a great deal to do with the limitation or discouragement of families, but I believe there is another factor, one which is usually disregarded or contemptuously thrust aside with the assertion that parents are selfish. Personally, I do not believe that is so.

I believe that the rearing of a family imposes, in many instances, too great a hardship on parents and that, in consequence, inconveniences and disabilities are suffered that are out of all proportion. I consider that our attention should be devoted to making the responsibilities and difficulties of married couples less than they are today. The system of child endowment is a humble step in the right direction. I am strongly in favour of the provision of marriage allowances. Such a scheme would not mean the breaking of new ground because the system has been adopted with success in other countries.

**Mrs. Cardell-Oliver:** Where?

**Mr. GRAHAM:** I could mention Italy as one country where it has been put into operation.

**Mrs. Cardell-Oliver:** What has happened to Italy now?

**Mr. GRAHAM:** I am referring to a somewhat different question altogether from that suggested by the member for Subiaco. It may be mentioned that the scheme of subsidising married couples more than paid for itself. I am unaware of the figures involved but I know that an advance was made to the couple after marriage. During the first few years no repayments or interest charges were required and the capital was reduced with the arrival of each successive child.

After the first preliminary years, a small interest charge was levied. Members will appreciate that such an innovation, if adopted here, would have much to commend it and would certainly have a very important bearing on the economic side. Under the system operating at present far too many couples, unfortunately, have to wait until economic circumstances dictate the time for marriage, rather than the obeying of the natural urge. As a consequence all sorts of other problems are created. It was found in Italy, for instance, that because the marriage allowance was made available, the tendency was for couples to marry far earlier. Because the money happened to be made available by the Government, the young people were able to set themselves up in house and home. The goods they purchased in the way of furnishings and chattels generally created a demand on the market which in turn increased the volume of employment available. A certain number of women were withdrawn from the labour market, which offered some relief to the Treasury of the State. The fact that the principal advanced was reduced with the arrival of each child meant something in the nature of a bribe or encouragement inducing parents to have families, without imposing any economic sacrifice on the part of the parents and earlier children of the marriages.

It can, therefore, be suggested that if such a scheme can work successfully in another part of the world, it deserves serious consideration with a view to encouraging an increase in our population. I feel it would have that result and that it would also have a beneficial effect on the morality of the community. With the deferment of marriage many complex problems are raised. If people could follow the tendencies that Nature ordains and were married in accordance with their desires, there would be far fewer illicit love affairs than are embarked upon at present. I have made some study of the subject and my enquiries suggest that the years of greatest fertility in the female sex are between those of 18 and 38. Notwithstanding that fact, because of the economic restraint placed upon those who otherwise would have embarked upon marriage, possibly 50 per cent. of the most fertile period of the average woman's life is wasted. Thus it is because of economic circumstances

and not because of any desire on the part of the people concerned. I mention that as another angle when considering matters affecting our population and have mentioned economic circumstances, and the general question of immorality.

I am concerned, too, with regard to the question of electoral enrolments. There is a great deal of confusion which could easily be overcome in Western Australia. Members will know that there are electors who are prepared to swear by all that is holy that they had filled in claim cards and received their acknowledgments and yet, possibly because of confusion in view of impending elections, they found they had been enrolled on the Commonwealth lists instead of on those for the State. Accordingly, I suggest that in Western Australia we should adopt the procedure followed in all the other States with the exception of Queensland. The proposed procedure is that the Commonwealth electoral officer shall be responsible for all enrolments within the State, and for compilation of electoral rolls, whereupon of course the State electoral machinery comes into play as regards elections themselves. I appreciate that this matter has already received attention repeatedly. A Royal Commission investigated the subject in, I believe, 1935, and came to certain conclusions. It determined, amongst other things, that not until such time as the boundaries of State electorates and Federal electorates or subdivisions were co-terminous, further consideration should be given to the proposal for a central enrolling authority.

As the result of inquiries, I have learned that there are 52 Federal subdivisions in West Australia. There being 50 electorates for the Assembly, it occurs to me that there should be no great difficulty in arriving, by negotiation and consequently by compromise, at a position of affairs under which the subdivisional boundaries of Federal divisions could be made to conform to State electoral boundaries. Then we would not have persons who reside in, say, the East Perth electorate finding themselves in the North Perth Federal subdivision. They would, instead, be in the State electorate of East Perth and in the East Perth Federal subdivision. Close consideration should be given to the question, because many thousands of persons are put to all kinds of needless inconvenience, and

moreover many of them are debarred from exercising the franchise by reason of the confusion which the present arrangements create. I believe, as I mentioned earlier, that the proposed system works satisfactorily in the four States which have adopted it.

If there should be a suggestion that the change might cost a few more pounds than the prevailing system—which I greatly doubt—under a democratic system the first consideration should be for the electors and a little additional expenditure should not operate as a bar in so important a matter as this. I believe that a certain amount of opposition to the proposal emanated from the State Electoral Office, probably because of a feeling that if the change were effected certain of the senior positions in the State Electoral Office might become less necessary; and of course the first instinct of man is self-preservation. I understand, however, that those circumstances do not obtain at present, and so there should be no great difficulty. Furthermore, if the change did mean dispensing with certain members of the staff, I would urge that there is no more appropriate time than the present for effecting the change, because there would be available to surplus officers alternate positions in the Government service or in private employment. If the democratic system is to function it is essential, first of all, that the people should be enrolled. This suggests to me that the postman is possibly the most effective agent for checking up on people's addresses and keeping the rolls generally in order.

At present there is to some extent chaos owing to the fact that different systems are in vogue as regards postal, absentee, and sick votes. The State electoral rolls, too, should be brought into conformity with the Federal rolls in order that the confusion now existing may be overcome. Because of existing differences, many people do not know in which electorate they reside. A man may have his home in the State electorate of East Perth and in the North Perth subdivision of the Federal division of Perth, and as a ratepayer he may reside in a ward of the Perth City Council called by yet another name. These things add greatly to the confusion. The postman is paid by the Commonwealth, and the proposal I have urged means merely that the information that official now obtains would

be made available for State electoral purposes as well as Federal. Then the matter of electors having to go through the present procedure of filling in two or more cards would be obviated.

Now as regards amenities and canteen services in Government departments and establishments! Of these work-places there are many in my electorate. I may mention the electric power station, the East Perth locomotive running sheds, and the tramways car-barn. I suggest that the time is more than ripe when men who are engaged working in dirty and uncongenial occupations should be enabled to have some short respite in decent surroundings from their labours. As regards the East Perth locomotive running sheds, some of the quarters in which the men are compelled to house themselves are an utter disgrace to any employer; and the Government should be an employer setting an example in that respect. One of the dingy little hovels, as I may term them, which I have inspected in that locality would not be passed as a place fit for milking a cow in—I know something of cows, having originally come from a farm myself. I suggest in especial to the Minister in charge of labour matters and the Minister for Railways that serious attention must be given to these problems. At present grave dissatisfaction exists in Government departments on account of the condition of affairs existing.

I am appreciative of the fact that there is an industrial disturbance at the present moment causing great inconvenience to the general public. While there is a particular issue involved, nevertheless I feel that this disturbance is possibly the climax of the very many inconveniences and causes of dissatisfaction experienced and endured by workers not only in the vocation to which I have referred but in very many other vocations as well. In the interests of decency and of what workers have a right to expect, I ask the Government to extend more consideration and better treatment to those working in such establishments as I have enumerated. The Government might well pattern itself upon the conveniences that have been provided by the Commonwealth Government, and moreover have been insisted upon by the Commonwealth Government in certain private establishments undertaking important defence work.

I am perturbed regarding the position that apparently exists in connection with the Railway Department and the Commissioner of Railways. I have scanned the Government Railways Act, but have been unable to ascertain exactly what the Commissioner's powers are and what is his relationship to the Minister. From actual experience I have found that I, as a member of Parliament, can make no representations to the Commissioner of Railways. I do suggest that there is something wrong when such a system exists. I have been told by the Commissioner himself—who was very nice about it—that I could not wait upon him. After all, we as members of Parliament are responsible to our electors who place us in this Assembly. We are expected to act as go-betweens in making representations on behalf of those whom we represent. It does seem to me absolutely wrong that it should be impossible for us to approach the departmental head of so important an instrumentality as the Department of Railways and Tramways. Anyhow, that was my experience.

Mr. Marshall: And that is not the only department!

Mr. GRAHAM: No, I am aware of that. Transport difficulties have been accentuated very considerably during the past few years because of the war, and consequently this question obtrudes itself to a higher degree than might otherwise have been the case. I have found that the only course to pursue is to make representations to the Minister, and I pay this tribute to him, that he makes himself available at every opportunity and treats deputations with the greatest courtesy imaginable. My experience has been that the Minister appears to be thoroughly convinced.

Mr. Thorn: But do you get what you want?

Mr. GRAHAM: That is the whole point. The matter is then referred to the Commissioner of Railways, or to some person on the administrative staff, with the result that a blank refusal is given to the request made. If the Commissioner is to have the final say in these matters I submit that we should be able to make representations direct to him. Personal contact may convince him of the validity of a request and the necessity for complying with it.

The Minister for Lands: Have you heard the story, "You are telling me"?

Mr. GRAHAM: I say that that may be the result. No one knows better than those

immediately concerned that it is not possible to obtain that direct approach and therefore some very extraordinary things are done. Other members besides myself are interested in a bus service which has one terminus near the Beaufort-street Bridge and the other at Kathleen-avenue, Maylands. It serves a more or less isolated community.

Mr. Marshall: Morley Park?

Mr. GRAHAM: No. It is not the Morley Park bus service. The extraordinary thing about this service is that, except for the first few hundred yards more or less, its entire journey is along a tramline. As a matter of fact, the petrol-driven buses belonging to this service are wearing out their tyres on the steel tram rails. I contend it is absolutely ridiculous that that service should be allowed to continue. A suggestion has been made by some members—particularly the member for Maylands—that a deviation should be made to serve other people who are not so well catered for at present. I, too, have made representations for a deviation to be made on the other side of the Mt. Lawley subway in order to provide transport for a number of people in East Perth, who are practically isolated and find great difficulty in obtaining transport of any kind. But I have been met with a blank refusal by—I take it—the Commissioner of Railways through the Minister for Railways. I wish it to be understood that I am not now pressing any claim for a particular route, but I do suggest that these petrol-driven buses should no longer be allowed to travel along a tram track, even though that tram service is not as frequent as the people along its route might desire. Bus services should be reserved for people who have no other transport facilities.

I made some inquiries with respect to this bus service and was astounded to note the number of passengers who patronised the buses at the peak period. The result of the inquiries demonstrates the lack of the necessity for the service. For one week—not a picked week—and excluding peak period the maximum number of passengers in the bus leaving Perth was 13, while the maximum load carried into Perth was nine passengers. The service is dealing merely with a handful of passengers.

Mr. Cross: We will have it in South Perth next week if you like.

Mr. GRAHAM: I daresay the member for Canning would not object to inconveniencing

East Perth residents by having the service transferred to South Perth.

Mr. Thorn: Look at the influence he has got!

Mr. GRAHAM: There are portents of an early victory and an early peace. It is a great consolation to all of us, because we all have members of our families or our friends engaged in this bitter struggle, to learn that the war is taking this favourable turn. Mr. Winston Churchill has said that we may expect a far earlier termination of hostilities than we had a right to expect some few months ago. This will place upon all representatives of the people a serious task and responsibility. We shall have to set about preparing at the earliest possible moment for the post-war years. There is hardly need for me to emphasise the necessity for us to do everything possible to avoid a repetition of the terrible days we experienced before this war. There is an incessant clamour and demand that there shall be a new order, that there shall be a better distribution of the products of industry, that there shall not be the extremes of riches and poverty, that there shall be security for all in their native land and that there shall be freedom from fear of aggression.

We should particularly devote our attention to problems within our own borders. In that respect the most important matter so far as regards the welfare of Australia will be settled by our masters—the masters of all members of Parliament—on the 19th August. If the powers sought by the Commonwealth are not granted by the people we have several alternatives. One is that the States should be entrusted with the tremendous task of finding work for 1,500,000 people whose employment—if I may use the word—will be terminated: I refer to those engaged in the Fighting Services and in our war factories. These people represent approximately one-half of the working population of Australia and that will give members some idea of the magnitude of the problem that will have to be dealt with. Personally, I feel that the task will be too great for the States. I say so because the States were unable to deal with a far smaller problem during the depression years. Even during what some people call the boom years immediately prior to the war approximately 250,000 Australian workmen were idle. Employment was then a responsibility of the

State. During the depression years I can say that practically everybody was insisting that employment was a Commonwealth responsibility. The Commonwealth Parliament is prepared to assume that responsibility on the conclusion of hostilities. As we were so insistent in that demand some 12 or 14 years ago, I see no reason why we should now wish the States to deal with the question, especially as they were unable to do so during the depression years.

Mr. Thorn: Whatever happens, the States will carry out the work. You know that.

Mr. GRAHAM: I do not.

Mr. Thorn: Well, you will know.

Mr. GRAHAM: Apart altogether from the question of employing all these persons, it is necessary that the work upon which they are to be engaged should be of some real value to the country. I am reminded of a problem which now confronts Australia and which is the direct result of State policies. I refer to railway gauges. It does not require me to lecture the older members of this Chamber on that matter. I realise, of course, that I am citing an extreme case, but it indicates that there are differences of outlook on the part of the various States, which seem to resort to all kinds of practices out of harmony with adjoining States. I believe there is no place for these differences in a country like Australia. Many people are suggesting that some of what they refer to as the fourteen points should not be granted. I would like to have it suggested to me which exactly of the fourteen points are not necessary for post-war reconstruction. It is all very well to speak of these matters in a general way. I have invited or challenged thousands of people to tell me which of the powers should be omitted, but so far not one suggestion has been forthcoming.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Conscription of labour.

Mr. GRAHAM: That is not one of the issues, as every member of this Chamber knows very well.

Mr. Thorn: We do not know.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: We know we are going to be conscripted.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. GRAHAM: These 14 points, as they are called, mean in effect the transference of certain powers at present possessed by

the States, but some cannot be used by the States. If members of the Opposition suggest that there might or will be industrial conscription by the Commonwealth Parliament after these powers are transferred, then equally if the powers are retained by the State Parliaments the State Governments could embark upon a policy of industrial conscription. No greater powers are being given to the Federal authorities under the heading of employment and unemployment than are at present reposed in the States. That is one alternative. I feel that history has revealed that the States are incapable of dealing with these problems.

Mr. Marshall: How much better off was New Zealand after the last war with only one Government!

Mr. GRAHAM: The question is not whether State Parliaments should be abolished, but one for a temporary transfer of certain powers for the purpose of post-war reconstruction. I have my own ideas as to how many Parliaments should exist in Australia, but I do not intend to cloud the issue with that point at the moment. The second alternative is that the Commonwealth Government, in conjunction with the States, should undertake this task. That, to a degree, will be done if these additional powers are transferred. I think the classic example of the impossibility of relying too much upon co-operation is given us by the convention held in Canberra towards the end of 1942. Notwithstanding the agreements arrived at and the undertakings given, within the course of a few months practically every one of the States arrived at a different decision on the question as to whether they would pass the entire 14 points or reject them entirely, or agree to them with certain amendments, which, to my mind, completely emasculated them and made them innocuous if the Commonwealth Government was to undertake the responsibility of post-war reconstruction.

In that respect the Leader of the Opposition in this State can, I suggest, be charged with having somersaulted on the attitude he adopted at that convention. I have read the report of those proceedings very closely. I find that in the opening addresses of the representatives of the States—and these speeches which I classify largely as window-dressing—very definite objections were raised by the Leader of the Opposition of this State. But the 14 points were unanimously accepted, after compromise I dare say, by the Premiers of each of the six

States, together with the representatives of the Commonwealth. When those 14 points were discussed by the full convention the Leader of the Opposition of Western Australia sought an amendment to one of the 14 points dealing with employment and unemployment, but he was not successful. I suggest in this instance that the representatives of the Labour Party are, perhaps, the best able to judge whether or not these powers are likely to be of advantage or disadvantage to the workers. The only other point on which the Leader of the Opposition spoke was that dealing with companies. His only comment then was that it seemed to him extraordinary that such a power should be limited to a period of five years.

Apart from those two utterances no word of criticism or opposition appears in the official record of that convention. I realise that opposition is now being expressed by many people, apparently following that lead. Grave doubts are expressed with regard to the section relating to marketing, and the effects that Section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution may have in limiting the provisions of measures designed to implement and assist orderly marketing in accordance with that particular point. Strangely enough the limiting effect of Section 92 was mentioned in this Chamber when these powers were being discussed by the State Parliament. Whilst in the past, as everyone is aware, that limitation applied, nevertheless that point, as applying to certain primary products, was passed by this Parliament. It was submitted by a member of the Opposition and was confined to certain commodities or primary products. No concern was then expressed about the limitations that might be imposed by Section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution. It seems, therefore, that a new argument is being found now in order to discount what might obtain from the benefits accruing from a greater measure of transference of powers than from the limited amount under the measure passed by this Chamber.

Mr. Thorn: What is your view of Section 92?

Mr. GRAHAM: I am not a constitutional lawyer. I accept guidance from those who are versed in the law. An opinion has been expressed by the Attorney General of the Commonwealth.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Biased!

Mr. GRAHAM: It cannot be suggested that there is any bias because the Attorney

General's record so far as legal matters are concerned—forgetting politics for the moment altogether—stands him in very good stead. I suggest that it is possible to deal with this question in a satisfactory way notwithstanding any limitations that may be imposed as a result of Section 92.

The Minister for Lands: You are not even a bush lawyer.

Mr. GRAHAM: I do not profess to be even that. Great play is made of the question of rights, or the sovereign rights of the State. I am by no means impressed by such empty words. I might be prepared to regard these things more kindly if I believed that the people of Western Australia had any such rights.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Have they not any?

Mr. GRAHAM: The people of Western Australia have not. I am pleased that His Excellency has intimated that a measure will be brought forward to deal with the liberalising of the franchise as it affects the Legislative Council. We are continuing to debar free exercise of true democracy in Western Australia because approximately one-third of the electors of Western Australia are entitled to be enrolled for that Chamber.

Mr. J. Hegney: Only about one-quarter of those vote.

Mr. GRAHAM: That is so. A most remarkable state of affairs exists. Notwithstanding the fact that the people of Western Australia have, for 17 out of the last 20 years, declared that in their opinion a Labour Government should occupy the Treasury Benches in Western Australia and that such a Government should have the power to implement its platform and the policy submitted to the electors, it has been possible for a group of persons elected by a selected group of people completely to frustrate any such measures submitted as being the will of the people.

Mr. North: Do you not think the enrolment is very poor? The rent, 10s., is a very small amount to entitle people to get on the roll.

Mr. GRAHAM: I admit that. People who are boarding and old-age pensioners who occupy a humble room would not be voting for those who comprise the majority in that Chamber at present. Furthermore, those of the property class who are married are able to put a little property in the names of the members of their family, whereas in the case

of working-class families where the husband pays the rent, he gets the vote. The wife has no vote and neither have the adult members of the family who are residing with him. Under a democratic system all who were over the age of 21 would be entitled to vote, and Labour would be their choice.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: If they were keen on the Labour Party would they not enrol?

Mr. Smith: Thousands of women cannot enrol for the Legislative Council.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: They can.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. GRAHAM: I feel, therefore, that until such time as we have in Western Australia a democratic Parliament, it is futile to talk about democratic State rights. In order to satisfy my own conscience, if I wanted democracy to determine a particular issue, even if I were in favour of the retention of power by the States, I would, as a democrat, wholeheartedly be in favour of the transference of these powers to the Commonwealth Parliament in order to allow democracy to function. Therefore, I say again, those who believe that there should be something in the nature of sovereign State rights preserved have a duty to see that there is a democratic system of Parliament obtaining in Western Australia. I look forward with eager anticipation to the measure that is to be submitted for the consideration of members.

As I see the position, if the referendum to be submitted to the people on the 19th August is not carried, it means that Australia has decided that it wants to revert to the state of affairs in existence prior to the outbreak of this war. They will have said "No" to what to my mind is the first instalment of the new order. The Commonwealth, as one of the nations of the world, has declared that it wants a new system, a better state of affairs after the war. To enable a better state of affairs to be brought about, it is necessary that certain powers be transferred to the Parliament elected by the popular will so that every adult person may express himself. Therefore, if the referendum is not carried, it will be tantamount to the people of Australia saying, "No, we do not want these changes and innovations; we do not want something different from what we have endured in the past; we want to revert to the state of affairs that existed prior to the outbreak of war." To



those who are opposing the granting of these powers for a period of five years, I say they must be held responsible.

Mr. Berry: For five years after the signing of peace.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: That will be 15 or 20 years from now.

Mr. J. Hegney: Do not talk rot!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. GRAHAM: It might be a matter of 15 or 20 years, but if the war lasts another 15 years the emergency powers being exercised by the Commonwealth under the Defence Act will still be exercised. Notwithstanding the efforts of certain people to prove otherwise, the proposal is to transfer these powers to the Commonwealth for a period of five years after the war. The confusion that has been caused in this connection is due not so much to muddled thinking as to deliberate distortion of facts. If these powers, which are so essential in the post-war period to enable the Commonwealth to deal with the tremendous problems that will confront Australia, are not granted, the responsibility for the consequences will rest upon those who oppose the transfer. They will have to answer for the confusion and chaos that I believe will be inevitable if the powers are not granted.

I close on that note, and express the hope that the people of Western Australia and Australia generally will answer the critics by voting solidly in support of giving greater power to the Commonwealth. That these powers will be granted I am heartened to believe by my scrutiny of the results of previous referenda, particularly in Western Australia. This State has a record second to none for affirming constitutional alterations when appeals have been made, and because the present referendum is so important and because the result must be attended by so many consequences and because dire consequences can be inflicted upon the people if the powers are not granted, I feel confident that in this instance the proposals will be carried as, in the majority of cases in years gone by, they have been carried by Western Australia.

**MR. KELLY** (Yilgarn-Coolgardie): It is pleasing to be able to refer to the vastly improved outlook confronting the Empire since Parliament was called together a year ago. This has made possible the considera-

tion of post-war proposals and various policies for reconstruction, and I believe that a great amount of ground has been covered during the last 12 months. The Lieutenant-Governor's Speech indicates a number of avenues in which action has been taken and in which we may expect greater improvements in the years to come. I was disappointed at the very brief reference made in his Speech to one of our most important industries, namely, goldmining. There was actually no indication whatever of what the future holds for the industry. In view of the recent discussions regarding the international monetary outlook for the world, it is singular that no reference should be made to it in the Speech. These discussions have shown that gold will play a very important part in our post-war policy, and I think that some indication should have been given of the outlook for goldmining, not only from the point of view of this State but also from an Australian angle.

What mention was made of goldmining in the Speech showed that during the last 12 months the industry suffered a further decrease of 38 per cent. over the production in 1942. This is a very alarming state of affairs because the output had already declined greatly in the preceding two or three years. While it was to be expected that the outbreak of war would cause some diminution, I consider that the decline has been greater than was unavoidable, even under war conditions. I desire to make a survey of statistics covering the years 1939 to 1943. In that period the decrease in goldmining in value returned in the State has been no less than 56 per cent. Comparing the year 1942-43 with the year 1941-42, the decrease was 40 per cent. During this period the number of fine ozs. produced dropped from 1,016,000 to 602,000; the decline in the value of production represented 2.6 million pounds. That is a colossal loss to the State.

The production during the first three months of 1944 shows a decrease of more than 25 per cent. over the corresponding period of 1943. That is a remarkable decrease bearing in mind that all the States are supposed to be treated on an equal basis, and more remarkable in view of the recent announcement about the production of gold in New South Wales during the same period. During those three months an increase of

no less than 23 per cent. was shown in the production in New South Wales. According to the Mining Registrar's figures 89.43 per cent. of the returns from all minerals mined in Western Australia in 1943 was credited to gold; in other words about 11 per cent. of our mineral production in value was accounted for by minerals other than gold. Notwithstanding the fact that all this vast expenditure has taken place in Western Australia, where strategic minerals are concerned gold still retains, and must retain, the predominant position so far as our State finances and our State Treasury are concerned. It is a highly significant fact that many of these strategic minerals are being utilised today. In the settling-down period after the war, or after cessation of hostilities, we shall find that the demand for many of these strategic minerals, which are now being utilised at very high production cost because of the great need from the aspect of war, will be greatly reduced in post-war days; and thus the goldmining industry will be called upon to shoulder the burden of providing the greatest return from the mining industry of this State.

It has frequently been emphasised that gold has a utility value, and not merely a sentimental one. That fact has been clearly shown during the recent international conversations. Gold will eventually be again the parity not only for Australia, but of every nation within the allied bloc, and possibly of many nations not within that bloc. Yet in spite of the bright future that awaits our goldmining industry, nothing has been put up in concrete form so far as gold is concerned. I feel, too, that a very great future would be guaranteed to the industry if gold coinage were re-introduced as an international form of spending power. If the golden sovereign and half-sovereign were again introduced as the world medium of value, it would be possible to go into any country and purchase anything one desired. It is to be noted also that Mexico for a few years has dealt mainly with gold coinage for exchange. India, as is well known, has for hundreds of years dealt only with gold coinage. Today the feature is more pronounced than it has ever been, because Indian people are not prepared to trade on any other footing than that of exchange of gold.

The time is ripe for making a vigorous approach to the Commonwealth Government

with a view to stepping up the future of the goldmining industry. I quite appreciate that at present there are many difficulties which will not be readily overcome. I am aware that manpower has played the greatest part in the decrease in production of the goldmining industry. I know that the supply of the various requirements to keep the industry going has extended the authorities to the utmost; but I hold that the time is opportune for making an approach to Canberra by way of a delegation similar to that which was headed by our Minister for Mines in May of last year, with the idea of impressing upon the Commonwealth Government the dire need for early action so far as Western Australia's mining industry is concerned. I consider that the pronouncements of Dr. Evatt, when here recently, with regard to the mining industry were such as to show that he had very little to tell us about it. He made a great point of the fact that £300,000 had been returned to Western Australia by way of maintenance and for putting its mineral house in order. But Dr. Evatt conveniently forgot to remind us that we had given the Commonwealth Government, by virtue of the gold tax, £5,000,000 during the period in question. That was a complete omission on Dr. Evatt's part. He further told us that gold could and would continue to play its former part during the post-war period. He stated that a mining industry advisory panel was being set up. Just fancy! After four years the Commonwealth Government is only thinking about setting up a panel to deal with the goldmining industry of this State.

The Minister for Mines: Mining—not goldmining only.

Mr. KELLY: That detracts still further from the value of the proposal. Had it not been for the impending referendum, I doubt whether our goldmining industry would have received the Commonwealth Government's attention at all.

The Minister for Mines: That is not fair.

Mr. KELLY: I consider it perfectly fair, since no reference has been made to our mining industry by any members of either Federal House. Our State Government and our Department of Mines have been extremely active throughout the whole period, and have done everything possible under the circumstances to create better conditions in the industry. But success has lain beyond their power because of all the regulations which have been promulgated by the Com-

monwealth Government. Still, we may be thankful to that Government for having informed us that a panel is about to be constituted.

The Minister for Mines: We do not want anyone to tell us what to do about our goldmining industry.

Mr. KELLY: What is a panel wanted for? We have a Department of Mines which knows all about Western Australian mining conditions. We do not need, either, to be told by men from the East where the goldmining industry begins and ends. We should ask Dr. Evatt what number of representatives he will give Western Australia on any panel to be created. Western Australia has every right to a preponderance of votes if any panel or committee is formed for the purpose of bringing about workable conditions in the goldmining industry for the post-war period. It is well known that over a number of years Western Australia's industry has produced 73 per cent. of the entire Commonwealth output, and yet, while we are told that a panel is to be formed, we are not given any indication of the number of voices Western Australia is to have on that panel. Dr. Evatt's statement is just one of those vague utterances that carry us no further.

We are entitled to pride of place in the formation of any panel or committee which may be considered necessary, and I hope the Minister for Mines will see fit to advance the strongest possible arguments to prove that a panel formed in Eastern Australia is not needed to tell Western Australians how their goldmining industry is to be conducted. Apparently, until Dr. Evatt came here to tell us what we should do and what we should not do, not many visits from these eminent people to Western Australia were considered necessary until they wanted something; and apparently they want quite a lot at the present time. The member for East Perth has told us numerous things that we should put up to the Commonwealth Government. I am not quite sure that there is not room for differences of opinion regarding many of the hon. member's assertions. It required a visit of the nature of that which took place some weeks ago to initiate formal plans for the rehabilitation of the goldmining industry. The promise was given only because of the special circumstances existing. I feel that now the State Government, which means really the Minister for Mines so far as the mining industry is concerned, should make

absolutely certain that the Commonwealth Government issues a fortnightly statement as to exactly where we stand in regard to mining, and gives us something concrete on which we may build our future hopes, before the date of the referendum.

Now I wish to deal with one or two matters affecting the industry which I think are worthy of the attention of the Chamber, and which I address to the Minister for Mines more particularly. My first reference is to a sulphide zone existing in the Yilgarn district. Over a period of years high-grade ore in practically unlimited quantities has been cut there, and in some cases developed throughout various mines extending over a radius of 50 miles in the Yilgarn area. Thousands upon thousands of tons of high-grade ore have been mined at depths varying from 15 to 300 feet. In most cases the ore bodies which have been cut in the course of mining in the other zones have proved that they will go down. The greatest drawback, as far as the working of these ore bodies is concerned, is that the majority of the plants operating on the leases were plants designed wholly and solely for treatment of oxidised ores. When the sulphide zone was struck, the deterioration of the plant made it unprofitable for many of those mines to continue working. Over a period of years quite a number of mines have closed down on that account. Others with higher grade ore did endeavour to make ends meet and transported from time to time fairly large parcels of stone to Kalgoorlie. However, treatment costs, plus the higher cost of rail-age and cartage, made those higher-grade properties almost unpayable and gradually the majority of them closed down.

A post-war plan which could be put into operation without much outlay would be the establishment of sulphide ore treatment plants either at Southern Cross or Hope's Hill, whichever centre might be found more convenient. Both are suitably situated. There are many thousands of tons of sulphide ore in the Yilgarn district which could be systematically worked if a suitable plant capable of treating, say, 10,000 tons a month were installed. That would give employment to at least an additional 1,000 men in the Yilgarn district. I feel that representations should be made to the Minister on this score and that he should give them thorough consideration. There is no doubt that investigations would stand up to any technical in-

quiry that might be made. I commend to the Minister's notice the possibility of a sulphide ore treatment plant as a post-war industry in the Yilgarn.

Another avenue which I consider would be highly profitable to the industry would be the purchase of either bulldozers or trench-digging implements. During the past few years we have seen the vast amount of work that can be done by these implements. Bulldozers are capable of pushing away huge sections of really hard ground, while the trench-digging implements have proved a very great success. I have seen such an implement digging as deep as eight feet in a remarkably fast fashion. The use of these implements should revolutionise our mining industry in the post-war years and would prove to be of extraordinary advantage in locating gold which at present is covered by a small amount of overburden or even earth up to six or seven feet thick. I do not think the Government should be called upon to bear the entire cost of these machines; I think the success that would attend their use would warrant the Government's making a charge for them. The scale of charges ought to depend upon the success obtained, and in that way the Government would be enabled to recoup itself for its outlay or for the greater part of it.

There are areas in the Hampton Plains district which could be worked suitably by the type of implements to which I have referred. That is a district where a vast amount of prospecting should be done, as several very excellent finds have been made there in the last few months. A vast amount of prospecting had to be done before that ground became what promises to be a very fine field. If either or both of those implements were employed the Government could, in some systematic manner, place a great amount of opened up country at the disposal of returned men. The time is ripe for the purchase or installation of boring machinery or, at any rate, the planning of boring which could be carried out in the period following the cessation of hostilities.

All too many fields that in the past have yielded untold wealth have closed down suddenly and without having been exploited to the full extent. In many instances the companies concerned were to blame. The money which has come out of the various shows of which I speak has gone into the directors' pockets and not into the industry as one

would have expected. I have cited this as one of the means by which the Government may step up the production of gold after the war, but I am aware that there have been shortcomings in the past on the part of private enterprise which should have carried out quite a large amount of boring but did not do so. I commend to the Minister the suggestion that some plan might be devised that will enable such boring to be undertaken without the expenditure of any great amount of money. A little while ago I had the plans and specifications of a very efficient boring plant capable of boring quite a lot of ground per day with four men employed and going to a depth of 800 to 900 feet. A plant of that kind at that time would have cost about £1,500, and could have been hired out by the Government to bigger companies in a position to pay, or utilised by the Government for sounding and proving many other areas.

I want to refer now to something which has been going on for some time with regard to the depletion of our timber resources. The Minister is aware of what has taken place. For one reason or another there does not appear to be sufficient co-ordination between certain departments that would enable this particular evil to be put down. I refer to the large amount of mining timber which at present is being taken and for the past 18 months has been taken from all parts of the Yilgarn for various companies throughout the State, and particularly on the Eastern Goldfields. Much of the timber being cut and carted away is burnt in boilers. That timber is beautiful mining timber that should never be cut for any purpose but mining, and it is particularly nauseating to find that it is being taken from the Yilgarn area, especially when it is realised that in a few years' time many of these mines will be re-opened and that there are plenty of opportunities for the opening up of other mines. The district is being denuded of its wonderful timber resources because of lack of co-ordination between the departments concerned. The Minister for Mines should be in a position to declare whether timber should be taken out of any district at all, even when the matter of supply is declared to be one of urgency. The present policy is one of robbing Peter to pay Paul, since in a few years' time it will be necessary for the people in the Yilgarn area to search farther afield for timber similar to that which

is already in the district but is now being taken away.

I commend these few suggestions to the Minister who, I feel, has the industry at heart. I am not taking him to task for the present inertia in the industry, because I know his efforts on behalf of the industry have been very persistent, and that he has done quite a lot in an endeavour to put it on a better footing. We are told every now and again that we have 4,500 men in the goldmining industry. Perhaps we have, but I am sorry to say that many of those men have been brought back to work against doctors' orders, and the incidence of disease must creep up higher than it was when we had more men employed. It is regrettable and deplorable that the health of these men is not considered sufficiently important to prevent their being brought back into the industry. I say that, notwithstanding that we are short of manpower because of the very severe inroads made by the Commonwealth Government in the industry in Western Australia.

I desire to touch on matters of education. Firstly I would like to take this opportunity of congratulating the newly appointed Minister on his elevation to Ministerial rank. I have not had the opportunity to congratulate him previously in this House, although I have done it publicly. I feel that no more appropriate appointment in any Ministerial position has been made in this State for some time. I have very great faith in the Minister's ability to carry out his duties. I also have faith in the future outlook so far as the educational matters of this State are concerned. I was privileged to be in his company during portion of a trip he made on one occasion. One has only to note the thorough knowledge he has of his department to realise that the educational standard of this State will receive an impetus as a result of his appointment. The Education Department is playing an important part in maintaining the educational system under adverse conditions. We realise that it has been almost impossible to get monitors to take up teaching.

Enlistments have played havoc with the number of men and women employed by the Education Department. I think that as a result a great job has been done by the department in maintaining its services despite the clamour and the contro-

versy that have raged over the past 12 months in regard to its shortcomings. I think, too, that the Minister will possibly be able to bring a large amount of influence to bear on the Treasurer in the interests of education. He has persuasive ways that will, I am sure, melt the Treasurer's heart when he asks for a much larger sum for educational purposes. He will have the wholehearted support of the entire people of this State when he opens the Treasurer's heart to the extent, possibly, of double the amount he has had in the past.

The Premier: Where will we get it from?

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: You are an optimist!

Mr. KELLY: I do not think so. I am simply giving credit to the Treasurer, and I am giving that credit where it is due. We realise that education must play a much greater part than it has done in the past.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: We will all be behind you.

Mr. KELLY: Matters of education in the country are in need of overhaul. In some instances education in the country has been completely outmoded. That has been because of insufficient funds, so that when the Treasurer does open his heart to the Minister and allows him the extra amount necessary there will be a lot of activity in the country centres, and decided changes, where public schools are concerned, will be warranted. One of the greatest drawbacks in the country areas is in the case of our one-teacher schools. In many of these schools the position is entirely unfair to the schoolmaster or schoolmistress. Some have no less than six or eight different classes. On occasions teachers have pointed out to me that that does not finish their grading. There may be 16 to 18 pupils in a small school, with six or eight classes which are re-graded into several grades. This places an almost impossible task on the teacher because of the fact that he has so many different children of different ages to cope with, and an entirely different set of subjects in each instance. I feel that in the case of the one-teacher schools a very unfair burden has been placed on the teacher. In addition, these schools do not offer any scope for specialised teaching. It is impossible for the children to be taught anything above about the 7th or 8th standard and up to

that standard no provision for teaching either physics or chemistry has been made.

The country schools are also made to suffer, not because the department so desires, but because lack of finance has more or less forced the policy that it has to follow. The consideration of the appointment of schoolteachers in many of these schools has revolved around the point that it was impossible to send an experienced teacher. As a result the country, in the majority of instances, has to put up with the least experienced teachers of the department. Frequently these small schools have no quarters available either for married or single teachers. In that case the teacher is compelled to obtain accommodation at a farm house, perhaps some distance away, or wherever he can possibly dig in. This also makes the question of sending teachers into the country a very hard one. In conjunction with the other hardships it makes the position with regard to country schools one that lends itself to a vast amount of improvement. The country schools are frequently poorly equipped. Over the last few years it has, of course, been a difficult task to keep the schools supplied with proper equipment. As far as desks are concerned, there is a great disparity in the types and in the condition of many that are in use.

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

**Mr. KELLY:** Many of the country schools are poorly equipped, particularly in the matter of desks. Not only does the equipment fall into bad repair, but the desks used in country schools, with few exceptions, are unsuitable for children who have to sit in them for so many hours each day. A number of desks of a newer type are quite suitable, but the old types ought to be replaced at the earliest opportunity. I know there is difficulty owing to the shortage of manpower, and that larger schools have been equipped with more suitable desks while the obsolete types have been sent to smaller schools. As a means of overcoming much of the costly repair work in country centres, I believe that travelling repair shops should be used by the department with a view to keeping school material in better order.

With the passing of time, even desks of the newer type are showing signs of the need for repair. If we had a travelling re-

pair shop in charge of a competent tradesman there would be no end to the number of jobs that could be done at country schools, and the saving to the department, I believe, would be considerable. At present either a local tradesman has to be employed or somebody has to be sent from the city to carry out the repairs. A similar system works well in the North-West, and it would work well in the direction I have indicated. In many of the outback schools there is little shelf or cupboard space. Some of the schools have libraries and the books cannot be looked after properly because of the lack of shelf and cupboard accommodation. If we had travelling workshops, cupboards and shelves could be installed where required and existing ones kept in repair.

Further saving could be effected if urinals of a more durable type were provided at schools when renewals are necessary. At many of the schools I have visited—and this applies also to some of the schools in the metropolitan area—the policy has been to instal galvanised iron urinals. This type has the distinct disadvantage of rusting and having to be renewed, and I believe that the renewal of each costs about £5. Whether they are made in quantity and of a standard type I do not know, but I suggest the use of a type that could be installed at any school without the need for employing an authorised plumber. If cisterns or troughs were made of cement by the hundred and used to replace the galvanised iron ones, hygiene requirements would be better met and money would be saved through the longer life they would have.

Another matter I wish to mention is that of smaller schools and centrally-situated schools. In many of the mining areas there are large schools that in the good days accommodated many hundreds of children, but nowadays are very poorly attended. They were capable of taking, say, 500 or 600 children and now have probably only 100 in attendance. At the present time economy in the use of teachers is a very important matter, because their numbers have been so greatly depleted on account of the war. There may be two or three teachers at a district central school and five or six at smaller schools and, if a transport system could be arranged to feed the central school, the teachers at the smaller school could be relieved. This proposal might look simple on paper, but I admit there are drawbacks to

it. The most apparent drawback would arise in the case of a smaller school being attended by children in what I may describe as the more or less kindergarten stage. If they were required to attend a central school by transportation means, they might be denied the opportunity to receive education until they grew older. Perhaps the Minister has already inquired into this matter, but I believe the day is coming when this system will be adopted and will not result in loss of opportunity to the younger children. I assure the Minister that I have great confidence in the future of the department under his guidance and, with many other people in the country districts, look forward to a successful period in the matter of education facilities.

I now wish to refer to a phase of post-war possibilities of which we perhaps hear least, and that is the fishing industry. I regret that that industry has a poor outlook and that it has received very little attention. The time seems long overdue when a sound enterprise in that respect should have been undertaken here. I was especially disappointed by a recent Press reference from a Federal Minister to the effect that Western Australia's fishing grounds did not warrant much research, as they had not the fish. Anybody accustomed to fishing in waters within a radius of 15 or 20 miles of our main ports, and in addition ports in the North-West and the South-West, must be greatly disappointed by such statements coming from a Federal Minister. The results of scientific research and investigation in connection with the industry during the last few years have outlived their usefulness, and it is high time that the industry was considered with a view to placing it in the near future on a sound basis.

To this end the purchase of a vessel capable of carrying out work required on our shores should be speedily effected. Such a vessel, in addition to trawling for fish, could if necessary be used for further researches. This would be better than having officers of the Fisheries Department wandering around the ocean at leisure, supposedly noting activities on our fishing grounds. In place of that kind of activity we could have a trawler put into operation to catch fish for consumption by the people of the State, as well as doing any scientific work

required. It is appalling to visit fish shops in Perth and see huge schnapper, seven or eight pounds in weight, ticketed "1s. 11d. per lb. by taking the whole fish." The glimpse many people obtain of those fish in the window is all they get of them. I have never had any difficulty in catching fish here. It is a crying shame that more has not been done towards putting a vessel into commission for the benefit of the fishing industry.

Next as regards the goldfields water supply! Recently a deputation representing road boards from Northam to Norseman waited on the Minister for Water Supplies—who I am sorry to see is not in his place at the moment—but overlooked one matter of vital importance to our agricultural districts, namely the rate they are being charged for water. The Minister assured the deputation that he would undertake to iron out any anomalies existing in the supply of water to goldfields areas. I do hope, when the time comes for the anomalies to be adjusted, that the anomaly of farmers paying for water under the present system will be wiped out, and that they will be required to pay purely and solely on a consumption basis for water they actually use. If that system were adopted, all trouble among the farmers in this respect would be overcome and everybody would be happy.

A recent paragraph in the Press referring to the forthcoming Premiers' Conference stated that among other subjects daylight saving would be considered. I ask the Premier to make certain that daylight saving will not be reintroduced into Western Australia. I feel sure that the hon. gentleman would have the backing of the majority of the Western Australian people in making an emphatic protest when the subject is raised again.

My final item, which also I address to the Premier, is a reference to the short supply of axes in Western Australia, not only at present but for a number of months. It is deplorable to think that so few axes have been provided for Western Australian requirements recently. The effect of the shortage has been to disorganise our entire wood-cutting industry; the majority of cutters to-day are using discarded axes which saw service years ago. Some of these axes are not

fit to be used on an ordinary woodheap, much less by a professional cutter. A great deal of the present firewood trouble not only in the metropolitan area but also in the country districts and in the mining areas is due to the shortage of axes. A few cases came to Western Australia last May; but after the military authorities had taken their share, very few remained. I have heard on good authority that the next shipment of axes, about 97 dozen, will reach Australia in September, but that those axes will not be available in the West until October. The position is serious. I do not suggest that the Premier can alter it, but I believe that by continually hammering at the Federal authorities he can make certain that the present undesirable position will not recur, and that axes will be made available for this State's requirements.

**MR. PERKINS (York):** I was extremely gratified to note by a reference in the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech that the Government has approved of the principle of free lending libraries for this State. This is a subject that I spoke on in my first speech in this House. It is an extremely important one and I still think we do not pay sufficient attention to it. Most members will agree that we only seek to give the background of an education to the children attending our schools and that by far the greater portion of a person's education is obtained after he leaves school, especially in a country such as Australia where contact with the rest of the world is more difficult than it is in other countries that are placed closer together. The provision of books is extremely necessary. The insularity of mind of Australians, upon which many visitors to our country comment, can be largely attributed to the lack of contact which Australians have with other parts of the world. That position may be improved somewhat in the future because of the improved methods of transportation which are being rapidly developed. Australia is being brought very much closer to the rest of the world, but it will still always be more difficult for an Australian to visit Europe, for example, than it would be for a person living in the British Isles or in the United States of America. Consequently, it must be more expensive and more difficult for our people to appreciate what is taking place in other parts of the world.

The best and easiest way to overcome this disability is, in my opinion, by extending the availability of books to our people. One would expect that in a country like Australia library facilities would have been developed to a greater degree than in other countries, but actually the opposite is the position. I have here a report issued by the Free Library Movement in New South Wales. It was published about two years ago and this is what it has to say about the existing position in Australia—

As a whole, Australia was better provided with local libraries in 1880 than it is today. Almost every city and large town now contains a decadent institute or school of arts, many of which give evidence of having had a former period of real usefulness. While Great Britain, the United States, and to a lesser extent Canada and New Zealand, have made creditable progress in establishing rate-supported municipal libraries, Australia has accomplished almost nothing! Sydney, Hobart, and a few suburban municipalities are the only ones which have even acknowledged this responsibility, and none of them has ever supported its library according to minimum overseas standards. Nothing comparable with the English county system has been devised to serve the small towns and rural areas.

The Munn-Pitt report stated that the Sydney Municipal Library was by far the best equipped building in Australia. Victoria also has a reasonable system and beginnings have been made in some small areas, notably for example at Broken Hill; but Sydney is recognised as having the best municipal library in Australia.

The Premier: Municipal?

Mr. PERKINS: Yes.

The Premier: New South Wales has the Mitchell Library, too.

Mr. PERKINS: An oversea visitor would not class the Mitchell Library or our own library as a library at all, as such an institution is known elsewhere in the world. He would class it as a reference library. Librarians elsewhere in the world only class as a library one which makes its books available for people to take into the home. That is the first essential. We in Western Australia have no lending library at all, except one or two small attempts in country centres. So far as I can ascertain Sydney is considered to have the best library in Australia. It is supported by the City of Sydney.



I have figures showing the expenditure in various cities on libraries. They are as follows:—

			Per Head of Population Served.	
			s.	d.
Washington	..	..	4	1½
Sheffield	..	..	1	10½
Toronto	..	..	3	2½
Liverpool	..	..	1	7½
Glasgow	..	..	1	9½
Birmingham	..	..	1	6
Los Angeles	..	..	3	8½
Sydney	..	..	0	2½

Members will note how the best equipped and most efficient of our Australian libraries compares with libraries in other parts of the world, and they can draw their own conclusions as to the position in the other States of Australia. Western Australia is in a very much worse position than are most of the other States and therefore I am pleased indeed to see that the Government at last is going to make a start to improve it. Since I last spoke on this subject I have given the Premier some of my ideas on it and it is with pleasure that I note the Government has approved the principle and appointed a committee. I am also pleased to accept the invitation of the Government to act on that committee.

We are at present hearing a great deal about the reconstruction that we are going to see in the post-war period, but what amazes me is that the people are satisfied with the plans now being put forward. We hear many airy generalities, but specific proposals are notable by their rareness.

Mr. Watts: Conspicuous by their absence!

Mr. PERKINS: I was about to say that, but I did not want to be accused of exaggeration. I would rather understate the position. I have been somewhat puzzled about the matter, but I think that possibly a statement made by Professor Bland, Professor of Public Administration at the University of Sydney, throws some light on the attitude of mind which has been developing in the community generally. This is what he has to say on the subject—

Post-war reconstruction has produced an escapist attitude in the minds of countless numbers who have lost most that a peace-loving people cherish, and of those whose emotional life has been deranged by the deep mental and spiritual wounds that have been inflicted. This characteristic of the human mind is illustrated by every crisis from Genesis to Revelation.

Post-war reconstruction is just another of those lands where the human spirit can find refuge; another promised land flowing with milk and honey, or where people will hunger no more, neither thirst any more; one where liberty and the pursuit of happiness will rival a condition of liberte, egalite, et fraternite.

Perhaps that does not explain the attitude of mind nor I do not think we should let the position rest there. So far as our plans for reconstruction go, we should try to get down to something more specific than we have had up to date.

Mr. Cross: Give us a few ideas.

Mr. PERKINS: I will do so if the hon. member will listen to me. Most of us will agree that many features of our life in pre-war days could have been improved upon, but I am not one of those who say that our past record is entirely discreditable. The fact that we have brought a country like Australia to its present level of development, despite all natural difficulties, in the course of a little over 100 years reflects some credit upon the people responsible for that development. We should be careful in any of the plans we make for the organisation of our country in the post-war years that we do nothing to kill the spirit of initiative and self-help which has been evident in the course of our history up to date. If some of the restrictions which have existed during wartime are carried on in peacetime I am very much afraid that that initiative will be sapped. Undoubtedly we must have some control to regulate the change back to a peacetime existence. But we should make sure that such control is not cramping to individual initiative. The control should be remote from the individual so that full initiative is left to each person and so that the individual who has novel ideas may be left entirely free to develop them.

Some of the features which are unsatisfactory or have been unsatisfactory in the past are exemplified in the drift which has been taking place for many years from the country areas to the city. Obviously there must be a large section of our people who think that life in the city offers some attraction that does not exist in the country. That is the only explanation, of which one can think, of the fact that people leave country areas and shift to the city. The only way to overcome that undesirable feature is to improve the attractiveness of country life. I do not think there is any-

thing basically wrong with country life. All we need to do is to see that some of the amenities which exist in the city and urban areas at present are available in the country areas.

Mr. Marshall: If that were done thousands of people would go out into the country.

Mr. PERKINS: Yes. If some of the amenities to which I shall later refer were available in country towns we would not have the spectacle of people making their money in the country districts and retiring to the city. It is natural that if persons have lived in a country district for a long time their families will probably remain there and their life-long friends will be there, and if amenities were available that were comparable in any way with those provided in the city one would naturally expect those people to retire into the country town. That would have a snowball effect. It would tend to build up the population of our country towns, improve their social life and make it possible to provide even greater amenities. There are three basic services which must be made available in country towns if people are to remain satisfied and are to be persuaded to live out their lives in such places. First come educational facilities, secondly water supplies and thirdly transport.

Mr. Cross: What about good houses?

Mr. PERKINS: If people are able to obtain reasonable incomes they will build houses for themselves and will not ask the Government to provide them. Regarding educational facilities, I was very disgusted when I read that our Government was boasting of the surpluses it had achieved in the last two or three years. It was difficult for me to comprehend how any Government could feel satisfied with a surplus when it looked around and saw the type of educational facilities available in country districts. Other members have already stressed some of the ways in which educational facilities could be improved. I entirely endorse the remarks they have made. First of all the number of area schools could be extended, but to extend those area schools it will be necessary for the Government to spend more money than in the past. The Government had a surplus and recently boasted about it.

The Premier: No. I said that we had helped the Commonwealth Government to finance the war without drawing on loan money.

Mr. PERKINS: The Government could have spent some of that money on improving educational facilities. It is all very well for the Government to say that it approves of the principle of area schools, but at present some parents say they are able to obtain a better education for their children in the smaller schools than in the so-called area schools. Their reason for that is that the area schools are under-staffed, and the educational facilities that are being offered in these central schools are not such as to induce parents living in distant parts, and being fortunate enough to have suitable teachers in the small schools attended by their children, to agree to the closure of such schools with a view to sending their children to an area school. I have no doubt that if the area schools could be improved to a point where the educational facilities offered are such as to prove attractive to the parents, there would be no further difficulty about their agreeing to the closure of the little schools.

The Minister for Education: Where are our area schools in this State?

Mr. PERKINS: There are some schools which the Government says it is developing into area schools. I presume they are the ones to which the children are conveyed by buses.

The Minister for Education: That is a different proposition altogether.

Mr. PERKINS: I hope that in course of time our new Minister for Education will be able to show that there has been a vast improvement on the position which has existed in the past. Another point I recommend to him is an increase in the number of secondary schools available in country areas. At present if parents desire their children to have a secondary school education they have to send them a considerable distance from home. More secondary schools should be sprinkled through distant areas. I hope, for instance, that the member for Avon will be able to persuade the Government to establish a secondary school at Merredin. Certainly an extension of secondary school facilities is needed. I consider that the lack of such facilities in the country is a potent factor in inducing people to leave those areas and to come to Perth where better school facilities are available. If such facilities were available within reasonable distance in the country areas I am convinced that country people would be much more satisfied to remain in those areas and take advan-

tage of the schooling available for their children.

This lack of secondary schools has a bad effect in other directions, particularly in connection with the Civil Service. At present city children have a big advantage compared with those in the country in regard to entrance to the Civil Service. The Civil Service has an undue proportion of children recruited from city areas in comparison with those taken from the country. It is giving a bias to our civil service. Any country members who happen to meet civil servants who have been recruited from country areas know that they have a different understanding of what is required in the country compared with people who have not spent any considerable portion of their lives outside the metropolitan area. I regard that point as very important indeed because our civil service is an extremely important part of our governmental system, and may become even more so in the future.

The second amenity to which I wanted to refer is the question of water supplies. A good deal has been said on this subject and the Government has made many plans regarding the extensions of water supplies. I believe that those plans have been fairly carefully drawn up and, if carried out, will mean a great improvement to the country districts. I would stress this point that the plans, as drawn, will take a long time to put into effect. I am afraid that there will be a serious time-lag. It may take 10 or 15 years before these water schemes are actually serving the country districts. I do not agree with those people who say that there will be any need to formulate special works to absorb people into employment after the war. I think that exactly the opposite position will obtain; that for at least five years after the war we will be faced with a shortage of labour and be placed in the position of having to put some works in priority classes. When we see the vast amount of spending power that has been dammed up in the way of deposits in the trading and the savings banks, and the increase in the note issue amounting to many millions of pounds, we cannot help but think that the people intend to spend that money, or a large portion of it, after the war. The difficulty will be rather to prevent a boom than to avoid a slump. With such competition for the available labour and supplies, it may

mean that such a proposition as that dealing with water schemes will be unduly delayed.

Mr. Marshall: Have you considered the vast capacity of machines today?

Mr. PERKINS: That may be, but manpower is needed both to make and to work machines, and a huge amount of work will have to be done. If we go through the country and the city districts we must be impressed with the amount of work that has been held over and which must be done in a comparatively short time after the war.

The other point deals with transport. At present many important changes are taking place in regard to transport. We have seen the remarkable development of the aeroplane and the extraordinary increase in the efficiency of motor transport. We have seen the increase in efficiency of road-making machinery. We have also noticed some changes in the methods of the use of the railway system. But I am not by any means sure that those who are responsible for the planning of our transport fully realise all the implications of the changes that are taking place. I do not know whether our Minister for Railways realises that the aeroplane will practically take all the long distance passenger transport. Those of us who know men in the Air Force and have talked with them find it difficult to come to any other conclusion than that for distances of 300 miles or more the aeroplane is simply going to put the railways out of business for passenger traffic.

Mr. North: Will they provide sufficient accommodation?

Mr. PERKINS: We can only draw our conclusions from what the experts tell us, and wait and see. It will be possible in Australia at least for aeroplanes to handle that long distance transport. Some experts go so far as to say that even in the case of such a short distance as 100 miles it will be possible for the aeroplane to compete with other forms of passenger transport.

The Minister for Justice: We will have trains in the air before many years are gone.

Mr. PERKINS: It is good to know that the Minister realises what the future holds. The development of road transport must also be taken into consideration. In my opinion, the Minister for Railways should be seriously considering what this means to our railway system. I believe it means that in some measurable period after the war the rail-

ways, to all intents and purposes, will cease to be a passenger-carrying agency.

Mr. Watts: They will be used for heavy goods over long distances.

Mr. PERKINS: I quite agree with that remark. I think that those in charge of the railways should be taking some notice of the position and making some plans for the future. I am not prepared to say that the railway management should attempt to get into the air transport business, but I do think that it should be making plans regarding road transport for passengers. The railway companies in England and in the United States have, for a good many years now, been running road passenger services as well as railway passenger services.

The Minister for Justice: As a feeder system?

Mr. PERKINS: No, as duplicate services. But this great difference exists between the railway services of England and of America compared with those of Australia, that those railways have been laid down in a manner that enables them to maintain speeds of 60 to 80 miles per hour, whereas the best that the Western Australian railways can do is about 25 miles per hour.

The Minister for Justice: What gauge have they, 4ft. 8½in.?

Mr. PERKINS: That is one of the reasons. The sensible thing to do in Western Australia, in my opinion, is to take the passenger traffic from the railways altogether and provide a suitable road passenger service.

Mr. Cross: You will have some trouble getting rubber for the next five or six years.

Mr. PERKINS: We will have bitumen roads through the country areas to serve the country people. The sensible thing for the railways to do is to get into the business and run their passenger services instead of trying to maintain those services with the railways.

The Minister for Justice: Do you suggest that for limited distances?

Mr. PERKINS: I am told that in America they run these duplicate services for distances of 500 miles or more, as well as short distances. The American road transport conditions are probably not as satisfactory as those in Australia. We have a more even climate and, as a general rule, our country has fewer steep grades. However, I seriously make that suggestion to the Minister

for Railways. Some railway officers realise that after the war their department will lose the passenger traffic, anyhow. If the railways do not provide a road passenger service, a large proportion of the transport will be carried out by people using their own motorcars, or else services will be provided by transport companies, such as those operating in the Eastern States and elsewhere in the world. I believe the Railway Department could very well take over that type of service and possibly could do the work more economically, as it could avoid the overlapping that would obtain if several privately-owned transport companies were to operate side by side. There is scope for development along those lines and certainly satisfactory services exist in the Eastern States.

The Minister for Justice: Do you think we should take over the whole of the transport systems throughout the State?

Mr. PERKINS: I would not suggest that.

Mr. Thorn: It would be a case of God help us then!

Mr. PERKINS: I believe there are certain limited fields in which the railways might be able to operate. At the present time I am sure that the Commissioner of Railways does not know whether the passenger traffic is, or is not, a payable proposition. The accounts that are published apparently do not keep the costs segregated, which makes it difficult to ascertain whether the passenger traffic is paying. To an ordinary layman who travels by rail, it would seem to be rather doubtful.

The Premier: The costs are kept separate.

Mr. PERKINS: Then I do not know how it is done. In the accounts I have seen the costs are not kept separate in a manner that would provide anyone with an opportunity to say whether the passenger and goods operations are paying.

The Premier: At any rate, the costs of passenger traffic and goods traffic are segregated.

Mr. PERKINS: How would the Premier deal with an instance such as the following? The Diesel coach starts from Bruce Rock three mornings each week with a stock train proceeding in front. The stock train reaches Shackleton, where it has to wait until the Diesel coach catches up and passes on to the next staff station, which is approximately 30

miles from Bruce Rock. Then the stock train can start again. How could there be any segregation of costs as between those two classes of traffic? It could not be expected that the goods traffic would bear the whole of the cost of the wait at that siding, where it might have to remain for an hour or more. I am sure the Commissioner of Railways does not know what that traffic is costing. On the other hand, if the passenger traffic were taken away altogether and there were no such thing on our railways as priority traffic, such as that relating to the carriage of passengers, the result would be that goods trains would start from one point and proceed to their destination without any hold-up such as that which occurs now due to priority passenger traffic running over the same lines. When the Premier says that the accounts are kept separate, they can be separated only to a limited extent, and it is certainly impossible for anyone to say whether the passenger traffic is payable.

The Premier: Neither is the goods traffic payable, unfortunately.

Mr. PERKINS: Another point is that if we were to take the passenger traffic away from the railways, possibly the railway system, with the expenditure of a certain amount on renewals, might serve Western Australia for quite a long time to come. If the passenger traffic were taken from the railways, not only here but in the Eastern States as well, very careful inquiries would be required to ascertain whether the proposed unification of gauges was justified.

The Premier: Do not advocate the pulling up of the railways, or you will not be returned to this House, and we would like to have you with us.

Mr. PERKINS: I shall not do that.

Mr. Cross: How would the interest bill be paid if we were to do what you suggest?

Mr. PERKINS: Running our railways uneconomically will not help in the payment of the interest bill. I do not subscribe to the theory that the people are here to keep the railways going. The railways are in operation in order to render a service to the people. When the railways cease to do that, we must look for some other form of transport.

The Premier: Then you would have imported fuel, imported rubber, imported rolling-stock and so on.

Mr. Seward: The Diesel engines were imported.

The Premier: Some parts were made here.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I think possibly the member for York can now proceed with his remarks.

Mr. PERKINS: If we import goods by exporting half the equivalent in payment, it will be of advantage to the State.

The Minister for Justice: Do you not think that the railway system has done a wonderful job in the development of the State?

Mr. PERKINS: I will not go into what has happened in the past.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think the member for York had better proceed with his remarks, and take no notice of the Minister's questions.

Mr. PERKINS: We must consider the requirements for the years to come, and I contend that a very careful inquiry must be made regarding the future of the railway system. Merely muddling through and hoping that everything will turn out satisfactorily is of no avail. A very serious position faces the railway system, and it is time we made some inquiries regarding its future along lines of investigation that have not been followed in the past. Another phase affecting the railways concerns its employees. I have thought about this aspect for a long while. I have often wondered, for instance, why men who work on the railways take such small pride in the system. The type of equipment they are asked to use and the bad order in which it is kept may be responsible.

The Premier: Are you talking about the condition of farmers' implements and so forth?

Mr. PERKINS: I am not talking about farming but about the railway system. It is rather remarkable to notice the contrast when we consider some of the commercial organisations and services and their employees. It is most noticeable that their employees evince quite an interest in the welfare of such privately-owned concerns, notwithstanding that the men have no pecuniary interest in them. That is most noticeable when compared with the attitude of railwaymen as a whole.

The Minister for Justice: I think the majority of the men take an interest in the railway system.

Mr. PERKINS: Not to the same degree as employees of private organisations. I do not say that it is the fault of the men. I believe there is not very much difference between those working on the railways and those engaged in connection with private concerns. My experience is that the quality of the employees does not vary very much, but I do know that the efficiency of the administration varies to a tremendous degree. There are instances showing that men have worked for one employer and have rendered poor service. The same men have worked for another employer and have given excellent service. That is what I am afraid is wrong with the railway system, and there is much to support that contention. I have had quite a lot to do with railway men working at small stations where the staff might consist of one or two. Those men have given service at least as good as and in many cases better than commercial organisations have been able to get from their employees. But shift one of those men to a larger station where he comes under the red-tape organisation and he is a different human being. At the small station, he has been keen to serve the public. When he gets to a large station under red-tape organisation, he apparently tries to find what work he can avoid or push on to the other fellow. That is due to the bad administration of the service. So far as I can judge, no effort is made to build up in the men a pride in the service.

We have had examples in other parts of Australia of a transformation being effected. I believe that when Mr. Clapp took over the Victorian railways, things were in a very bad state, but he had been trained as an administrator in America and I understand he completely re-organised the Victorian railways. He developed a system under which the employees were encouraged to make suggestions for the improvement of the service. Papers were published which gave the men a chance to express their views, and the result was that the employees took a real pride in the service. That is what we want in our public utilities.

The Minister for Justice: You do not think there is sufficient co-operation between the men and the administration?

Mr. PERKINS: In my opinion the administration is not doing its job.

Mr. Cross: You are an expert and you know!

Mr. PERKINS: Just as good an expert as is the hon. member. I believe that in America the universities have special courses in public administration, and the men who fill these responsible positions are specially trained for the work whereas, in the case of our public utilities, men are appointed to administrative positions because they are experts in some other field. I consider that is wrong. The proper course to adopt in regard to administrative positions, not only in the railways but also in other utilities, is to appoint trained administrators and leave the experts in their particular jobs to carry out the work for which they have been trained. I do not wish to criticise any particular official. I think the fault lies with the Government in that it has not set up the proper kind of administration to deal with public utilities, and it is time some change was made.

Mr. Cross: What change do you want?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. PERKINS: I have said quite a lot to indicate ways in which I think we might improve the services available to people in country districts. The three points—education, water supply and transport—I regard as basic necessities. There are many ways in which the Government can help to improve the amenities available to country people, but those three points are basic, and the Government should bear in mind that it is necessary to effect an improvement in those directions before we shall be able to get anywhere. Another basic necessity to improve conditions of people in the country is a satisfactory price for the produce they raise.

Mr. Cross: We want efficient farmers.

Mr. PERKINS: If the people in the rural areas are able to get a reasonable return for their labour all other things, such as housing and facilities in the home that go to ease the difficulties of life in what at times is a rather trying climate, can be provided by the people themselves. Give them a reasonable return for their labour and they themselves will supply those amenities. There is plenty of room for improvement in this direction. The housing standard in the agricultural areas is very low, but if the farmers can get a reasonable income they will provide improved facilities for themselves. Unfortunately we passed through a very hard time in the ten years before the outbreak of war. Prices were low and many of our producers have fallen a long way behind scratch. The

outlook for the future, however, is brighter. The prices for our primary products have either reached a payable level or are approaching it.

The Minister for Lands: That might prevail for a short term or a long term.

Mr. PERKINS: We hope it will be for a long term. It seems that payable prices for some of our products will continue for a number of years. For some of our products, however, we are not getting the full market value. I refer particularly to wheat. Our wheat farmers have experienced a very difficult time. Many of them have piled up large debts and, now that the price of wheat seems inclined to go to boom level, they do not seem to be getting full market value for their product. I have been told by some people in the city that it would be undesirable for wheat prices to go higher than a payable level. I should agree with that, provided our farmers had always received a payable price for their wheat, but in the ten years from 1930 to 1940 they received very much less than payable prices and many of them have built up the huge debts to which I have referred. The better plan—much better than any debt adjustment scheme, for such a scheme must be difficult to carry out and must entail trouble for many people—would be for the farmers to get good prices for their products so that they would be enabled to pay off their debts. The position has improved somewhat, but I hope it will improve to a much greater degree. Unfortunately there is a gap in wheat prices.

The Minister for Lands: What is the difference between the Canadian and Australian price?

Mr. PERKINS: I have not the present-day price for Canadian wheat, but the actual price at which Australian wheat is being sold to the United States of America and other free markets is 6s. 11¼d. f.o.b. Australia. I have been informed that Canadian wheat is being sold for that price in the United States of America. For flour for Australian consumption we are getting equivalent to 5s. 2d. f.o.b. That is all right. We agreed to that because we did not want the Australian public to pay other than a stabilised price for their flour. In the bad times the Australian public paid that price. When wheat prices go above that figure most wheatgrowers, I think, are well prepared to accept the stabilised price, plus any increase in the cost of production; I think

the growers are entitled to ask for that. But recently there have been greater disabilities. Breakfast food manufacturers are paying 4s. bagged. New Zealand is getting its wheat for 4s. 10¾d. f.o.b. bagged. Britain gets its wheat from 5s. to 5s. 6d. Stock feed is being sold at 3s. 11½d. bagged, including the Government subsidy. The position in regard to stock feed and wheat for breakfast foods is one of very great injustice indeed to the producers. I consider that this State's Minister for Agriculture should present, whenever opportunities offer, a case to secure for our wheatgrowers the full price for their product.

The Minister for Lands: One of my worries is to keep the industry in its proper place in the State.

Mr. PERKINS: The industry is an extremely important one to Western Australia, and unless we are able to get on to a sound basis the difficulties of reconstruction in the country areas may be greatly increased. One other point to which I desire to refer is fodder prices. This season unfortunately has been most difficult. In most of the agricultural areas it opened up very badly indeed. The season is very late. Fortunately, fairly good rains have fallen recently; and over most of the area which I represent, the York electorate, things are looking a great deal better. Crops are much later than usual, and to a greater extent than usual will depend on the late rains. The position regarding fodder, however, can still be very difficult. Unfortunately the supplies of hay have almost all been used up, and much less than the normal quantity was cut last year. Unless the ceiling price of hay is allowed to rise to some extent, I am afraid very small quantities will be cut on that area during this year. It is going to mean that many crops which would be normally stripped for wheat will have to be cut for hay if a sufficient quantity of hay is to be obtained. Naturally, with the better prospects for wheat, farmers will be less inclined to go to all the extra trouble involved, and possibly to incur some danger of loss if things do not turn out right, in cutting good wheat crops for hay. Undoubtedly sufficient feed crops can be obtained at the expense of the grain yield. Unfortunately a golden opportunity was lost last year.

During the debate on the Address-in-reply last session I raised the question of providing some extra labour to take advantage of

the bounteous season which we then had in the eastern districts. Unfortunately that labour was not forthcoming, and huge areas of self-sown crop simply went to waste—were not harvested at all. I know of cases where farmers had cut some of it in the hope of getting labour to stack it. That hay is still lying out in the paddocks, and has never been carted. The losses were very heavy. If some labour had been made available at the critical time last season, the recent fodder worries could have been largely got over, and our dairy production could have been increased; there was not sufficient fodder going into the dairying districts this year. I hope the Agricultural Department will watch the position very closely this year, because the crops are short whilst labour is offering some difficulties. Fortunately the labour position has been eased by prisoners of war being allotted to some farms, though not to all by any means. I repeat, the position will need very careful watching. However, I commend the position to the attention of the Government and hope that Ministers will keep closely in touch with it.

That, I think, covers the main subjects on which I wished to speak. I would like to stress again the importance of the Government's giving consideration to plans for improving the position generally in country districts in order not only to hold the position which we have now but also to build up a better feeling there and make it easier to deal with the repatriation of our soldiers when they come back from the war, which we hope will not last much longer now. But unless we do give serious thought to the organisation that we are going to set up for the purpose of bringing about the various reforms and improvements to which I have referred in the agricultural areas, I greatly fear that we shall not see as many ex-servicemen returning to the land as we hoped would do so, thus helping to lift our agricultural industry to a higher level of prosperity than we have known for some time past.

On motion by Mr. Leslie, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 8.48 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

*Tuesday, 8th August, 1944.*

	PAGE
Auditor General's report, Section "B" 1943 .....	97
Questions: Potash, as to production and cost .....	97
Third party insurance, as to licenses issued .....	98
Superphosphate, as to allocation for 1944-45 .....	98
Orchard registration, as to fees and inspectors .....	98
Address-in-reply, fourth day .....	98

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

### AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT.

#### *Section "B," 1943.*

The PRESIDENT: I have received from the Auditor General a copy of section "B" of his report on the Treasurer's statement of Public Accounts for the financial year ended the 30th June, 1943. It will be laid on the Table of the House.

### QUESTIONS (4).

#### POTASH.

##### *As to Production and Cost.*

Hon. J. CORNELL (for Hon. H. Seddon) asked the Chief Secretary:

In reference to the Lake Campion alunite deposits—

(i) On what date was the production of potash commenced?

(ii) What amount has been produced to the end of June, 1944?

(iii) What is the daily production of potash now, and in what form?

(iv) What was the capital expenditure to end of June?

(v) What further capital expenditure is estimated to enable the estimated tonnage of potassium salts set out by the Minister in his memorandum to Parliament in 1942, when introducing the State (Western Australian) Alunite Industry Partnership Bill to be attained?

(vi) What is the cost per ton produced?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(i) 16/2/44.

(ii) 420 tons to end of June. July production—135 tons.

(iii) (a) About 5 tons. (b) Potassium salts.

(iv) The total expenditure to the end of June was £185,014, in which is included £14,000 for the purchase of the syndicate's