

fer was pointed out, an examination showed that the word "incorporated" was being improperly used. The legal interpretation of the word "incorporated" is, I understand, quite different from what was intended in connection with the Perth Dental Hospital, and the word has consequently been eliminated from the title of that institution, which is now known as the Perth Dental Hospital. The Bill is a simple measure rendered necessary because of the division of the interests which formed the conjoint ownership of the area in question, and I trust it will receive the approval of this House. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. L. Craig, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 4.55 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Thursday, 15th October, 1942.*

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2.15 p.m., and read prayers.

### QUESTIONS (3).

#### MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT.

##### *Councils' Revenue.*

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER asked the Minister for Works: What are the respective amounts calculable as local revenue for the purposes of Section 480 of the Municipal Corporations Act from the last year's annual statements of—1, The Perth City Council; 2, Fremantle City Council; 3, Subiaco Municipality?

The MINISTER replied: The figures supplied by the councils are as follow:—Perth City Council, £255,862; Fremantle City Council, £54,978; Subiaco Council, £36,034.

## SHIPBUILDING.

### *Qualifications of Management Committee, etc.*

Mr. BERRY asked the Minister for Industrial Development: 1, Will he please inform the House what qualifications for shipbuilding are possessed by each of the members of the management committee set up to inaugurate and control the industry of building wooden ships in Western Australia? 2, Is there any reason why an experienced shipbuilder has not been included in the personnel of this committee? 3, When may we anticipate the laying of the first wooden-ship keel in this State?

The MINISTER replied: 1, Two members of the Committee are civil engineers of high standing with special organising qualifications. The third is a marine engineer who has had shipyard experience. 2, An expert on wooden-ship building is to be appointed almost immediately as works manager. 3, Eight to ten weeks.

## PIGS, PRICES.

Mr. BERRY asked the Minister for Agriculture: As he is aware of the wide discrepancy between the price of pigs in this State and the Eastern States and because of the rising resentment of Western Australian pig breeders, will he make a statement explaining the reasons for such discrepancy?

The MINISTER replied: The basis of increased production of pigs in Western Australia is the policy to produce for the export market. In the Eastern States, particularly Victoria and New South Wales, growers have produced for the local market rather than for the export trade. Because of this factor, we have been subjected to a 15 per cent. discrimination on the export price which has, following our constant representations, recently been removed. This represents a little more than 1d. per pound to the grower. The Government has also on numerous occasions stressed the necessity of the grower having a period of security during which the price will not be reduced. It is known that this provision was included in the drafts of the plan to control the meat industry. The price alone is not sufficient to induce farmers to enter upon a policy of pig production, as is clearly indicated by the receding number of pigs in the Eastern States where the price is high.

### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motions by Mr. Wilson, leave of absence for one month granted to Mr. F. C. L. Smith (Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) on the ground of urgent national business, and to Mr. Rodoreda (Roebourne) on the ground of ill-health.

### PRIVILEGE—FARMERS AND PASTORALISTS' DEBTS.

*Inaccurate Press Report.*

**MR. WATTS** (Katanning) [2.20]: On a question of privilege, yesterday I asked the Minister for Lands the following question:—

Is it his intention this session to introduce legislation to carry into effect the resolution of this House passed last year, asking for legislation for the adjustment of secured debts?

That resolution as amended by this House and passed in October last year read—

That in view of the fact that the secured liabilities of many farmers and pastoralists, and persons, whose difficulties have been occasioned by the same economic factors, engaged in manufacturing, commercial, and industrial enterprises and numerous citizens, not so engaged, who are in difficulties substantially through reasons beyond their control, are so great that they are unable to pay their way, and in the interests of the State, it is essential that those engaged in these industries be placed in a solvent position as soon as possible, it is the opinion of this House that the Government should take immediate action to legislate for the adjustment of such secured debts and their ultimate reduction to not exceeding the fair value of the security.

The motion, therefore, did not apply only to the debts of farmers, but in the Press today I am reported as asking the Minister if it was his intention this session to introduce legislation to carry into effect the resolution of the House passed last year, asking for legislation for an adjustment of farmers' secured debts. There has been previous reference in this House to inaccurate Press statements. The whole purport of my question was to ascertain whether the resolution passed by this House was the subject of legislation, and I take exception to the fact that the question I asked was not properly reported.

### BILL—ADMINISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 8th October.

**MR. WATTS** (Katanning) [2.23]: As the Minister told the House, this is a Bill

a portion of which has been submitted at my request. It deals substantially with the authority of executors and administrators to act through agents or attorneys, and that aspect of the Bill has two sections. The first is that when a person dies he appoints an executor or an application is made for administration by one of the next-of-kin or some other person entitled to act. In many cases at present executors have been appointed by wills made a considerable time ago, and the executors themselves are members of the Forces. The law does not enable such an executor to appoint an attorney to act on his behalf and take out probate of the will unless the executor himself is out of Western Australia. It will be readily realised that there are many of our men today in the Forces who are just as far away from the sphere of operations in connection with the affairs of the testator as they would be if they were on service overseas, because it is possible for them to be as far away as Wyndham whereas the court that deals with these matters is situated in Perth.

So difficulties have arisen, and it was those difficulties I brought before the Minister concerning cases where no application has been made, as it was impracticable under the existing law for the executor to appoint an attorney because the executor himself was still in Western Australia, and was not authorised by the Act to do so. Consequently applications have been long delayed and considerable difficulty has ensued. The same remarks apply so far as administration is concerned. If the proposed administrator desires to appoint an attorney, he is in a very similar position, so that part of the measure that enables such an administrator or executor while he is in Western Australia and a member of the Forces to make an application through his attorney is very desirable. As for that part of the Bill which seeks to include, in the concessions granted under the Act to members of the Fighting Forces, those men who belong to the Fighting Forces of our Allied nations, there can be nothing but commendation for the proposal. I am in entire agreement with the Minister in his desire that our Allies, in the circumstances in which we find ourselves, should be given any concession that is reasonable; and I think this concession is most reasonable.

The remaining portion of the Bill deals with another aspect of administration that has occasioned even greater difficulties than

the first to which I have made reference. To make the position clear, I will give the House an example of what has actually taken place. At Cranbrook a farmer died leaving his son as the sole executor. The son took over the property and for some time managed it in his capacity as executor. He was then called up for service, and is now in some far-distant northern portion of the State. He desired to appoint his mother as attorney to carry on during his absence, but immediately it was found that Section 138 of the Administration Act rendered that course impracticable because the young man was not out of Western Australia. I communicated with the Crown Law Department and asked if there was any way by which an application on behalf of the son could be made to the court for leave to appoint an attorney to act for him while he was still in Western Australia. I was informed in reply that there was no means available for that course unless the law was amended with that object in view. It was then that I approached the Minister on the matter, because it is vitally important that someone be appointed to administer such properties while young men are away on active service, although still in Western Australia. I am grateful to the Minister for bringing down the measure which will rectify such a position and enable an application to be made to the court—if the Bill is passed. Accordingly, I have no hesitation in commending the Bill to the House, and I support its second reading.

**MR. McDONALD** (West Perth): I support the second reading of the Bill. It is to rectify an anomaly that the Minister is now seeking to provide that people in our Fighting Forces, although still serving inside the confines of Western Australia, shall be granted the same concessions with regard to estate duties as are, under the law as it is at present, extended to soldiers whose service is proceeding outside Australia while yet fighting in the defence of our country. Another clause which will empower a member of the Forces to appoint an attorney to discharge his duties as executor or administrator before he leaves Australia, is also a very necessary provision, and I support it. I think, however, that we may need to go further in relation to the position of members of the Defence Forces who are executors or administrators. I have

not been able to frame a suitable amendment in time for consideration during the Committee stage of the Bill in this House, but before the Bill is dealt with in another place I would like to have a talk with the Minister as to a possible extension of the principle in relation to attorneys acting for administrators or executors. I will give the House brief details of a specific case within my knowledge. An executor who had not appointed an attorney to act for him before he left Australia is now a prisoner of war in Germany. In the circumstances it is quite impossible for that executor to execute any power of attorney at all. I think, if that position is to be overcome, it can only be by a certain amount of expense being involved, which everyone wishes to avoid.

The Premier: It should be a simple matter to get that dealt with by a judge in Chambers in those circumstances.

**MR. McDONALD**: A judge in Chambers has no power to appoint an executor but there is one way by which the difficulty could be overcome, though it would not apply in all cases. I shall not take up the time of the House by detailed references to what I mean, but there are cases where, as far as I can see at present, it would present insuperable difficulties and an estate might therefore remain without any proper control until such time as the position could be rectified. However, I have not yet evolved an amendment to meet the situation, but I think it should be possible to do so. Before the Bill goes to another place I would like the Minister to give me an opportunity to discuss with him an amendment which might broaden the application of the Bill, and cover cases that would not now be adequately dealt with under the provisions the Minister has included in the Bill.

**MR. NEEDHAM** (Perth): Before the second reading is agreed to, I wish briefly to refer to that portion which provides another definition of "active service." I am glad the measure embodies that very important alteration in the definition. Considerable trouble has been experienced regarding probate on estates belonging to deceased members of the Fighting Forces. Those associated with the Soldiers' Dependents War Patriotic Fund have had many instances before them emphasising the difficulties, and prompting the suggestion by

their honorary solicitor that an alteration in the law was essential. One example concerned a soldier who after fighting overseas had returned to Western Australia and died in the Infectious Diseases Hospital. Despite the fact that the man had served overseas, his death having occurred in the State, the exemptions which the Act provided regarding fees and probate duty, were not allowed in his case. The value of that soldier's estate was £300, but exemption from probate duty and fees was not allowed. I believe that at the outbreak of the war an Executive Council minute provided exemption from the payment of fees on estates of deceased persons whose death occurred while on active service with the Fighting Forces; and I understand that minute was in line with the Commonwealth Defence Act which, as far as I remember, provides that those enlisting for service abroad are considered to be on active service although they may not leave Australia at all.

This matter was complicated by the passing of an amending Act, No. 34 of 1939, the object of which was to insert a proviso that Section 98 of the principal Act was only to apply to the extent of a concession of half the duty allowed under the terms of the principal Act to certain relatives domiciled in Western Australia. It was not, however, applicable to estates whose value exceeded £6,000. In 1939 we had further amending legislation, which, so far as I see, does not give a definition of "active service," although some of the heads of the relevant departments have adopted a fairly liberal interpretation of the meaning of "active service." Once more, in 1942, there was amending legislation, which however did not make the position any easier. It provided that, when the net value of an estate did not exceed £1,000, no duty shall be payable, but that when it exceeded £1,000 only one-half or one-quarter of the duty ordinarily payable according to relationship and domicile of the persons entitled to the estate should be paid. Such was the position at the time of the advent of the present Bill, which I observe gives a definition of "active service" that is more clearly understandable. The people interested will, if the Bill passes, have the benefit of legislation in this connection applying to soldiers in Australia. The Bill is necessary because of the fact that Australian soldiers already have died in Australia. So far as the war is concerned, no matter

where a soldier dies he should be deemed to have died while on active service. That I understand is the intention of the measure. I brought the urgency of the need for a clear definition before the Minister for Justice some time ago, and I am glad to see that need is now to be met.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment and the report adopted.

## **BILL—COLLIE RECREATION AND PARK LANDS ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 8th October.

**MR. THORN** (Toodyay) [2.40]: This small Bill speaks for itself.

Mr. Marshall: You can sit down then!

**MR. THORN**: I have before me the plan furnished by the Minister. It provides for the excision of a small portion of the land comprised in the Collie Recreation Reserve, this portion being divided from the main portion of the reserve by a railway line. To me the portion in question appears practically useless as an inclusion in the reserve. In agreement with the Conservator of Forests it has been decided to include another small portion of land, which in many respects is far more suitable than the portion that the Bill proposes to excise. The former portion has been inspected by the Town Planning Commissioner, who agrees that it would be an acquisition to the reserve. After consideration by the Minister for Lands, who is the relevant Minister, it has been agreed to excise portion "C" as shown on the plan and to include the small portion marked "A." It will be realised that a piece of land separated from the main portion of the reserve by a railway line is in no respect suitable as a recreation ground for young people, especially children. In fact, it creates a dangerous position. I have no objection whatever to the passing of the Bill.

**MR. WILSON** (Collie): I agree with the purposes of this Bill, and also with everything stated by the Minister in introducing it. It is most desirable that the measure should pass.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment and the report adopted.

**ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1942-43.***In Committee of Supply.*

Debate resumed from the 13th October on the Treasurer's Financial Statement and on the Annual Estimates, Mr. Marshall in the Chair.

*Vote—Legislative Council, £1,890.*

**MR. NORTH** (Claremont) [2.45]: During his remarks yesterday, the member for East Perth reminded me of a subject well worth reviving in this Committee, and that is the question of post-war reconstruction. He said that, in order to be fair, we ought to take action on those lines. I desire to refer to a motion carried by this House last session on the subject. It is in the following words:—

1, That this House considers that Cabinet should take steps now to explore avenues of employment for our fighting men and war workers after hostilities.

2, That the public works to be examined for this purpose should include the following:—

Western Naval base, with docking facilities;

Completion of various harbour works, as necessary;

Gauge standardisation and modernisation of W.A.G.R. in stages;

Conservation of water supplies and reticulation of wheat belt, in stages;

Provision of necessary State utilities to enable establishment of a steel and aluminium industry.

3, That the Premier should get in touch with the Federal Government to ensure a practical liaison and joint effort in respect of these projects.

The House at the time listened attentively to the debate on the motion and was good enough to carry it. I have reason to believe the Government has done something in the matter; it is making the necessary examinations. I am grateful to the member for East Perth for having reminded me of the subject, because the public have not yet heard whether or not the Government is making the inquiries and investigations.

The Premier: Some of the matters referred to are war-time matters.

**Mr. NORTH:** The time has arrived when members and the public should be informed of what is being done. Of course, if the

matters come under the National Security Act—

The Premier: Yes, two or three of them do. They are different matters.

**Mr. NORTH:** The carrying of that motion by the House was important. It was not prepared in five minutes. It involves the expenditure of millions of pounds, perhaps £50,000,000, to carry it to a conclusion. The Premier now informs the Committee that the investigations are being made; and, if that is so, the effect will be to make absolutely sure there will be work available for our fighting men and war-workers—no matter if these investigations cost thousands of pounds—after the war is over until such time as some new order can be worked out. It will be a good stop-gap. Members should be reminded of that fact.

I shall now turn to another subject of importance which I desire to bring under the notice of the Minister for Agriculture. I do so partly for the reason that the member for Murray-Wellington is unfortunately absent from his seat on account of military duties. The time has arrived when milk-producers are inclined to refuse to continue delivering milk. I desire to refer to what has been done in Great Britain with regard to its milk supply. A few days ago, Sir Walter Elliott, the British Minister for Agriculture, told the public over the air an extremely interesting story of what was being done in Britain in order to keep down prices for agricultural and other essential products. In Australia we have a system of boards which, in these times, are accepted as satisfactory by many people. Here the producers' costs are ascertained, the board meets and a price is struck as low as possible to suit the consumer. Naturally, there are complaints about these boards, even in peace-time; but now we have reached the stage where costs are continually rising and where, under our board system, the price is not being raised. The consumers, of course, do not want the price to be raised.

Great Britain has, in the face of tremendous difficulties, dealt with this matter in a sound, if unorthodox, way. I am now quoting what was said by the British Minister for Agriculture. He used a homely phrase; he said that Britain would go the longest way to get the shortest way home. In other words, there was a large subvention from the British Treasury to the producers

to enable prices to be kept at a level that would permit of distribution of essential foodstuffs to the homes of the people. Actually, milk is being received by every person in England, except those who refuse it. Large numbers of persons in England receive milk without payment, but all who want milk get it at a reasonable price, the difference in the cost of production being made up by the Government from the subvention. We learnt two or three days ago that the Commonwealth Government decided to subsidise the dairy industry to the extent of £2,000,000, but this amount seems to have dropped to £1,500,000. We have not been told, however, how the money is to be spent and therefore—without this guide from Great Britain—nobody can say how the money will be applied.

But it surely is of great interest to this State to realise that Great Britain is employing a quite unorthodox method to supply her people with essential foodstuffs. It has never been heard of before and, according to the Minister concerned, it is producing satisfactory results. I am dealing particularly with the subject of milk, but England supplies not only milk but other essential foodstuffs to all her people in this way, notwithstanding the tremendous rise in costs. It is not perhaps my duty to tell the House what to do in this matter; that is a duty which perhaps should be performed by a member representing a farming constituency. Every member knows, however, that our producers are almost on the point of leaving their holdings because of their inability to meet increasing costs. Methods similar to those to which I have referred were advocated before the war; they were termed "new economics," but they were not considered at all practical. Now we have Great Britain's example. I trust it will be considered by the Committee and followed at the first opportunity. Although our Milk Board may be doing its best to keep the price of milk down, it cannot prevent an increase in costs of production owing to rising prices of superphosphate and labour, as well as other difficulties that must be faced by the producers. That is the problem in a nutshell.

Another question that should be raised now is the proposal before Australia to hold a referendum. An important matter that will have to be considered by Parliament in the

near future is the next State election. We have been definitely warned that a referendum will be held. I am not quite sure, but perhaps it will be held in the middle of next year.

Mr. Seward: In six months.

Mr. NORTH: According to the information I have received, the conference on the referendum will be held at the end of the year, so the referendum is likely to take place about September of next year.

Mr. Seward: It must be taken within six months of the passing of the Bill.

Mr. NORTH: The Bill might not be brought down until March or April.

Mr. Boyle: December!

Mr. NORTH: I did not know that, but that would fix the date of the referendum as about June or July. The point I wish to place before the Committee is whether or not it would be advisable to hold the State election just before the referendum is taken. Should we not consider the postponement of the State election until the referendum has been taken? According to the remarks of the member for Pingelly and the member for Avon, the referendum will be held within three months after the State election. Are we justified in spending £100,000 of the taxpayers' money to hold an election before the referendum takes place? Should we not wait until we have our orders from the people of Australia?

Mr. Watts: The State election would not cost £100,000. It would cost about £10,000.

Mr. NORTH: That is good news.

Mr. Needham: To what election are you referring?

Mr. NORTH: The election to be held next March, unless, of course, it is to be postponed under some arrangement that we have not heard about. I am assuming for the moment—I do not think it likely—that the unificationists get away with their propaganda, and that the people of Australia are stampeded into wiping out State Parliaments. Then we would have our orders and know what to do. Should we in such a case hold an election that would give this Parliament but two or three months' survival?

The Premier: You are taking a very extravagant view.

Mr. NORTH: The possibility exists that the unificationists may get away with their propaganda; the conditions are favourable to them. In the first place, large numbers of the thinking public are in khaki and it

will not be possible to reach them easily. In the second place, an enormous amount of energy and interest is being expended in the prosecution of the war. Therefore, the enormously important State Parliaments, with their extremely important State functions, are completely, as it were, blacked out.

Member: Submerged!

Mr. NORTH: Yes.

Mr. Needham interjected.

Mr. NORTH: Of course, there may be a plot to try to secure the life of the present Parliament for a further two or three years in defiance of the wishes of the people. That is a different matter. But the point I have in mind is that we should consider, during the next month or two, what action the Government ought to take to put before the public the real need for State administration in all its forms. When I think of the opportunities before the State, and what we could do in the next 20 or 30 years in the way of post-war reconstruction, I realise what is needed in Western Australia. The member for East Perth said the problem could be solved by increasing our population to 7,000,000. If we had such a population we would consume all the food we now grow; there would be none available for export. There would also be a tremendous expansion of our secondary industries. We must visualise a State with such a population and apply ourselves whole-heartedly to the solution of this problem. We cannot expect the State to have a population remaining stationary at half-a-million. We must keep that ambition before us; if we do not, it is better that we should close down and allow the State to be run from one centre.

But if we apply ourselves to the duty which the Constitution has placed upon us, we certainly will not only maintain our State Parliament, but perhaps bifurcate the State or divide it into three portions—that is not impossible in a State of 1,000,000 square miles, with its tremendous resources—and we should have at least three administrations, centred perhaps in Albany, Perth and Geraldton or Broome. That the public should be stampeded into a snap-vote to throw away the present and future powers of this Parliament is scandalous, and I trust that the Government and this Parliament will instruct the public in its own interests and in the interests, not only of the small man, but of big business, just what the

position is as to the tremendous opportunities we have here. That point of view has been put forward many times.

The member for West Perth has done everything that any person could humanly do, short of getting a good hearing. I have not forgotten his policy speech over the air when he told the people that it was the duty of the Commonwealth Government to set up a definite developmental policy for this and other backward States. He stressed the obvious need, which was not so apparent to the unthinking elector then, of population. He also stressed the point that we must open up this territory. The Commonwealth Parliament should not, at a moment when the whole nation's attention is on the war, try to crush this Parliament and take its powers from it. The Government of the day, in consultation with the Leader of the Opposition and the member for West Perth, should arrange, with the expenditure of a few pounds from these very Estimates, to have a series of talks sent over the air telling the people the position which they are up against if they fall for any of the propaganda to take away the powers of this State, and thus not allow it to be developed in its own way. They should also point out its future prospects and emphasise all the available minerals we have here in addition to the tremendous landed estate.

In my first speech in this House—in the days of my nervous maiden speech—I quoted a list of minerals that we have here, and even went so far as to mention the tremendous amount of machinery and horsepower per head in the United States compared with that in Western Australia, and how necessary it was for us then, as it is now 18 years later, to develop that horsepower and machinery so that we may become a progressive State and not a mere wood and water Joey, as we are likely to be if the unificationists get their way. I will leave that point with the urgent request that the Government of the day, together with the Leader of the Opposition and the member for West Perth should prepare a programme of publicity to go over the air to ensure that the public will know what it is going to suffer if we lose the power of running this State in the way desired by the people of Western Australia.

Not only is the United States of America—on which we are modelled—content to maintain its 48 States throughout

this war, and have been so content for 150 years or more, but there has been no attempt to belittle the States. They run their own affairs, and President Roosevelt said that after the present conflict he would hand back to the people for their own use all the powers that the Union Government was now using. Possibly, in making these remarks, one is beating about the bush because the Leader of the Opposition and the Premier are going East to a conference, and when it has been held we may find that the proposals are reasonable and generous, and perhaps necessary; because all of us know there are many changes due, although no changes should remove the sovereignty of this Parliament. We only want changes that will make for better working and better commercial and economic conditions. We do not want any more James cases.

Mr. Doney: Would they seek a change in constitution if it were to be more generous?

Mr. NORTH: It is possible. We should have some faith in our representatives and imagine that their reasoning is sufficiently strong to prove the exception to the rule, and that on this occasion the Commonwealth will give way. Let us hope so. While we hold our present powers—and after all possession is nine-tenths of the law—let our own people know where we stand. I would go further and advocate that this Government, together with the Leader of the Opposition and the member for West Perth should get in touch with two or three of the other States where there is a chance to defeat these proposals if they are ungenerous and likely to belittle and endanger the States. In combining with those other two or three States we should arrange to fight so that the proposals will be defeated as they must be, in two other States besides Western Australia.

This is one time, Sir, when you, whether in your present capacity or that of Deputy Speaker, are not able to direct us to keep to the Bill. Although my remarks may not be directly concerned with the Estimates they are so in a sense because, if the Estimates are to be maintained each year, we must certainly retain this Parliament so that they can be brought down. Nearly everyone has referred to a matter which I will bring forward merely to encourage those members who are keen on reconstruction. As I said a few moments ago, we carried a motion in

this House which the Premier informed us cannot be discussed in public, because the work being done is of a confidential nature and must not be disclosed to the enemy. I received this morning a rather curious letter on reconstruction from the country. When I say "curious" I mean "notable," because it shows that there are people in the country who are still keen on this subject. As we are later to have a motion on reconstruction I propose to read these few lines. They are written from a place as far away as "Murchison House Station, Ajana." Fancy having thinkers in that country among the sandflies and blowflies! Although they are worrying about the war they still have sufficient time to give a thought to reconstruction, and I believe their thoughts are up to the standard of some of the speeches in Legislative Assemblies. The letter is as follows:—

I hope you do not mind my writing to you about a matter of reconstruction after the war, but as there have been a number of speeches by Parliamentarians upon this problem, it appears that a fair amount of thought is being given towards it. The point I should like to bring forward is, what position are the huge financial and commercial trusts going to occupy in the new order?

I think this point should be looked into as I think we all agree—even some of the people in control of mammoth institutions concerned—that the centralisation of immense wealth, together with the possession of raw materials and power in the hands of a select few is bad for the general population throughout the world—white, black, brown and brindle—and also that their example is affecting Governments—such as our Federal Government—by increasing their tendency towards securing the economic equipment and legislative control of smaller States.

It is no use building up a paper Atlantic Charter in which the smaller nations are free in name only, but actually under the domination of the financial trusts in London and New York. To have been really genuine the Atlantic Charter should have made some reference to this as the power of these trusts is now so well known as to constitute an international problem. I enclose a "note" I have written explaining my reasons for holding my opinion, which I have sent to Professor Murdoch and several others. Please forgive my writing to you upon this matter. I hope my views do not offend you. Yours very truly.

(Sgd.) CHAS. L. K. FOOT.

The author of that letter is the gentleman who pioneered the famous aviation route between South Africa and Western Australia. That is a reasonable letter and I submit it to this Committee, so that when the reconstruction



motion is brought forward members may care to contribute on these lines. There are many things in my district in regard to civil emergency control which have been well ventilated here. Questions have been asked by me and others, and as the Minister is not here at the moment there is no particular point in raising them again at this juncture.

**MR. BOYLE (Avon):** The member for Claremont, in opening his speech, referred to the prices of primary products in England, and criticised rather severely the system of boards that has been evolved in connection with primary products and their disposal within Australia. A tremendous difference exists between the conditions in England in regard to primary products and the conditions obtaining in Australia. In England we have the spectacle of a country that can only feed itself to the extent of about 40 per cent. Consequently prior to the war the British Government placed a fixed price upon wheat in England of 45s. a quarter, or about 5s. 7d. a bushel. Milk and other products were dealt with similarly. Since the outbreak of war Britain has been called upon to feed the population as far as possible from her own resources, and that has led to a system known as the subvention system. That is, the Government is now about the largest customer in England for primary products, and the cost to the Imperial Government up to date has been about £150,000,000. Britain realised that the population must be fed and had to be fed on an equalised basis, so the analogy between this country and England will not stand comparison for the reason that we in Australia have a population of 7,000,000 people producing sufficient foodstuffs to feed 50,000,000.

If we examine the position in regard to wheat alone we find that the consumption of wheat per head, in the case of a normal bread-eating population, is about  $5\frac{1}{2}$  bushels per annum so that the 200,000,000 bushels of wheat we produce every year would feed a population of about 50,000,000 on the normal bread ratio of  $5\frac{1}{2}$  bushels of wheat per head. We are a primary products exporting country and the difficulty that the present Government, or any Australian Government would discover is how to keep in existence the primary industries that have been built up on an export basis in time of war. Normally we export 75 per cent. of our wheat and 90 per cent. of our wool, in

addition to butter and other primary products in astronomical proportions. Therefore, when one deals with the primary products position here as compared with any other country, the basis is entirely misleading.

The estimated revenue for the coming year is set down at £12,394,502, which is a record for Western Australia. But the same old position arises in regard to interest payments. We are to be debited with £3,546,625 interest or £10,000 a day. This State has to pay oversea bondholders £1,785,363 and Australian bondholders £1,761,262. Members have repeatedly pointed out that such a position cannot be maintained. I am again calling attention to it, not with any intention of wearying members, but with the object of proving that we are becoming used to it and, when one becomes used to such a thing, a dangerous state of affairs has set in. In addition, we have to bear loans on war account. We cannot see the end of the debit of accumulated loans, but we know that in Australia there has been much objection to the expansion of credit. I do not like the term "monetary reform;" I prefer to refer to it as a movement to a sane control of the financial system, in which evolution must play a large part. We have always been told that an expansion of bank credit would lead to inflation. In Australia the note issue in the pre-war year was £48,000,000, and this has been expanded to £110,000,000, and we are told that £90,000,000 of it is in the pockets of the people, that is, in circulation. Yet I do not think any great inflationary tendency is visible today. It may be said that the system of price-fixing has held inflation in check, but the trouble in Australia, and in other similar countries producing far more than the resident population can consume, is that the people have not had the purchasing power in the past. Now they have it, we find that employment throughout Australia is general, though it be war-caused.

If we do not develop this country, someone else will do it for us. We are threatened by a country that has said we are slothful. I refer to Japan, and Japan has threatened to come and develop our country for us. Our greatest danger is that of opposing a population of 7,000,000 to the 90,000,000 of Japan. If we had maintained the birth-rate of 1900, we would have had 10,000,000 people to defend this country. When people

talk about an abuse of credit expansion, I reply that in my opinion the Commonwealth Bank expansion is well justified, and I for one do not entertain fears of what will happen if the Commonwealth Bank is used—as its original charter provided—as a bank for the people.

Before the war I approached the Commonwealth Bank to get an overdraft transferred to it, from another bank, for a farmer. He had excellent security including city security—that anomaly of city security more valuable than broad acres! I was told by the manager in Perth that the transfer could not be made as there was a gentleman's agreement between the banks that one should not take a customer from another. When the people's bank reaches that stage, it is no longer a people's bank, because it has joined the great combine.

Mr. Hughes: Would that farmer have got the money at a cheaper rate?

Mr. BOYLE: Strangely enough, he would have done so. He was paying  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. to one of the associated banks, and the Commonwealth Bank overdraft rate was  $4\frac{1}{4}$  per cent. He was not allowed to get the advantage of the  $1\frac{1}{4}$  per cent., though an adjoining farmer, who was a client of the Commonwealth Bank, had received money at that rate. It is unjust to compel one farmer to pay a private bank  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. when the people's bank, which was brought into existence in 1913 and which has well justified its existence, could have provided the money for  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. As I have stated, this farmer had to pay a penal rate to the private bank while a man on a farm practically adjoining received his money at an interest rate of  $1\frac{1}{4}$  per cent. less.

I feel concerned about the plague of grasshoppers afflicting the eastern districts. This question was brought before the House by me last week and I have no intention of pursuing the lines followed then. I notice in the Estimates that provision is made to deal with the pest. There is no question but that the pest has assumed alarming proportions. The Minister told the House on one occasion that he did not like flying. I understand that when an airman gets into difficulties, he takes what is termed evasive action. In replying to my statements on the grasshopper pest, the Minister certainly took evasive action. He could have dealt with the matter in a manner to bring some little relief or solace to the afflicted farmers

instead of setting out to excuse the departmental officers and the lack of action by the Government. The Minister said that £37,000 had been expended since 1936 on baiting and other methods to cope with the pest. I adopted the attitude that spasmodic action only had been taken by the Government, and I can prove by departmental documents that there has been less than spasmodic action. Declining action has led to the present state of affairs.

The estimated expenditure for the destruction of locusts in 1941-42 was £2,000, of which only £259 was spent. For the year 1942-43 only £500 is provided. The destruction of grasshoppers involves preventive action year by year. I agree with the Minister that once the grasshopper is on the wing it cannot be dealt with, but when the expenditure on combating the menace falls from £37,000 to £259, and only £500 is provided for the present year, the preventive action is too ridiculous to be dwelt upon. The Minister referred to the fact that ploughing had been done, though not to any great extent. In reply to a question asked in another place, a member elicited that the extent of the ploughing was under £100 in value.

I repeat that only £500 is provided for preventive measures this year. The Agricultural Bank, in its report, shows a locust eradication recoup of £81 5s., and presumably that was the total amount paid by the Agricultural Bank for the eradication of locusts on its properties. Consider these amounts, £81 5s. and £259, and the Minister's reference to £37,000 spent six years ago! I desired to deal with the problem on the present basis, and I object to being charged with making extravagant statements. That savours to me of being a ministerial remark with very little foundation, especially when the documents issued by responsible departments show that only a very small portion of the money was expended. A sum of £259 compared with £37,000 is a very small amount.

Daylight saving is meeting with a great deal of adverse criticism in the country areas. Most members will agree that whatever the merits of daylight saving may be in the Eastern States, it has practically none here. To my mind there is no reason why we should have daylight saving in all the States. Western Australia is normally two hours behind Melbourne time, so there is no need for a

differentiation here, and it is causing a good deal of inconvenience and trouble in the agricultural districts. Farmers work by the sun, not by the clock, and they find that when they go to town to transact business, post offices, railway stations and business houses are closed. Somebody suggested that they should go to the town in the morning to do their business. Did one ever hear of such a thing—that a man should leave his work and go to town in order to comply with daylight saving conditions? I hope that if daylight saving is proposed in future, a strong protest will be entered on behalf of this State.

I must revert to the grasshopper menace. A day or two ago I received a telegram and I believe a copy of it has been sent to the Minister. It is from a farmer in the North Burracoppin area and reads—

Grasshoppers said to be under control. Here in billions. Demand you bring Ministerial party including Wise and Donovan immediately to investigate first-hand alarming destruction being done. Have wired Mr. Wise. Confer with him. E. Reichelt.

That is a very peremptory telegram and I have read it, not because I could order the Minister to go to the district, but because I know Mr. Reichelt is a very substantial farmer and a hard-working man whose crops are disappearing before the hordes of locusts. It has been said that politics is a problem of no inconsiderable magnitude. I am afraid that the so-called marginal area settlement in this State is going to be a problem of no inconsiderable magnitude. Any criticism I offer is made in a constructive spirit. I would not be helpful to the Minister or the Government, nor would my action be justified, if I merely criticised in a destructive way the efforts being made by the Government. Rather would I endeavour to assist in the re-settlement of those areas. For many years I have been in close contact with the areas known as marginal. That is a misnomer, because amongst the so-called marginal areas are many farms of a highly productive nature. The quality of the land varies and the rainfall varies. To take a district, say, from Ajana in the north and east of Geraldton to south of Southern Cross and treat it as one proposition is not dealing with the problem as it should be tackled. There are many difficulties to face. Recently I had a trip to those areas. Witnesses came in from the surrounding districts, which I have also visited on many occasions. Settlers in the Mt. Hampton area have declared

that they do not want the so-called marginal area reconstructional scheme. They merely ask to be left alone. They want better water facilities, their debts reduced, and they believe they can make good.

The best thing Parliament or the Government can do is to help those who are prepared to help themselves. The men in that district want to be permitted to work out their own salvation, and be permitted to grow 200 acres of wheat. I have not always subscribed to that view. I have tried to fit in with the views expressed in the Wheat Assistance Act, 1938 (No. 53) in which it was laid down that farmers should be shifted from marginal areas to other localities, or that their farms should be changed over to other products than the growing of wheat. I have taken that as my text. I find that the farmers practically unanimously rejected that proposal in those areas. They want to be able to grow 200 acres of wheat. After listening to statements made and examining those statements I agree that that should be so. That is where I think the Government has made a grave initial blunder. No man knows his own case as well as he himself knows it. I am not impertinent enough to move amongst hundreds of settlers and endeavour to teach them their business. They know their land after being there for 15 or 22 years. If they consider they cannot make a success of their operations without the right to grow 200 acres of wheat I would agree with their view. I would examine the position, and then give them the opportunity to carry out their desire.

To deal with this problem the Government has unfortunately set up the Agricultural Bank. That is basically unfair. I do not impugn the officials of that institution. I do not say the Commissioners are not doing the best in their own light that they can do, but the position as I have stated remains. These farmers are mortgaged to the Agricultural Bank, and the Commissioners are charged with the duty of preserving the mortgage debts due to the institution. That is in accordance with the Act, and it is commonsense that the Commissioners should safeguard so far as they are able the amounts owing to the Bank. But we cannot have it both ways. We cannot reconstruct these condemned areas on the ordinary basis of farming by endeavouring to preserve the debt existing against the property. That is why I and others, who know the

problem intimately, think that in many cases the mortgage debt must disappear. It is an accumulated debt, which has been built up on country that was settled before there was any real knowledge of it, and the men who are in those areas today are largely the victims of the land boom of a period following the last war. We have today the problem of re-settling not newcomers but men who have been on the land for many years.

I have heard it suggested recently that it did not matter whether the present settlers remained on their holdings or not, that returned soldiers would be sent there after the present war. If I have anything to do with it no returned soldier will ever be induced to go there. Of the 320 men who originally went into the Mukinbudin district 150 are still left, and they want the opportunity to be reconstructed. They should not be told they may not grow any wheat. They have been told they will receive sheep through Government channels, which amounts to getting rid of the stock firms. I hold no brief for the stock firms as such, but I think they are doing a good job in these areas. Not only are they making it possible for farmers to acquire sheep but Goldsbrough Mort and Co. for instance, have established at Mukinbudin a manager and thus proved the confidence that firm has in the district. Another important item is the production of pigs around Mukinbudin, which is itself not actually within the marginal areas. That is another fault I have to find with the scheme. A line has been drawn some 10 miles north of Mukinbudin, and extends south-east in another direction through Pope's Hill. A farmer named Hansen who lives one mile from this arbitrary line is one of the best farmers in the district, but he does not want to be brought into the marginal scheme. Because he happens to be within a mile of the arbitrary line he is compelled to come within the scheme, although he does not wish to do so. There are other instances of the same kind.

Some 75 to 80 per cent. of the farmers are rearing pigs, which is a most valuable sideline, and liberty to grow 200 acres of wheat is of paramount importance to them. When that point was argued a little while ago the pig did not figure so largely in the scheme of things as it does today. Even at this late hour the Government should set up a marginal area board distinct altogether

from the Agricultural Bank. The Commissioners of the Bank apparently largely view these questions in the light of the mortgage debts due from the properties concerned. We see many extraordinary anomalies in the present situation. It seems to be a rule that from £1,000 to £1,500 must be left as a debt on the linked blocks. I refer to the linked blocks and what are known as anchor blocks. That means from £50 to £75 a year as an interest bill upon a man before he makes a start. If the principle were adopted local marginal area boards and councils could be set up on which the farmers would be in a majority. At present there is unrest throughout the districts. In a recent trip through those areas we met very few settlers who were satisfied with the scheme.

It is the duty of the Government to satisfy the farmers if they are expected to remain on their holdings. We came across one very fine farmer, north of Mukinbudin, who declined to stay on his land under any consideration. When a man has reached that stage he is liable to affect others. It is no use trying to administer that area through a Government department. A body must be set up on which the farmers have a say. At present, so far as I can see, the farmers are not consulted in any way. They are simply told that their debts amount to so much, that they cannot grow wheat, and cannot do many other things. Men cannot be expected to work contentedly under such conditions. According to the report issued by the Agricultural Bank the marginal area reconstruction scheme is likely to be a costly one. I should like to ask the Minister for Lands why it is that the information that has been contained in these reports has become less and less year by year. When there is any criticism concerning any particular point it seems to disappear from the report in the ensuing year. I have referred repeatedly to the percentage of collections of interest in different districts. That table has disappeared. The report today is most notable for what is missing rather than for what it contains. I hope that war economy has not reached the stage when a few lines of printing makes so much difference. Dealing with the marginal area reconstruction, the report of the Agricultural Bank sets out that the expenditure to date is £228,671 1s. 6d. The Minister said in his statement that £417,000 was to be expended.

I point out that of the allegedly Commonwealth money not one penny of it is Commonwealth money. It belongs to the wheatgrowers, and has been taken out of the flour tax that was subscribed by the people of Australia for the wheatgrowers of Australia. It was never looked upon as a grant in aid for distressed wheatgrowers who had to be reconstructed. It was taken out of the flour tax which was contributed by the people of the Commonwealth so that an additional price might be paid for wheat to aid operating wheatgrowers. The Commonwealth Government put into the Wheat Assistance Act a section setting out that £500,000 per annum would be drawn out of that tax to provide for marginal areas being taken out of wheat. That created a most extraordinary position. The wheat-grower who is distressed and up against it is called upon to provide for a Government policy of shifting men from the so-called marginal areas to safer areas. Another thing was that the State Government accepted no financial responsibility in that regard but received the money out of the flour tax funds, of which this State will receive £417,000. That money has been subscribed by the people of Australia and given to the wheatgrowers, so that the latter should have some say in its disposal. They should be represented on a marginal area reconstruction board or council. They should be consulted and local committees should be set up for their benefit.

At Mukinbudin over 30 farmers came in to the town from marginal areas to place their cases before us. We did not constitute an official committee. We were not appointed by the Government, but by the party to which I belong. We were told what many of us knew already. This Chamber should know, as the Government itself knows, that these men have not been consulted as they should be. The scheme is foredoomed to failure unless the human element is taken into consideration. Another matter that is affecting the farmers is with regard to the so-called payment of 4s. and 2s. per bushel respectively for their wheat, this year. At first we were told that they were to receive 4s. per bushel at siding for the first 3,000 bushels and 2s. a bushel for the balance. Later on, Mr. Chifley in presenting his Budget, referred to the fact that this price was for bagged wheat. That

meant a reduction of 2d. per bushel to farmers in Western Australia.

Mr. Seward: It may be more than that.

Mr. BOYLE: Yes. The farmers immediately lose 2d. per bushel when this scheme is carried into effect. The price thus comes down to 3s. 10d. for the first 3,000 bushels, and for the balance it may well not be more than 1s. 10d. a bushel. The scheme is really one that was launched five or six years ago in New South Wales. I support the Commonwealth Government's scheme, though it is not actually an original scheme but really the Robertson scheme of New South Wales. Five or six years ago, Mr. Robertson, of New South Wales, brought out exactly the same scheme. I wish to make it clear to members that I support the Scully scheme, because it involves the principle of a payable price for wheat. It fixes a price of 3s. 10d., which is a far better price than the farmer has received, even if it involves only 3,000 bushels. I do not wish it to go forth that the members of the Country Party oppose the scheme. As a matter of fact, we published a statement some time ago that we supported the Scully scheme, with the exception of the concluding portion of it, because we consider that the 1s. 10d. is not sufficient.

Reference has been made by the member for East Perth to the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act. He took members on these benches to task for not having raised some protest against recent statements. I can assure him that it is no new thing for us to raise objections to the Rural Relief Fund Act, because from my place in the House, when the previous Minister for Lands introduced the Bill, I moved that as the money given to the farmers was a gift from the Commonwealth Government, it should be a gift to the farmers. That is only common honesty. But instead of being a gift to the farmers, the £1,259,000 advanced largely constitutes a secured debt to the farmers, and a huge amount of unsecured debts have been compounded for 5s. 10d. in the pound.

Mr. Hughes: Sometimes half-a-crown!

Mr. BOYLE: Yes, and sometimes 1s. I know storekeepers who have received 1s., but I must take the average put out by the trustees, and that is 5s. 10d. In my area, road rates were paid to the extent of 15s. in the pound, and some machinery firms obtained 20s.

Mr. Hughes: I know they all did.

Mr. BOYLE: Many second mortgages were paid off at the rate of 10s. or 12s. in the pound. The fact remains that in connection with unsecured farmers' debts amounting to £1,250,000, 5s. 10d. in the pound has been paid, but they have become secured debts. They are not unsecured now, but are secured through the Rural Relief Fund Act.

Mr. Hughes: Secured to whom?

Mr. BOYLE: To the board, to the trustees—against the farmers.

Mr. Hughes: Not to the wages man.

Mr. BOYLE: No. The debt that was uncollectable has now been paid off at a rate sometimes as low as 1s. in the pound, but I take the average of 5s. 10d. That has now become a secured debt, so far as the farmers are concerned, and they find themselves in the position of having to meet bills and accounts from the trustees who have nothing else to do at present. The trustees dealt with only 27 cases last year. This is an instance of a board which could very well have a holiday. Now the trustees are setting out to act as collectors of debts. Since the scheme has been in operation, they have collected about £13,000. I heard that they have used £6,000 in order to put into effect a certain reconstruction proposal. How far would that go in reconstructing anything of that nature? Over 3,000 claims have been adjusted. I want to make it clear that the secured debts, as regards the farmers, are not touched.

The Royal Commission on wheat, in its monumental report in 1935, stated that this secured debt burden overshadowed everything else so far as the wheatgrowers were concerned, and I agree. The farmers in Western Australia were given £1,259,000 to relieve their debt burden, but it was passed on to them by the Act in the form of a secured debt. True, certain relief has been given as far as second mortgages are concerned, but very little in connection with first mortgages. They are sacrosanct. A bank manager said to me, "We are not represented at these meetings. We are secure. We cannot be touched." Obviously, as the other debtors are cleared off, that main debt becomes more secure to the bank. That is hopelessly wrong. When the Bill was introduced, I moved that the money should be used as a grant to the farmers. The then Minister for Lands did not agree. He said that the

farmer might win Tattersalls, and be able to repay the money out of the fortune. If the farmers are as lucky as I am, in regard to Tattersalls and lotteries, they will be in debt for the rest of their lives! The fact remains that the first annual instalments over 20 years are being sought by the trustees of the Rural Relief Fund. There is not much left for the farmer by the time he gets his account for land rents and mortgage interest, his I.A.B. bill and his water rate. To top it all, because a gift has been translated into a further debt, he is receiving accounts from the trustees of this fund! It is time the trustees were found other jobs.

This Chamber is too complacent in allowing money granted by the Commonwealth Government to be dealt with by State institutions. Those who know what I am talking about will agree that the only time Federal money has been distributed to the farmers without complaint was when the Commonwealth undertook the task, when it set up its own centre in the Post Office building. Mr. Hagarty was the officer in charge and he distributed no less than £850,000 in one year in relief to farmers. There was no trouble about the matter at all, but immediately the State Government gets hold of the distribution of Commonwealth money it is left in the hands of the Agricultural Bank.

Mr. Shearn: Whom do you blame for that situation?

Mr. BOYLE: In the first place I blame the Commonwealth. Secondly, the action taken must remain the burden of the State Government, which has distributed these moneys in such a way as to add to the difficulties of the farmers. When the Commonwealth Government distributed that 4½d. per bushel the State Government took no part in the matter at all. It was laid down in the Act that the money should go direct to the farmers and the State Government at that time—about 1933 or 1934—did not interfere, the farmers receiving their cheques direct. Today we have this iniquitous system of sustenance for the farmers. The idea in governmental circles appears to be that it is not good for the farmer to have any money.

Mr. Hughes: That is a good reason why the farmers should vote to wipe out the State Parliament.

Mr. BOYLE: That is not a valid argument. Surely the State Parliament is not to be condemned for the action of a Government which I hope is only temporarily in office!

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Will the hon. member kindly resume his seat? I draw attention to the fact that it is distinctly out of order for a member to pass between a member orderly addressing the Chair and the Chairman or Mr. Speaker. This practice is becoming quite frequent and is distinctly irritating to a speaker and to the presiding officer. I hope members will bear that in mind and not offend in future.

Mr. BOYLE: I think I have said enough to put before members the position today. A hopeless state of mind is being engendered in the farmers by the reflection that they are not considered fit to be trusted with anything, that they must live on £7 a month and, if they are endowed with children and are under the same conditions, they are allowed for each child £6 a year or 2s. 4d. a week. Yet the State gives 12s. 6d. a week to those looking after an illegitimate child.

Mr. Hughes: The farmers should have a guaranteed basic wage.

Mr. BOYLE: A basic wage for the farmer is a thing to be dreamed about! The basic wage is for every other worker in the community, for every man in a union, and quite rightly so. Why should not a man have a rate of wage paid to him to enable him to maintain a reasonable standard of comfort for himself and his family? If a farmer sells a bag of wheat, or any of his products other than through the Agricultural Bank, he becomes a criminal. Farmers have been prosecuted under the Criminal Code of this State and sent to gaol, for the alleged offence of stealing what they have produced themselves. To my knowledge, in three instances men have been sent to gaol at Fremantle for five months. Two men were so sentenced for the crime of converting to their own use their own property, that is to say, the wheat they grew themselves. It was proved that the money was not misused. They were charged at the Lake Grace court house before two justices and acquitted. I was there as President of the Wheatgrowers' Union.

Mr. Hughes: It looks as though they were Fremantle and not Lake Grace justices!

Mr. BOYLE: This time the justices were right. Very shortly afterwards, fresh in-

dictments were laid against them and they were taken to the Criminal Court in Perth where they were sentenced to Fremantle gaol for five months. I always thought it was an axiom of British justice that no man could be charged twice with the same crime, but that was not the case where these wheat-growers were concerned. Those two men from Lake Grace spent the best part of three months in gaol before we had them released.

I have previously told of the case of a young fellow from Southern Cross, but it is worth repeating. He had a wife and three children, and wanted £20 to purchase spare parts to take off a crop in order to pay the Agricultural Bank. He sent some wheat to Kalgoorlie—£20 worth—and as a result was sentenced to five months imprisonment. The magistrate at the time, Mr. Moseley, said he was sorry. He sympathised with the man but gave him five months—a peculiar sort of sympathy! The position is the same today. Farmers were charged in the Bencubbin district, and I was told later that they were fined £10 or £15 for converting wheat to their own use. I was told by a certain man that they were very lucky they were not charged with conspiracy. Could tyranny go further than that? We have a strike pending in Perth by the Tramways Union—a hold-up tomorrow. I know nothing about the case and am not forming a judgment on it, but because a tram-driver got down and clouted a chap there is a hold-up meeting.

Mr. Sampson: He was first insulted.

Mr. BOYLE: That may be so, but the fact remains that the union has vindicated and stood by its member. I do not know what the Government will do, but there is to be a meeting tomorrow and the citizens of Perth will have to walk from their residences into the town. If the farmers did a little more of that the Government would realise that they have a place in the sun.

Mr. Hughes: Perhaps their leaders are not so vigorous as are those of the Tramway Employees' Union.

Mr. BOYLE: I do not know. The isolation of the farmer is his first handicap. He can be dealt with piecemeal, but such a union as the Tramway Employees cannot be dealt with in that manner. The men are going to decide tomorrow what action will be taken to have this man reinstated, and whatever action they decide on they will

see is carried out; and they will protect their member. It may be a wrong attitude. I am not wishing to draw a comparison. This attitude is not confined to the Tramway Union. It has the advantage of unity, and as the member for East Perth remarked the tramway men's leaders know where they are leading their members because the men initiate the move. But when it comes to dealing with the unfortunate farmer who takes his own wheat, he is sent to gaol, possibly for a year. Under the Australian Wheat Board control he has no say in these matters. I hope the Government will consider the matters I have brought forward. There is a war on and the farmers are doing a great job in maintaining their production. The wheatgrowers are protected to some extent by a guaranteed price, but the majority of them in Western Australia will not derive any advantage from that money. Most of it will be taken to satisfy their debts; it will mostly go to lower the institutional debts, particularly those of the Agricultural Bank. That Bank has about 4,700 wheat and wool growers indebted to it today. Easily the majority of wheatgrowers in this State are indebted to it, and under Section 51 of the Act it is entitled to take their proceeds.

Mr. Tonkin: What is your plan to deal with this situation?

Mr. BOYLE: What situation?

Mr. Tonkin: If the Agricultural Bank has money owing to it, it means that the people have money owing to them.

Mr. BOYLE: The hon. member is getting back to the arguments used in this Chamber for years by the ex-Minister for lands. He pointed out that this money was owing to the people of Western Australia. I used the argument earlier in the debate that the officers in charge of the Agricultural Bank regard the recovery of its debts for interest as of paramount importance.

Mr. Hughes: Does not every moneylender feel the same way?

Mr. BOYLE: I am speaking from a governmental point of view.

Mr. Hughes: It is only a moneylender.

Mr. BOYLE: I would subscribe to that view, too, but the hon. member must agree that we have in this Chamber repeatedly sought a reduction of these debts.

Mr. Hughes: Would you give us all a reduction of our debts?

Mr. BOYLE: If the hon. member was in the same parlous condition as these men I would, yes, but if his assets exceeded his liabilities he would, to that extent, not be entitled to a reduction of the debt. If a man is not virtually bankrupt he must pay his debts. I do not advocate the evasion of the payment of debts, but I do say that the bankruptcy laws regard a man who cannot pay his debts as worthy of protection, and such people can seek the protection of the Bankruptcy Court.

Mr. Berry: Why cannot the farmers seek that protection?

Mr. BOYLE: That question has arisen, and there have been advocates of a mass movement towards bankruptcy.

Mr. Hughes: That would have got you somewhere.

Mr. BOYLE: Yes, and it would have deprived 4,000 men, together with their wives and children, of their homes.

Mr. Hughes: No, the authorities would have begged them to go back and look after the farms.

Mr. BOYLE: That is just a statement. It is a remarkable fact that these men and women, who have carved farms out of the country and built homes, have the creative instinct strongly implanted in them, and are loth to leave their homes. Members would be surprised to see what constitutes a home in some of these places, and to see how the women, particularly, cling to them. When one talks of a mass movement in bankruptcy one has to deal with the human element, and we could never, when I was leading the organisation, get all the members to agree. The member for Irwin-Moore knows that. The proposition was repeatedly rejected at conferences because it meant to these people the loss of their homes. They could not be forced into that position.

The Government, which put through the Agricultural Bank Act in 1934, realised that the farmers could never pay what they owed because in Section 65 is included a reduction of debt clause.

[Mr. J. Hegney took the Chair.]

The Premier: We reduced the debt by millions.

Mr. BOYLE: Yes, I agree. The Government reduced it to 12 per cent. and left 88 per cent. untouched. The Government wrote off close on £7,000,000.

Mr. Hughes: Everything it could not recover it wrote off.



Mr. BOYLE: Exactly; not only what it could not recover but of £6,000,000 a total of £3,500,000 was lost on the group settlements in the South-West. About £6,000,000 was written off because of abandoned farms, but only about £1,200,000 was removed from the shoulders of farmers on their farms. These figures are not included in the reports today. The Agricultural Bank report now is more notable for what it omits than for what it states. Last year's report showed plainly that of the farmers—and I refer only to the wheat and woolgrowers—only 12 per cent. had a reduction of debt. Eighty-eight per cent. were left with their full burden of debt, which included in many cases accrued and compounded interest. Section 47 of the Act insists that debtors should compound their interest to the Bank. I regard that as something atrocious.

Mr. Triat: Absolutely!

Mr. Hughes: It is Shylocking.

Mr. BOYLE: That is so. Section 47 of the Agricultural Bank Act insists that the Commissioners shall collect interest upon interest. In a marginal note is the term—"Interest upon interest." That Act was passed in 1934 and we are now in the year of grace 1942. Not one comma of it has been altered. The Act was assented to in January, 1935, and is a piece of legislation that has stood eight or nine years administration without the necessity for altering one section of it.

The Premier: The Commissioners who conducted the Royal Commission into the Bank's activities must have done a very good job.

Mr. BOYLE: No fear, they did not! It reminds me of Shakespeare's words, "There's a divinity that shapes our ends; rough hew them how we may." The rough hewing was certainly done by the Commissioners under legislation introduced by the Government of the day. I cannot recall that the Royal Commission recommended a provision to bring in the police to throw a farmer off his holding for the recovery of debt. That is a right not given by any other Act in the British Empire. If I am a mortgagee and have a debt owing to me—

The Premier: Or a bailiff.

Mr. BOYLE: I am coming to that point. The bailiff is employed by the local court and is insured for any wrongful act in executing an order of the court. Consequently the police are not called into the

matter, and the police should not be called in to assist to recover mortgage debts owing by farmers.

The Premier: Half the bailiffs in this State are policemen.

Mr. BOYLE: Yes, by virtue of local court appointment, but if they do anything wrong as bailiffs, they have no protection as has a constable in the execution of his duty. I remember when Mr. Claffey was bailiff of the local court in Perth.

Mr. Cross: A good man, too.

Mr. BOYLE: I believe on one occasion he was sued for £1,000 for wrongful exercise of his powers or doing something illegal. The Agricultural Bank Act, however, empowers the Commissioners to demand the assistance of the police in order to dispossess farmers of their properties, thereby bringing members of the police force under opprobrium. They do not act in the execution of an order of the court, but merely obey a ukase of the Commissioners who want to repossess a farm. A notice is served on the farmer giving him 14 days in which to pay the whole of the debt and accrued interest. It reminds me of the Commonwealth language test in which officials get hold of a Roumanian and question him in Hindoo. What farmer could pay on demand the whole of his capital debt, accrued interest and L.A.B. charges? The interest is due on the 30th June and, according to the report of the Bank Commissioners, a sum of £14,000 is already overdue. The clients concerned cannot possibly pay before January. If the Commissioners exercised their powers, those farmers who failed to pay by the 14th July could be deprived of their properties. Fancy power of that sort being granted to the Commissioners!

The Minister for Justice: It has never been exercised.

Mr. BOYLE: That statement does not cut any ice. They have the legal power.

The Minister for Justice: Not in that particular case.

Mr. BOYLE: Perhaps not, but the police have been used to intervene. This power was exercised in the Manjimup district. A farmer was thrown off his holding and I believe he had his leg or arm broken. His wife and furniture were also put out.

The Minister for Works: Did he have an action against the police?

Mr. BOYLE: I am merely mentioning the case. I have known a farm to be patrolled by a farmer carrying a shotgun to prevent

eviction. Are we to revert to the old days in Ireland when it was the custom to take the thatch off the roof and for constabulary to put out the furniture along the road. We do not want to get down to that sort of thing. It is unreasonable that the bank should have these rights of repossession. I want the farmers of this State to have some legal as well as moral rights. Today they appear to have none. Why cannot the Government be reasonable and re-cast the Agricultural Bank Act? If that task was undertaken, I would give the fullest possible assistance.

The Minister for Works: You would make a poor job of it.

Mr. BOYLE: I would make such a job of it that it would give a fighting chance to the man on the land and not put all the aces in the hands of the Bank Commissioners.

The Premier: Who would pay the bill as a result of your new Agricultural Bank Act?

Mr. BOYLE: I could expect that from the Premier. He has been responsible for the continuance of the Act for eight years, and I suppose in his eyes it has become sacrosanct. No one must touch it. If I offer assistance to get a little justice for the farmers, the Premier at once asks who will pay the bill. Who is paying the bill now? The State. It has wiped off on account of abandoned farms more than £6,000,000.

The Premier: Do you want us to continue doing that?

Mr. BOYLE: The Premier will have more than £6,000,000 to wipe off if he continues with the present Act.

Mr. Doney: The unfortunate thing is that they wipe off the farmers at the same time.

Mr. BOYLE: No, the farmers wipe themselves off and I do not blame them. Those who have left were in a hopeless position. When they left, however, the debts were reduced or written off. Within the last two months a case in a wheatgrowing district came under my notice. A farmer owed the bank £3,300 and could get but a small reduction of debt. He was thrown off the farm, having received one of the notices to which I have referred. Immediately he had left, the debt was reduced to £840 and the interest bill was reduced from £165 to a little over £40. Why could not that have been done for the man who had spent 15 years on the farm, a good man too? The bank would do nothing for him.

The Premier: Was he a good man?

Mr. BOYLE: His neighbours said so, though the bank said otherwise.

Mr. Doney: If he was a bad man, he should have been put off long before.

MR. TRIAT (Mt. Magnet): From the Budget Speech of the Acting Treasurer I realise that Western Australia's affairs are likely to be in a fairly bad way in the near future. As we shall have no right to collect taxation, our affairs must be governed by the amount of money we are able to get from other sources. Obviously conditions in Western Australia are not as bright as some people would have us believe. Quite a number of items in the Estimates show reductions. Take the vote for Education! The estimate for 1942-43 shows an increase of £20,105, but that is an increase on the expenditure in 1941-42 in which year the expenditure was £831,095 and the vote £873,700.

The Premier: That is mostly accounted for by the fact that women teachers have replaced men who have gone to the war.

Mr. TRIAT: Quite so, but the estimated expenditure for last year was not actually incurred. In my opinion a large sum of money was saved by the department by not keeping facilities up to the standard. When applications are made for improvements to schools, we are told that no money is available.

The Premier: That is a Public Works matter.

Mr. TRIAT: That may be so. On the other hand, when we make application for a higher standard of education in the back country, we cannot get it. We are told there is not sufficient money to provide teachers capable of giving the children that standard of education. Nobody will complain about the education facilities provided at Kalgoorlie. There we have both Government and private institutions capable of carrying students to the leaving certificate stage. At the schools of Meekatharra, Mt. Magnet and Leonora, or any other goldfields centre, a junior certificate cannot be obtained. If a pupil must have the junior certificate in order to continue his or her education, the parents must send the child to a place which enjoys a higher type of education. It is grievous that the educational facilities of Western Australia in the back country should be so low that no child there can attain a certificate that is needed for entry into the public service of Western Australia.

lia. Undoubtedly the educational standard here is very low.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: The lowest in the world.

Mr. TRIAT: I do not think that in any other country, comparable to Western Australia in point of civilisation generally, are educational facilities so low. Very few of our children reach the University, simply because the parents cannot keep their children at school sufficiently long to allow of their securing the leaving certificate. Few members of this Chamber, I think, have obtained that certificate; and their failure to obtain it has been due simply to the fact that they were compelled to leave school at too early an age. I repeat, the educational standard of Western Australia is low, although it is true we have a wonderful University. I hope that before long every Western Australian child will have the opportunity not only to gain the leaving certificate but also to secure a University education. Moreover, every child before leaving school should have learnt the elements of some trade. The future of our schoolboys should not be the pick and the shovel. To me it seems strange, though I am by no means a Red, that a country like Russia in 20 odd years should have reached a higher standard of education than obtains in Australia. The average Russian is more highly educated than the average Australian, and every Russian student who shows ability is assisted to obtain, say, a medical degree or a degree in science at the University. Russia supports students during their course.

The Minister for Labour: The member for Subiaco told us an awful story about Russia a few years ago.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Where did Russia get the necessary money from?

Mr. TRIAT: Russians have their country to live on and do not bother about money.

The Minister for Labour: The member for Subiaco should have a look at that speech she made about Russia!

Mr. TRIAT: The present Government would be anxious to give the highest possible education to all our children if only the necessary funds were available. Western Australia simply has not the finances to offer better educational facilities, better welfare facilities, better social facilities.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: But you are in favour of unification!

Mr. TRIAT: I am not.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: But the Labour Party is.

Mr. TRIAT: The Labour Party may be, but just at present I do not favour unification. On the goldfields the general trend is towards reduction of population because of the manpower position. Many goldfields towns are reduced to the condition of nonentities, with only two or three people in them. Youanmi, which a few years ago had a population of 1,100, now has four people; and that number is likely to dwindle. In Youanmi, there are substantial houses with electric light and all customary facilities, there are swimming pools, recreation grounds, picture palaces; but most of the people have gone. Former residents who left their houses in Youanmi did not receive a shilling for them. Those dwellings are going to rack and ruin. They are being destroyed by white ants. Towns like Youanmi are steadily decreasing in population. Presently the remnant of people in those towns will ask the Government for assistance to be brought away from them. In those towns there are now neither doctors nor stores, and the ordinary amenities of life are gradually disappearing. Some mining companies have realised the importance of removing those people.

A case in point is Cox's Find, where the mining company—it is the first time I have known a mining company to be really generous—made an offer that every man desirous of working for the company next month—the mine was on the point of closing down—would be, together with his family, removed to another of the company's mines. Cox's Find is 40 miles from the railway line, but the company was prepared to remove the miners there to Kalgoorlie, or to the Triton, or to the North, or wherever the mine might be to which a man was desirous of being shifted. But for that company's generosity, many of those people would have been stranded at Cox's Find and compelled to ask the Government for assistance. Most goldfields people do not save much money, and many of them have their furniture on the time-payment system. The people in question would have been obliged to ask the Government for free railway passes for themselves and their families, and for free transport of their goods and chattels. The position is a sad one for Western Australia

to be faced with. Instead of reducing the Mines Vote, we should increase it. Gold at present is a drug on the market, with nobody requiring it. Other Western Australian mines, however, are exceedingly valuable to this State and to the Commonwealth, and also to the British Empire. There is great demand for base metals in connection with munition-making. Such base metals as tungsten, scheelite and molybdenite are required in large quantities. I am given to understand by Mines Department officials in Kalgoorlie that there is a deposit 21 ft. wide right on the surface, containing 5 per cent. tungsten. Yet not one cwt. of this ore has been removed, notwithstanding that tungsten is being sought for all over the Commonwealth. Scheelite is worth £300 per ton. Instead of the Mines Vote being reduced, it should be increased, in order to assist miners to produce tungsten and scheelite.

Mr. J. H. Smith: What is tungsten worth per ton?

Mr. TRIAT: It is worth £370 per ton on rails.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Five per cent. is very low.

Mr. TRIAT: No, it is high. It is a valuable mineral, and the ore I referred to is not far from a railway line and only four miles from a State battery. I am assured by a Mines Department inspector that there is a deposit 21 ft. wide on the surface, of an average of 5 per cent. wolfram.

The Premier: Tungsten.

Mr. TRIAT: It is the same mineral. In addition, we have copper available, a mineral in great demand. A prospector in my electorate brought down a sample—it was not selected, but taken at random from the deposit—containing 27 per cent. copper, 5½ dwts. gold and 1.7 oz. silver. Twenty-seven per cent. copper is valuable, but the prospector has not any money and consequently he asked me if there was any possible chance of obtaining Government assistance. I said I thought he had every chance, because the ore body was 4½ ft. wide and was situated right on the railway line. Very little trouble would be experienced in lifting that copper ore. These are opportunities we should be exploiting today. These minerals should take the place of gold. I candidly admit that when the war is over these base metals will not be worth 2s.; but while the war is proceeding we should make every

effort to ensure that this State promotes the production of base metals, and so makes up some of the leeway lost by the goldmines. I feel sure the prospector I mentioned will, if he makes application to the Mines Department, obtain the assistance he requires, although I know the Government has no money to spare.

Something should be done for our boys and girls. At present, work is available for them in munition factories and on the land, but they cannot earn much in some of the jobs. Girls doing land work do not receive high wages. The Americans employing a girl to look after books, a library and a telephone exchange, pay her £5 or £5 3s. a week. A girl working on the land, however, receives but £1 a week and her keep. The difference between the wages paid in various classes of occupations results in a tendency for workers to flock to the city, in order to secure work on the tramways, the railways or in munition factories, or possibly to get some of the very fine jobs available in the city. Those working in the country find they must labour hard and long for little pay. After listening to members opposite, I do not altogether blame the farmer, who in many cases cannot afford to pay higher wages. Surely, however, that difficulty can be overcome. Why should a farmer have to work long hours, seven days a week, for nothing? The Government would not desire to allow that state of affairs to continue.

Women of Australia, in whatever work they have undertaken during the war, have made a wonderful job of it. I have seen women on bread carts in my district. They carry a bread basket on the arm and jump from the cart in the same way as a man does, dash into the house and get on the cart again while the horse is moving on. Then we have girls working on milk carts, who must commence work at two or three o'clock in the morning. They are doing work very few men would care to do. When the war is over and these women must return to their ordinary life, what will happen? They have been earning £4 or £5 a week. Will they be satisfied to return to 25s. a week? There will be a revolution of our women one day. These women have proved that they can undertake this heavy work; they can hold their own with the best and they possess commonsense. Elderly women have undertaken all sorts of honorary jobs. They are working in can-

teens, for the Red Cross Society and are doing welfare work. In addition, they are looking after their homes. They do this extra work voluntarily and are putting up a wonderful effort. We do not see men doing canteen work or Red Cross work. They put in an appearance at a canteen, but not to work. The work is done by the women. The soldier-wife whose husband is in the Forces cannot now get anyone to do her gardening, and so it is not unusual to see her pushing a heavy lawn-mower through long grass—she makes no complaint about it—and cutting wood; in fact, doing everything which would otherwise be done for her by some man who, through her efforts, has been made available for war service.

The Minister for Labour: They are well-trained wives!

Mr. TRIAT: But after the war these women will resist being treated as slaves by the Government or by anybody else. They will stand up for the rights to which they are entitled. They will put up a big fight. However, I do not think there will be many rights for us after the war; our rights will be to pay off immense liabilities.

Mr. J. H. Smith: It will be our own fault if we allow that to happen.

Mr. TRIAT: That will occur, and we shall find people in high places fighting hard for their pound of flesh.

Mr. J. H. Smith: They will get it!

Mr. TRIAT: The member for Avon put up a strong argument in favour of the farmer. I do not know anything about the Agricultural Bank; I have never worked under it, but I am sure the Government is prepared to remove the hardships farmers are enduring under the Act. The member for Avon mentioned compound interest.

Mr. North: Ah!

Mr. TRIAT: I think it is shocking. To pay interest is bad enough, but to pay compound interest is altogether wrong. To ask any man to pay interest on interest is totally wrong.

Mr. J. H. Smith: The farmers have stood it all these years.

Mr. TRIAT: If I were a farmer, I would not hesitate to put up a case to be relieved of payment of compound interest. I know the farmer has to work long and hard. He is therefore certainly entitled to payment for his labour. Further, he is entitled to a guaranteed payment for his labour. We find that the Commonwealth Gov-

ernment is not keen on giving the Western Australian farmer a guaranteed amount. It has reduced the acreage to an absolute minimum. From an agricultural point of view Western Australia is a wheatgrowing State but we were not allowed a large area for wheatgrowing. We have the lowest acreage in the Commonwealth with the exception of Tasmania.

Mr. Patrick: Tasmania is not a wheatgrowing State.

Mr. TRIAT: Of course not!

Mr. Patrick: We have the lowest acreage of the wheatgrowing States.

Mr. TRIAT: I believe Queensland has the lowest but all the other States were granted a greater acreage than was Western Australia. The Commonwealth Government should have said that as Western Australia's main product is wheat it would be permitted to grow more wheat than the other States. Instead of that it granted us the lowest quantity. We are right down to a minimum, and it is totally wrong that Western Australia should be treated in such a manner. The position is that the people with the big stick do the flogging and we must do what we are told.

Somebody has said that we shall live much better after the war. I do not think so. Consider the loan position! We are being asked to contribute to a £100,000,000 austerity loan. We have to raise it, because we are told by those in authority that unless the money is available we shall not be able to continue to fight. As the member for Murchison tells us, when we continually raise money we must continually pay interest on it. I am not a financier: I know nothing about the subject but, like everybody else, I do a certain amount of reading and I read something the other day which struck me rather forcibly. In 1886 New South Wales borrowed £16,000,000 to build a railway. In 1924 it had paid back in interest £25,907,726 and still owed the £16,000,000. That loan was launched at 3½ per cent. In 1924 it was converted to 5 per cent. and is redeemable in 1955. In that year £49,825,526 will have been paid in interest and the principal will still be owing.

The Premier: Is that a British loan?

Mr. TRIAT: Yes. The actual amount paid for that £16,000,000 in 67 years is £65,825,526.

Mr. Fox: And they say one is born every minute!

Mr. TRIAT: That is the trouble with New South Wales; it has not paid off the loan and in 1955 it may not be able to do so. It will probably be converted again and renewed. If that is the position facing Australia as a whole where will it end? What will the position be for us? Where are the better times ahead? I do not see them. It is possible, however, to hamstring people so much that they will revolt, and if people are asked to stand up to the obligations which will be laid upon them after the war they should revolt. They should not permit anybody to say, "We are not going to let you live in decent comfort. You are going to live under the same conditions as before the war." In such circumstances there should be a revolution in this country and I think there will be. I do not believe young people today are so foolish as older people. They will not tolerate these conditions.

Consider the national debt of Australia before the war! I am not giving my own figures but am quoting a financial authority, who states that the national debt before the war was £1,262,911,646. Can anybody conceive the amount of interest payable on that sum? When I read it I was astounded.

Mr. North: A million pounds a week.

Mr. TRIAT: Correct. The hon. member must have read the same book. The interest amounts to £1,000 a minute, £144,000 a day or £1,000,000 a week. Put into figures that I can understand it amounts to the payment of £3 6s. 8d. every time I take a breath. Yet 7,000,000 people are asked to stand for that. Since the beginning of the war how much have we borrowed? What do we intend borrowing? Yet we talk about better times. I think constituents of Country Party members will get better times eventually because they will do what we have done. They will combine and say, "We are not going to pay this money." This country will say the same, because it cannot pay the money. We do not want to repudiate but where are we going to get the money to pay?

Mr. Doney: We go on because other countries are faced with precisely the same problem.

Mr. TRIAT: Other countries will not get their money back because we cannot pay it. Take the position of taxation! In 1914 the tax per head was £4 14s. 4d. In 1941 it was £25, an increase of 526 per cent.!

There are other taxes that make the position very inconvenient for the people, who do not realise that they are being taxed. There is the sales tax that was introduced in 1931 or 1932. That was a wonderful scheme for raising money. I think most of the educational facilities at our Taxation Department must be directed to training in invention.

Mr. Patrick: They copy from Canada.

Mr. TRIAT: I do not know where they copy from but they are very good at inventing new taxes, and people do not realise that they are being badly bumped. The sales tax was 2½ per cent. in 1931 and in the first year it raised approximately £3,500,000. In 1936-37 it raised £8,000,000 and in 1940-41, £20,000,000. The incidence of the tax, however, has been raised to 15 per cent. Every time we buy an article, there is tacked on to it 15 per cent. How many people realise that when they buy a pound of butter at 1s. 8d., of that amount 7½d. goes in tax? Nobody thinks of that sort of thing, but it is a fact. Of course we have a wonderful degree of freedom in this country—so long as we are prepared to pay for it!

The Premier: Wages have to be increased to meet the increased cost of living, and then the cost of living increases again.

Mr. TRIAT: That is what I have always been opposed to.

Mr. Thorn: It is what we have been trying to tell you for years.

Mr. TRIAT: It is unfortunate that the wages of the workers have to be raised in order that they may be able to meet liabilities they could not otherwise face. If only the cost of living could be kept at a reasonable level the basic wage would not climb, and workmen would be a lot better off. If I could buy more for my £1 than I can today I would be much better off. I cannot do so because the cost of living is continually rising, due to greed.

Mr. Sampson: A modern see-saw.

Mr. TRIAT: No, it is not. A pound of onions is not worth 1s. 2d. or 1s. 1d. Members cannot tell me that beer is worth what is paid for it today. It is taxes which increase the price. If the cost of living keeps rising the Arbitration Court will be forced to increase wages, and that is no good to the working man. It creates a liability on the country and nobody gets any advantage. Peg the wages if necessary, but peg the cost of living, too. The time will arrive

when the cost of living will get out of bounds and people will not be able to live. Today it costs 1s. 6d. or 1s. 8d. for an ordinary cut of rump steak in a country where beef is grown. That is ridiculous.

Mr. Thorn: And the butchers will not even deliver it.

Mr. TRIAT: I do not know about that; I get it myself.

Mr. Sampson: You are on a subject with which you are not too well acquainted.

Mr. TRIAT: I am well acquainted with it; probably better than is the hon. member.

Mr. Sampson: Even at that you may not know too much about it.

Mr. TRIAT: I come from a place in the North-West where we could buy a bullock for 30s. if it were taken off the property by the purchaser. But we cannot today buy much in the way of meat at the butcher's shop with that amount of money. That is the position and it is due to all these taxes. I cannot enumerate them all, but we have the Federal tax, sales tax, municipal taxes, road board taxes, the petrol tax, land tax, property tax, insurance tax, amusement tax and many others which I cannot remember.

Mr. Sampson: What about the dog tax?

Mr. TRIAT: They are a few of the taxes which everyone has to meet.

Mr. Thorn: We have not many.

Mr. TRIAT: No, but the people of Western Australia have to pay them.

Mr. Marshall: How many taxes are included in the cost of a loaf of bread?

Mr. TRIAT: Fifty-seven.

Mr. Marshall: No, fifty-two, but nobody would believe that.

Mr. Sampson: We are achieving a record in taxation.

Mr. Marshall: Labour does not differ from any other Government in that regard.

Mr. Thorn: There is a war on.

Mr. TRIAT: The disabilities of the people of this State must increase not altogether as the result of taxation, but due to our inability to raise the funds. The proposed referendum, if carried, will give to the Commonwealth a lot more power. It is most unfair that any Government should ask the people in a time like the present to cast a vote on a most important question, such as a referendum on power, when any eloquent speaker can sway a crowd of people whichever way he likes.

Mr. Patrick: It was done once in the United States of America on the liquor question.

Mr. TRIAT: It can be done at any time when people are upset, and do not know on what day they will be invaded. If a man says to them, "If you do these things we can keep the enemy further from your shores," the natural consequence is that the people will vote for the position that will keep the enemy away.

Mr. North: Vote in haste and repent at leisure.

Mr. TRIAT: That is so. In war-time it is inopportune for the people to be asked to vote on such an important question as this. I would guarantee to use such language to a crowd of people in the back country as to influence them my way, whereas in ordinary times they would not listen to me. Today the war situation, being as it is, we can do almost anything. I can remember being a member of a deputation which approached a Commonwealth Minister. Whenever he got worried he would say, "The country's very existence is at stake," and the deputation would break down. Members would not need two guesses to know who the Minister was.

Mr. Thorn: That is what he said to me in Melbourne. He asked me if I did not know there was a war on.

Mr. TRIAT: He would ask that question and we would be right back at the start again. The position is serious. I do not know that we are going to do any good by making a lot of comments on it, but there is no doubt that when this war is over and the people of Australia are asked to stand up to the phenomenal taxes, they will not be able to do it and will say so. It is better to be in gaol than to starve in the open with liabilities. Something must be done. We have a huge interest burden hanging round our necks.

Mr. Marshall: It is only £70,000,000!

Mr. TRIAT: The people of Australia will not pay it. While they are trying to pay it our standard of living will go down and our educational standards will be reduced, and they are very low now. Unless the people have more money and freedom these standards will get worse. A man has to pay so many taxes today that when his sons and daughters arrive at the age of 14 or 15 years they have to go out to work. They cannot acquire some cultural or scientific degree, which would be a wonderful

thing for the country as well as an asset to the individual himself in after life. No! They have to go out and earn a few pounds to assist their parents to pay the liabilities.

When I entered Parliament there were about 11,000 unemployed. I can remember applications being made for nominal working periods for the men and more money, but the Commonwealth Government told the people of Western Australia, "We cannot give you more money because we have not got it." That was in June or July of 1939. What occurred in September of that year? Fifty millions were raised overnight for the war! If when this war is over the people tolerate these conditions, they deserve to have the chains of slavery shackled around their necks, because the time for free men is over if they will stand that. We are told every day over the wireless that the united nations are for free men—they are only words! They are free so long as we will pay the interest to the last penny, but the people will never pay it. If a person buys a house worth £800 or £900 he has to pay up to £150, and it takes 30 years. He probably would not live long enough to complete the transaction. Every man living in Western Australia is entitled to a good home, and every housewife is entitled to the necessities of a home, including refrigerators, electroluxes and things like that. They are not luxuries, but necessities!

Women today should not have to polish on their hands and knees as they did in the old days. They are entitled to all the benefits of modern science, but they cannot get them. Even though they work hard they are not able to get these benefits, and why? Because there is not sufficient money left after meeting their liabilities to purchase what we call luxuries, but to which they are entitled. If I am alive after this war is over I will tell the people not to pay this interest until they get these things for which they and I are fighting.

Mr. Thorn: Good on you; keep on fighting!

Mr. TRIAT: I feel deeply on the question, not only for myself but for my family coming on after me. I realise that the obligations they will have to meet will be stupendous for any working man or woman in a country like ours.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan): I listened with some sympathy to the remarks of the member for Mt. Magnet, and I agree that there

is plenty of occasion for anxiety in regard to the cost of living, and cost of building construction and equipment for the home. I am afraid that, although I believe you, Mr. Deputy Chairman, are in a very enviable position in these matters, every word the member for Mt. Magnet uttered can be borne out by facts. To get the various labour-saving appliances that should be in every home is rendered almost impossible by successive Governments, whose one object seems to be to add still further to the rate of duty imposed upon each one. That is a short-sighted policy; it does not take into consideration the needs of the womenfolk, who already are working unnecessarily long hours because they cannot find means of acquiring labour-saving equipment for the home. The hon. member referred to prisons and uttered a sort of semi-threat that he would go to gaol rather than do certain things.

Mr. Thorn: He was thinking of Barton's Mill.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am not sure what particular prison he had in view but, even though things are bad, we are better off than we would be in prison. We are still able to enjoy some semblance of freedom and liberty. But what about men working on the land? How much freedom and liberty does the small farmer enjoy?

Mr. Triat: Practically none at all!

Mr. SAMPSON: That interjection leads me to think that the wide gap which for so many years existed between the Opposition and some members on the Government side is now narrowing.

[Mr. Marshall resumed the Chair.]

The Minister for the North-West: You yourself are beginning to wake up.

Mr. SAMPSON: No, the light long denied the Minister and some of the members associated with him is at last breaking upon them. The small farmer has never received consideration. The Arbitration Court, with its beneficent work, has resumed a closed department to him. When anyone purchases the products of the small farmer, there is no control or organisation; it is always a matter of the law of supply and demand. People buy as cheaply as possible, which is only natural. When there is a glut, prices drop and when there is a shortage, prices soar. Neither condition is satisfactory. If the small farmer were assured of



a reasonable return, wide variations in prices would not occur, and instead of his leaving his orchard or garden at the first opportunity, he would continue to work his property feeling that the future was not entirely divested of all prospects of progress. At present, however, our farmers are leaving such properties. Some of the members to whom I am speaking would do well if they realised with greater clarity the trend of events. Throughout the producing districts there has been a tremendous change in the last 20 years. Settlers are losing heart and abandoning their holdings because there is very little hope of any satisfaction or real liberty, in that they do not secure a reasonable return for their products.

Recently I have been caused a good deal of anxiety because men engaged in transport work in the producing districts have been deprived of that work. Let me refer to a carrier who operated at Glen Forest, Parker-ville and other towns in that locality.

Mr. Cross: Is there not a railway to that locality?

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes, and a genius for making discoveries in this Chamber, but surely the hon. member knows that the producer cannot, without grave inconvenience, cart his vegetables, fruit, eggs, day-old chickens or other produce to the railway siding unless he has some vehicle.

Mr. Cross: He could take it in a wheelbarrow.

Mr. SAMPSON: Now the hon. member is showing a flippancy and lack of seriousness that would be depressing if I had not long ago assessed him at what I consider his true worth.

Mr. Cross: I have some real farmers in my district.

Mr. SAMPSON: To say that those producers could take their produce to the railway in a wheelbarrow was unworthy of even the hon. member, and I cannot go further than that. The calling up of the man in question, who was carting produce for probably 50 or 60 small farmers, is an economic tragedy. The man is physically and mentally fit and doubtless will make an excellent soldier, but his going into camp has created a great difficulty. A few minutes ago I rang a man in the district to ascertain whether anyone was now operating in his stead. I had been told by the Manpower Office, fol-

lowing many discussions of this matter, that there would be someone else to undertake the work. I find that nobody is doing the work, and the producers are experiencing great difficulty. As stated, it is an economic tragedy to take away the one man who has specialised in carrying, those people thus being left without any means whereby their produce can be taken to market. I do not know that I can do any more in the matter. It is no use my appealing to the Deputy Premier, because, after all, the Manpower Office is not under his control.

Mr. Seward: I wish it were!

Mr. SAMPSON: If it were under the hon. gentleman's control something would be done, I think: but this is an exceedingly difficult position. I do not make a practice of rising here to criticise men who are doing their best. No doubt the Manpower Office is under the impression that what it is doing is right. I do not, however, agree with the view taken by that office regarding this particular man.

Mr. J. Hegney: Did you say anything in his behalf before he was called up?

Mr. SAMPSON: I did. I saw him and the Manpower Office on many occasions. While he was quite pleased to become a soldier, yet he had bought a truck and fitted it with a gas-producer and was doing splendid service for the district. From people in the district which that man served I have received many letters—I think not less than 15—urging his retention, and also a petition to the same effect which I passed on to the Manpower Office, but all in vain. Unfortunately the man concerned had taken the matter into court. This is another unfortunate phase the existence of which I acknowledge. The man had no one to conduct his case. He being unused to the surroundings, it is not a matter of surprise that he found himself ordered into camp, at first within a couple of months, but then a month's extension was granted and later, I believe, yet another month's. He did his utmost to dispose of his business, but was unsuccessful. The position today is as it was when he first went into camp. Small producers engaged in fruit and vegetable growing, the production of day-old chickens, table poultry, eggs and so on have had to do what the member for Canning mentioned—take their production to a station or a siding in a wheelbarrow. The hon. member said that lightly. Even Homer

sometimes nods, and there are occasions when the most sensible man will say something he would never seriously intend. Words escape!

The position I have described continues, and it is a subject which will probably cause every member of the Chamber a good deal of regret. I readily believe that the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition, and all members who take a serious view of matters will be shocked by this case. Why should one man be withdrawn when his continuance in business means such a saving in time and in convenience to producers? Can we expect men to remain on the land when they are deprived of an efficient service such as a competent carrier provides for them? Gone are the days when an orchardist took his produce to a station or siding by means of a horse and cart. That is what we did when we first had orchards. But those days are long past. Today a carrier with a good motor-truck comes round and picks up the fruit or whatever other produce there may be at the gate or at some place adjacent to the farm. I do not know that I shall achieve anything by ventilating the matter further. I trust my remarks will have the effect of discouraging such actions in future.

Were you, Mr. Chairman, in your place and were you seized with the impropriety and wrongfulness of what has been done, I feel sure that you would comment upon it strongly, for I have heard you speak with much emotion regarding interest charges and other matters relating to monetary reform. The case I have instanced, however, touches many people, and it is a wrong which can be remedied without any alteration in a well-established system. The member for Middle Swan is concerned with this very man, I believe through some of his own producers around Greenmount and Swan View; and I hope the hon. member will raise his voice in protest against the calling-up of a particular man whose services are required by so many producers. I now propose to leave this instance; but before doing so I wish to say that the Manpower Office was good enough, several weeks before the man was called into camp, to assure me and several others who formed a deputation that it had determined not to call up, or allow to go into camp, if it could be helped, anyone engaged in a community service such as that carrier. I know that the Premier and the Minister for Agriculture are well aware of the case.

I am sure those gentlemen regret what has been done. The man has been called up; and I am told his truck, a fine big new truck which he purchased and which he equipped with a producer-gas outfit, still stands unused in the shed. In my opinion, that is a shocking state of affairs, and it has not been remedied. The person who was to have taken on the job for the man I mentioned has not put in an appearance. He has not been seen or heard of.

Mr. Thorn: He is invisible!

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes. I have occasion, very properly, to thank the Minister for Industrial Development for the advice he gave me with regard to the marketing of lemons. The citrus growers of this State are in a bad position. It is remarkable that whereas in most cases the prices our growers receive approximate the prices paid in the Eastern States, our citrus growers now are not paid nearly as well. Our growers receive £9 per ton for lemons, but the growers in the Eastern States receive 50 per cent. above that price. Imagine that! Nine pounds a ton in this State; £13 10s. a ton in the Eastern States! Yet the New South Wales growers are protesting against being compelled to accept £13 10s. per ton; they maintain they should only accept that price when the lemons are delivered for military use. Their contention is that in other cases they should receive the full market price. It certainly is not encouraging to our growers to receive such a low price in those circumstances. I refer particularly to lemons, but I believe the position is just as unsatisfactory with regard to navel and Valencia oranges, and grape fruit.

Mr. Fox: It would cost £9 per ton to transport them to the Eastern States.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am aware that the transport costs are high, and that therefore it is scarcely practicable to export the oranges, but we should not forget that contracts are being met in this State for delivery of supplies to the Military Forces and that £9 per ton is the maximum price paid. The growers do not always receive that price. At a conference held recently a statement was made that the price dropped as low as £3, although it is but fair to add that that was paid during the period of the financial depression. It was also stated at that conference that the price was not even now always as high as £9. It was the maximum. That is disconcerting and the effect will be to dis-

courage people from coming to our State. What is the use of a person coming to Western Australia to grow lemons when, by remaining in the Eastern States, he can do so much better?

On various occasions I have said that, in my opinion, rural workers should have their wages and conditions fixed by the Arbitration Court. The idea that rural workers, if they secured an award of the Arbitration Court, would be worse off, is quite out of date. The people working in the production of our primary needs are facing higher and yet higher costs all the time. That position must be altered if we wish these people to continue to work their holdings. There is nothing to fear in asking the Arbitration Court to determine the payments which should be received by those engaged in primary production. The sooner we realise the importance of this the better.

I desire to touch upon the apple and pear acquisition scheme. Unfortunately, this is not working as well as I hoped it would. I admit that, at the outset, I strongly favoured the scheme, but today it would seem that it is not working satisfactorily in many instances in this State. I will not deny that a large number engaged in apple and pear production, particularly in the South Western and Great Southern districts, favour the scheme. It is but fair that I should make that admission; but other growers are in an exceedingly unsatisfactory position. They regard the prices received by them as a grave injustice. There is also dissatisfaction in the retail trade, while consumers are not backward in their criticism. It has been stated that the scheme has decreased the price to the producer and increased it to the consumer.

A proposal has been put forward by the Fruitgrowers and Primary Producers' Defence League of Australia under which an alternative is suggested. I shall not dilate upon that at length today; but it is urged that if, in place of the acquisition scheme a small subsidy per case were paid and the growers were allowed to sell as they wished, better results would be achieved. I incline to the belief that there is much to be said in favour of the suggestion, especially when one realises that growers are receiving only 2s. to 3s. per case for apples. At a time such as this, with costs rising so rapidly, one can easily imagine that such a return is regarded by the growers as unfair. Further, there is a 25 per cent. reduction on

the appraisement in order to allow for fruit which does not reach the prescribed standards. Beyond this brief reference to apples and pears I will not at the moment say any more, except that in my opinion the growers should receive a fair deal and under the acquisition scheme I do not consider they are doing so. I want to see those engaged in production treated as members of the community, who are justified in expecting the same protection and consideration as those who are engaged in trade. There is no reason why they should not receive such treatment. They ought to have an opportunity to earn a reasonable living and in many instances that is not at present possible. At a later stage, when opportunity permits, I will speak at greater length on the apple and pear acquisition scheme, which is causing very great anxiety to a number of growers throughout the State.

Progress reported.

### **BILL—JURY (EMERGENCY PROVISIONS).**

#### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 15th September.

**MR. WATTS** (Katanning) [5.33]: I propose to support the second reading of this measure, not because I approve of the majority of its provisions, but because there is one clause in it that I think is reasonable and necessary. That clause is the one which proposes to extend the age at which persons may be called up for jury service. I recognise that there has undoubtedly been some diminution in the number of persons available for jury service. Because that is so, in my view it is reasonable that the time for that service, so far as age is concerned, should be extended. I would point out to the Minister, however, that he gave us no indication in his speech that the belief we have that the number of times juries are required has decreased in the last couple of years is incorrect. He did not establish in the course of his remarks that there has been by any means as great a demand for jurymen as has existed in past years, especially those immediately prior to the war, and I do not think that we should agree, without some very definite proof beyond that information which was given by the Minister, to a Bill that proposes to alter the jury system, which has been in operation for so long and which I believe has

given every satisfaction, so far as any man-made plan in a matter of that kind can give every satisfaction. The Minister proposes to reduce the number of jurymen to six in a trial, whether civil or criminal.

The strong objection I take is to the proposal to reduce the number of jurymen to six in a criminal trial. There may be very little foundation for the practice of having 12 jurymen. I have made such inquiries as I can in regard to what gave rise to the practice of having 12 jurymen, and there is very little beyond ancient custom to support the need for that number. Nevertheless I contend—and I believe many members of this House will agree with me—that it would be unwise to enable criminal trials to be conducted before a jury of less than 12.

The Minister for Justice: They are doing it in England.

Mr. WATTS: I do not mind in the slightest what they are doing in England. I have always tried—and I think as a matter of fact that the Minister does—to think of these matters in the light of what is good for us in Western Australia. We do not know what are the conditions or the circumstances that gave rise to these alterations elsewhere. We have to guide ourselves by what are the reasons that gave rise to them here. As I have been trying to indicate to the House, there is very little in the Minister's speech to indicate any reasons except to some extent a deficiency in the number of persons, by comparison with times past, available for jury purposes. That I am prepared to let him overcome to a certain extent by extending the age, but it seems to me that with 12 jurymen we have a number that represents, shall I say, a cross-cut of our community. We are not likely to get that same cross-cut in any lesser number nor, as I have said, have I been given any sufficient reason why we should upset or alter this soundly established practice which we have admired—although sometimes we might have felt a little disappointed in its work—all the time in the British judicial system of justice and trial.

What seems to me to be more extraordinary still is that the Bill provides that this reduction shall not take place in relation to the trial of a person on a charge of treason or murder or—and here is the gravamen of my complaint—“on any other charge if the court or a judge thinks fit by reason of the gravity of the matter in

issue to direct that those provisions shall not apply.” In what sort of a position are we placing a judge in the Supreme Court when he is engaged in a criminal trial on some charge other than treason or murder? He may, of course, have had the benefit of looking at the depositions that were taken at the preliminary inquiry; but, nevertheless, although he has had that benefit, I do not think it is fair for him to be asked to indicate whether he thinks a jury of six or 12 is the right one to have before he has had the valuable benefit of being able to see the witnesses and hear their testimony and form—as the jury should also form—an opinion on that testimony and the credibility of the witnesses. Moreover, if this proviso is in the Minister's opinion necessary, why in the name of fortune does he bring before the House a proposal to reduce the number of jurymen?

On the one hand he agrees with me and says the judge ought to have the right to order 12 jurymen, which I say should be left as in the past. On the other hand, he wants the Act to enable the judge not to do so. It seems to me that the Minister and his advisers in bringing this Bill down are in some doubt as to whether I am right and they are wrong. In my view, unless some much stronger case can be made out for the alteration of the law in regard to the number of jurymen, it should be left as it is. It would not be a progressive step but a retrograde one, if, during the period through which we are now passing, the law was amended in the terms of this Bill, except for that part of it which extends the time for the service of a jurymen beyond the age of 60 years. Therefore, I will support the second reading in order that I may enable the Minister to include that clause in the law. I do not otherwise favour this measure.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth): I propose to support this Bill. I would not be a party to any interference with the traditional number of a jury in criminal trials if it were not an emergency provision limited in operation to the period of the war and six months after. The number of twelve for a jury has been accepted, I might almost say traditionally, as a convenient one, and I do not propose to inquire into the origin of the jury system or the reasons which determined the number of twelve. If any member is interested in that point,

there is a very interesting and most informative article or address given by Dr. Evatt—then Mr. Justice Evatt—in 1936, to the Australian Council of Law Societies. He reviewed the whole of the jury system from the earliest times, and discussed it as it applies now in different countries.

I appreciate that at this time in Western Australia, in particular, it is becoming increasingly difficult to get jurors. Office staffs are depleted; businesses are depleted in regard to their ordinary numbers, and it is hard to take men from these businesses. They are very often men in key positions. I believe also that a large proportion of those on the jury list are now in the Army or munition works, or employed otherwise in essential defence services or industries. These reasons appear to me to justify the Minister in endeavouring to limit the number of people compelled to spend their time in giving jury service, because they not only spend some time as jurors but of course inevitably spend a certain amount of time simply waiting until they are called.

There is nothing startling in the proposal, if we are prepared to regard the House of Commons as a conservative institution. Personally I think it is not, but the Minister has taken his Bill from the English Administration of Justice (Emergency Provisions) Act, 1939. Section 7 of that Act provides—

Notwithstanding anything in any enactment, for the purpose of any trial with a jury or inquiry by a jury in any proceedings, whether civil or criminal, it shall not be necessary for the jury to consist of more than seven persons: Provided that the preceding provisions of this subsection shall not apply in relation to the trial of a person on any charge, if the court or a judge thinks fit, by reason of the matters in issue, to direct that those provisions shall not apply, and shall not in any case apply in relation to the trial of a person on a charge of treason or murder.

The drafting of this Bill is practically verbatim with the terms of the English Act of 1939. As far as I am aware, or have read in any literature, there have been no apprehensions in England as to miscarriages of justice by reason of this emergency provision reducing the numbers on a jury. It is true that England has reduced the number to seven, whereas this Bill proposes to reduce the number to six.

I wish to add that the number of 12 for a jury in criminal proceedings is common to all the Australian States, and also the

Federal jurisdiction, but in two States already it is provided that although the number of jurors in criminal trials shall be 12, it is sufficient to take a verdict of ten; so that in two States, namely Tasmania and South Australia, they have for many years been prepared to accept the unanimous verdict of ten jurors in any criminal trial, whether for murder or a crime of a lower degree. It all comes back to the matter of the probability of a correct verdict. I might be pardoned for quoting the curious and interesting calculation made on the jury system by a writer called Forsyth. He starts with the assumption—an arbitrary one—that if there were only one juror, he might be taken to be right in his verdict, on the average, three times out of four. He then works out a calculation of the probabilities, and says that if 12 such jurors are taken, each of whom by himself could be on the average right three times out of four, and their unanimous verdict obtained, the probabilities of their being right are 167,776,220 to one. On his figures, the jury system ought not to involve many miscarriages of justice.

Although we propose to reduce the number to six, I still think there is a reasonable assurance that the interests of justice will be served, but I certainly would not be prepared to consent to a suspension of our traditional number except because of the emergencies of war and on the terms that the normal number of jurors will be restored as soon as the emergency has passed. I therefore support the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment and the report adopted.

*House adjourned at 5.52 p.m.*