

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 16th September, 1943.

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

QUESTIONS (3).

AGRICULTURAL BANK.

As to Rent for Vacant Holdings.

Mr. WILLMOTT asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Is he aware that the Agricultural Bank Commissioners have increased the rent for vacant group holdings from 3½ per cent. to 5 per cent.? 2, If so, is the time considered opportune for such an increase, seeing that the holdings are used by dairy farmers who have only recently, as the result of the £6,500,000 Federal dairy subsidy, received a payable price for their products? 3, Under the circumstances will he take action to ensure that the rent is not increased?

The MINISTER replied: 1, 2, and 3, The interest rate of 3½ per cent. charged to dairy farmer clients on group holdings which are leased was instituted when butter fat was in the region of 1s. per lb. Every encouragement has been given to have effective occupation, and it is considered that an interest rate of 5 per cent. encourages development and is in the best interests of both the dairy farmer and the property at this stage.

ONIONS.

As to Varieties and Prices.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, What are the maximum prices for onions, including early onions? 2, Are early onions, weight for weight, more

costly to produce than the main crop? 3, If so, will he recommend an increase in price with the view of encouraging the production of early varieties?

The MINISTER replied: 1, Maximum prices of onions, 1943, at growers' premises:—brown No. 1 grade, £15 5s. per ton; white No. 1 grade, £17 10s. per ton; picklers, £13 15s. per ton. Special maximum price for early onions to the 31st October, f.o.r., Perth, £56 per ton. 2, Yes. 3, An increase in price has been provided for the early product. An increase in the production of late onions is more urgently required than that of early varieties.

RURAL CARTING ARRANGEMENTS.

As to Group Plans.

Mr. WATTS (without notice) asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Is he aware of the group carting plans which are being put into operation on account of the shortage of manpower, and particularly of tyre equipment? 2, Does he agree that, where a group of nine or ten farmers are to have their produce carted by one farmer, the system cannot work efficiently during peak periods at harvest time because the harvest period is limited, and it is impossible for one truck in the same space of time to do the work of nine or ten? 3, Does he consider that relief could be obtained if the military authorities would agree either—(a) to make trucks available temporarily to assist; or (b) to make available truck tyres discarded by them but still serviceable for short periods? 4, If so, will he approach the military authorities with urgent representations on this subject? 5, If not, has he any other proposal which is likely to relieve the difficulty?

The MINISTER replied: 1, Yes, I am aware of the plans. 2, Smaller groups would be preferable, but the size of the groups will depend almost entirely on the tyre position. 3 (a) (b), I believe there is no shortage of military trucks, and it would be a good idea not merely to endeavour to have more of these trucks made available but also to have discarded but serviceable tyres made available. 4, I will continue to make representations to the military authorities. The hon. member is doubtless aware that in the past two years I have endeavoured to get them to take an interest in rural matters where heavy carting is involved, and it is

necessary that attention be given to this problem. 5, Answered by (4).

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Municipal Corporations Act Amendment.
 - 2, Road Districts Act Amendment.
- Introduced by the Minister for Works.

BILL—COAL MINE WORKERS (PENSIONS).

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—TOWN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 14th September.

MR. SHEARN (Maylands) [4.38]: The need for this Bill arises from the necessity for bringing under the Act leases of land—comprising less than half an acre—for any term exceeding 21 years so that the Town Planning Board may have jurisdiction as in the case of freehold land. As the Minister explained, the measure of 1928, as submitted to Parliament, contained the word "lease," but members of another place suggested that its inclusion was unnecessary and possibly would inflict hardship without being of benefit to anybody. Consequently the deletion of the word "lease" was agreed to. In the intervening years a number of cases have occurred in which the basic principle for which the Act exists has been seriously impaired, while the policy of the Town Planning Board has been flouted. I personally am of the opinion that, despite what was said on that occasion, there are considerable areas of land adjacent to the inner metropolitan area on which suitable residences can be erected and a maximum of convenience provided. Whatever may have been contended in regard to conditions in the other States, I do not think the arguments are applicable to Western Australia. In some of the Eastern States residences are now being built in districts many miles removed from the centre of the city. I therefore hope the point will not be raised again on this occasion.

I agree with the Minister's view that it is undesirable to bring all leases within this amendment. Those of us who have been associated with transfers, conveyances and mortgages will appreciate the many diffi-

culties that might arise if that were done. At present the freeholder is at a distinct disadvantage with regard to the re-subdivision of his land compared with a leaseholder, as the latter does not at the moment come under the provisions of the parent Act. A leaseholder can, if he has a lease for a term of 21 years or more, erect a terrace of houses having frontages that would not be permitted under the Act. As the Minister has pointed out, the Town Planning Board has insisted upon a minimum frontage of at least 50 feet. In the discussion which took place in this House the other evening, it was generally admitted that the minimum frontage for a dwelling should be 50 feet; in fact some members considered it should be greater. My experience of the board is that, while it has had to disappoint some applicants—and that at times has been my experience—it has steadfastly kept in view the best interests of the community.

It is unfortunate that in 1928 Parliament did not go more fully into this matter, because I find on reading the debate on the Bill at that time, and the evidence of the Select Committee that inquired into the matter, particular attention was not paid to the point now under discussion. It may be said that, as town planning at that time was a new idea in this State, the matter could only be dealt with in a more or less abstract manner. The experience gained by the board since shows conclusively how necessary is the amendment which the Minister has now brought forward. I have much pleasure in supporting the measure and trust that it will receive the concurrence of the House.

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—WORKERS' HOMES ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 14th September. Mr. Marshall in the chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clause 5—Insertion of new Part and sections:

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported after Clause 4 had been agreed to.

Mr. McDONALD: I desired some time to give consideration to the amendment of this clause, because it seems to me possible that some of the provisions contained in the 1937 measure might with advantage be repeated in this Bill, although the principle of the two measures is precisely the same. During the time at my disposal, however, I have not had the opportunity to consider the matter. I think the Bill in its present form will give the board possibly greater discretion than would be the case if we included some of the limiting provisions contained in the 1937 measure. Upon re-consideration, I therefore do not propose to move any amendment.

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

That at the end of the first paragraph of Subsection (1) of proposed new Section 48E the following words be added:—"or to improve the standard of comfort or convenience of such dwelling-house."

As I understand the provision, the advantages at present are confined to those workers who can comply with the by-laws and regulations of local authorities, health authorities and the Metropolitan Water Supply Department. There are places to which those by-laws and regulations do not apply or are not effective, and I think a general power for the Workers' Homes Board to improve the standard of comfort or convenience of a dwelling-house might reasonably be included.

The PREMIER: I have no objection to the amendment, as it gives the board discretion to do what it thinks best.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

That at the end of proposed new Subsection (3) the following proviso be added:—"Provided that notwithstanding anything contained in the principal Act or this Act in the case of any person engaged in rural industry, the Board shall be at liberty to make an advance under this section notwithstanding that the dwelling house is encumbered by a previous mortgage or charge, and for the purposes of this proviso the expression 'rural industry' shall include the agricultural, horticultural, pastoral, grazing and dairying industries carried on in this State, and without affecting the generality of the foregoing provisions, includes dairy farming, poultry farming, bee farming, and viticultural operations."

I would say that the definition of "rural industry" is that contained in the Rural Relief Act, 1935. In the course of the second reading debate, the Premier suggested that it might be practicable in the case of

agricultural tenements for the board to make an advance on second mortgage. The position is that under Section 28 of the parent Act the board is not permitted to make advances, except on first mortgage, unless the first encumbrance is to the Crown. I assume that the Agricultural Bank would come within the definition of the term "the Crown." In that case a portion of the difficulty suggested by the Premier is removed. Many agricultural tenements, and other places, in the circumstances could not come within the ambit of the Bill as it stands. It was my desire to give the Workers' Homes Board the discretion to deal with all cases where it thought the standard could be improved.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I do not propose to move an amendment, but I want to ask the Premier whether he would give attention to the fact that no consideration is given to converting a perpetual lease into freehold in this Bill.

The Premier: I think there is.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The scheme is to convert weekly tenancies into perpetual leases. "Perpetual lease" is defined in the Workers' Homes Act as being one subject to re-appraisal at the end of 20 years. That is closely approaching to freehold because, except for the land, buildings can be paid for, but it is not freehold. I am not prepared to say that it might not be argued that provisions enabling a perpetual lease to be converted will apply, but on the face of it they do not apply. I would be quite satisfied if the Premier would give the matter consideration and, if necessary, have some alteration made in another place.

The Premier: Very well.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 6, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILLS (3)—RETURNED.

- 1, Industries Assistance Act Continuance.
- 2, Public Authorities (Postponement of Elections) Act Amendment.
- 3, Public Authorities (Retirement of Members), Act Amendment.
Without amendment.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1943-44.

In Committee of Supply.

Debate resumed from the 2nd September on the Treasurer's Financial Statement and

on the Annual Estimates, Mr. Marshall in the Chair.

Vote—Legislative Council, £2,012:

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [4.58]: I would first like to say that I very much regret the Budget having been introduced rather earlier than usual, because it has made it increasingly difficult for us to have for perusal the report of the Auditor General. I took the opportunity of inquiring from the Speaker whether there was any prospect of this document being available within reasonable time. I was informed that in consequence of the state of affairs at the Government Printing Office it would not be here for at least another two or three weeks. In those circumstances I do not feel disposed to press for the postponement of the resumption of the Budget consideration until the report arrives, because the actual time of its arrival is uncertain. Nevertheless, it is a disadvantage which is suffered by members, particularly by those on this side of the House in not having the opportunity to check what that servant of this Parliament, the Auditor General, has to say about the operations of the State Treasury and its finances during the year. We are compelled to take entirely at their face value the presentation of the statement of expenditure and the observations of the Premier himself thereon, without those valuable comments which are sometimes made by the Auditor General. His remarks fortify us in approaching this matter. Nevertheless we have not got it, and there is no immediate prospect of its being available. In the circumstances I shall have to dispense with it and make the best of a bad job on this occasion.

Reference was made by the Premier to the improvement in the war situation. With that, so far as I can see, we are all entirely in agreement, and to the extent that he rejoices in that improvement we can rejoice with him. Notwithstanding that, we appreciate, as no doubt he does, that there is a great deal of hard work and much sacrifice ahead before the present turmoil can be brought to a satisfactory conclusion. We also realise that there may be other Budgets introduced before that most desirable time is reached. I hope I am not pessimistic in even suggesting that there will be one more such Budget because that would mean another year of hostilities, and that I am sure

everyone is anxious shall not eventuate. I feel we can rejoice in the improvement that has taken place and give thanks to Divine Providence for the assistance that has been rendered in that direction. We can be appreciative of the magnificent work done by our Armed Forces and the Allied Services in all theatres of the war. We can also be thankful to the various Governments concerned in the work of the nations that are united in their objective to liberate, shall we say, all those whose freedom has been entirely ruined in recent years.

The next item the Premier referred to concerned the improvement in the political situation of Australia following upon the recent Federal elections. I admit there has been an improvement in one direction. At least there is majority government in operation through the Commonwealth Parliament. Up to that point I do not think we will be in any disagreement, because it is certainly better for a Government to know where it stands rather than be uncertain from time to time as to what its fate may be.

Mr. Cross: Probably we shall have a couple more here in a few weeks.

Mr. WATTS: The member for Canning always adds words of wisdom or indulges in flights of fancy—irrespective of whether his intrusion into a debate is advisable or otherwise. I do not propose to embark upon flights of fancy in common with the hon. member on this or any other occasion. Despite what may be the views of the member for Canning, the only real improvement I can see in the political affairs of Australia at present is that to which I have already alluded. From one aspect I am perfectly certain that the Premier, in his heart of hearts, will be in some measure of agreement with me with reference to the political situation. I venture to say that it brings nearer some outstanding effort to impose a large measure of unification upon the Commonwealth.

It cannot be said that the Commonwealth Government, when elected, was given a mandate by the people of Australia as a result of any declaration of policy on that particular subject during the campaign. From all the reported speeches of the Right Hon. the Prime Minister, we gather only that he was not prepared to enter upon any Constitutional argument with the Premiers of the States,* and that he was going to obtain a

mandate from the people. Just exactly what that mandate was to be concerned with he did not make clear. I say, therefore, that he obtained a mandate to proceed neither with a measure of unification nor a submission of legislation with the object of imposing such a form of government on the people as a result of the recent vote of the people, because the Prime Minister and those associated with him soft-pedalled when dealing with that issue during the election campaign. To such an extent was that so that in the minds of most people unification was not regarded as a controversial issue. On the other hand, I feel that forces will be brought to bear on the Prime Minister that will compel him to give consideration to this question, and it is because I remember the Premier's remarks on the 12th November of last year that I say I feel that the Premier, in his heart of hearts, will agree with me that it will be necessary for every Western Australian to resist to the utmost of his ability any action taken along the lines I suggest that will go beyond the scope of the Commonwealth Powers Act which was passed earlier in the present year. That legislation gave to the Commonwealth Government for the period mentioned in its provisions all the powers that were adequate and necessary for any measure of post-war reconstruction that might be required.

No member of this House or of another place opposed the provisions of that legislation regarding repatriation and the returning to civil life of all those engaged in the several branches of war service. Nor did anyone question the need for ensuring the legality of such Commonwealth provisions as family allowances, but agreed to confer sufficient authority on the Commonwealth Government for the purposes desired. Consequently I say that this Parliament, for the period that the legislation contemplated, did all that was reasonable and necessary to enable the Commonwealth to do what it desired, although I suggest that many of the tasks could be done equally well, if not better, by the State Governments provided the Commonwealth was prepared to assist them from the financial point of view, seeing that the Commonwealth today has substantially the control of the purse-strings. If the Commonwealth is prepared in regard to other matters that may arise, to co-operate with the States beyond the powers we have already conferred upon it by the legis-

lation passed this year, there is not the slightest need whatever for still further provision for the Commonwealth to assist or, in fact, to handle, in co-operation with the States, all that is necessary for post-war reconstruction, rehabilitation and the settling down of the community to a peace-time existence.

I have no hesitation in making the statement this afternoon that if there is to be any attempt by the Commonwealth to go beyond that state of affairs, such a course will not be acceptable to a great majority of the people of this State when they are placed in possession of knowledge of the circumstances. My feelings are that they will not be acceptable to the Premier and his colleagues. I remember the Premier saying that the granting of further powers to the Commonwealth Government would be disastrous to Western Australia from the social and industrial points of view. Nothing has happened, or is likely to happen, to enable anyone successfully to controvert that statement, which I held at the time and still consider to be a statesmanlike utterance on the part of the Premier. I say to him that he must stand behind it in the interests of the people of Western Australia if any attempt is made to go beyond the provisions of the legislation this Parliament has already passed.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You would not object to securing an expression of the opinion of the people?

Mr. WATTS: No, provided the people are aware of the circumstances and are not filled with information and propaganda of a partially untrue character, and provided there is not one question put to them in which are lumped three or four matters, power to deal with which we have already granted—we believe those things to be essential—along with other non-essential matters. If the referendum is dealt with in that manner I have no hesitation in saying that our people will turn down the proposition by an overwhelming majority. On the other hand, if we are to draw red herrings across the trail and the people are given the impression that one paragraph in the midst of a dozen dealing with repatriation must be carried, and that if they reject it they will reject the rest, we shall have great difficulty in discussing the issue with the people.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: But you control the newspapers that discuss the issues.

Mr. WATTS: I control the papers! What is the honourable member talking about?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: At any rate, your party controls them.

Mr. WATTS: I certainly wish I did have control of the Press. If I did, there would certainly be less published regarding the hon. member's utterances and more of my own. I suggest that the hon. member's control of the Press may be definitely greater than mine and probably much greater than that of anyone else here. There is an old saying that people who live in glass houses should not throw stones, and I recommend it to the hon. member for his close attention.

The Minister for Mines: They say that people who live in glass houses should undress in the dark.

Mr. WATTS: Possibly so. I do not think the Premier can congratulate himself on any successful estimation of revenue and expenditure for the year just ended. The revenue exceeded the estimate by over £750,000, while the expenditure exceeded the estimate by £698,000.

The Premier: Did you know everything that was to take place in connection with our war effort, what it would cost and what the work would be? If so, no one else in the world did!

Mr. WATTS: I am not suggesting that.

The Premier: There was a large increase in the revenue of the Railway Department due to the war, but to get it the State was involved in the expenditure of almost the same amount.

Mr. WATTS: Prior to the introduction of the Budget, the Premier surely must have known that such a state of affairs was likely to eventuate.

The Premier: No.

Mr. WATTS: It is futile to ask me if I would have been capable of furnishing a more accurate estimation. I have not the advantage of the services of excellent and valuable officers skilled in such matters, whereas those services are available to the Premier. To say the least of it, I am surprised that the estimate should have been so wide of the mark as £750,000 in the matter of £13,000,000.

The Minister for Railways: The Queensland Government had an even greater margin.

Mr. WATTS: The Minister for Railways always seeks comfort in the doings of per-

sons elsewhere than in Western Australia. I am not offering any severe criticism of the Premier because his estimate was wide of the mark by £750,000; I merely state it as a fact.

The Minister for Labour: Just a friendly comment!

Mr. WATTS: That is so, and I certainly do not desire to be drawn into an argument about what happened in Queensland.

The Premier: If everyone was within 5 per cent. of what he estimated, this would not be a bad world.

Mr. McDonald: It would be a horrible world!

Mr. WATTS: The point that interests me is that it would be difficult to conceive what the position of the State's finances would have been had there not been that increased revenue.

The Premier: We would not have spent the money that the extra revenue made possible.

Mr. WATTS: And to what department does the Premier refer?

The Premier: The Railway Department!

Mr. WATTS: In another portion of his speech the Premier spoke about the shortage of manpower in the railway service, and mentioned that to obtain the same amount of revenue in the circumstances would have cost a great deal more. In that event, had the staff been larger I assume there would not have been a surplus but a deficit.

The Premier: No. The limited staff worked overtime at increased rates, which cost more.

Mr. WATTS: The Premier said he was not able to estimate what would be the result of the war in regard to revenue. Suppose for a moment I allow that that is a reasonable thing, it was certainly evident that there would be a large increase in expenditure. Everywhere the cost of living was rising at a rapid rate, and we all know what effect a rise in the cost of living has on the State's expenditure. There must be an enormous increase in that expenditure if only 1s. per week is added to the cost of living, that addition being reflected in the basic wage and in the whole of the State's expenditure throughout the Public Service, and the transport services and the rest of our departments. That increase was on its way 12 months ago, and it was strange to me to find that there was not any great anticipation of it shown in the presentation

of last year's Budget. Nor do I know that in the circumstances the Premier is to be congratulated on the surplus of £24,000. He has elevated himself to a position of producing three surpluses in succession. He has established in that respect, I believe, a record for Western Australia; but there are many avenues I could have suggested to him where he might have spent the £24,000 without indulging in an overdraft and with decided advantage to the citizens of Western Australia. If he likes to take me into conference with him at some subsequent time, I will make him some valuable suggestions. For the moment I shall keep them to myself.

The revenue from public utilities amounted to £630,000, of which the railways account for £430,000. The service afforded to the public by the Railway Department, however, has substantially deteriorated; and it is only hard necessity which has induced our public to travel by train. The attitude of the department and the Commissioner appears to me to be one of despair. That is the point I take. Their attitude has been one of despair since long before the war. I do not wish to deal with this subject as only during the war period, but can anyone deny that during the last eight or nine years the Railway Department's policy has been one of despair? I do not think it can be successfully and truthfully denied. The attitude seems to be that the day of railways is done, that it is unlikely the railways will ever be of much use again and that, therefore, bad as they are, we will leave them. That, I believe, has been the attitude of the railway administration of this State for many years. The result has been that instead of the public being given some encouragement to use the railways, because they are a national asset and represent a great portion of our indebtedness, the public have practically been invited not to use them.

The railway refreshment-rooms in many cases are a disgrace. Attempts at improvements are being made at Chidlow. As a friend of mine once said to the president and the committee at a meeting when discussing some alteration to a building, "You have simply turned a hovel and a passage into two hovels." That has been done at Chidlow. The premises available to the public are being enlarged, but they cannot be called a refreshment-room. They are turning in a rental of £1,600 a year to this State. The "pig-trough"—as it was called

by our late friend who represented Yilgarn-Coolgardie—stands there still as a disgrace to this community. Hundreds of people have to get out of the train in all weathers and partake in the utmost discomfort of food which in many cases is most unsuitable for human consumption. I do not know what effort has been made to check over that aspect. The fact remains that the food is on many occasions not in the least attractive.

As regards the premises themselves, no attempt has been made to secure comfort and convenience. Even with the improvements the premises are a disgrace to this community. It must not be forgotten that it is the people of the State who make the revenue from the premises possible, enabling the licensee to pay such an extraordinary rental for such premises. With that rental to pay, no wonder the licensee finds it somewhat difficult to maintain the standard of refreshments to the public. I know his difficulties have been accentuated of recent months, and I am in sympathy with him because of the difficulties of supply under which he labours. But this rental is being collected on the pre-war basis, and the premises were equally bad then. So they are a standing disgrace to Western Australia. The aim of the administration should be to improve the facilities available to the travelling public so that the people might still have a chance of becoming railway-minded. The policy of the administration should not be what it has been for many years, to say that the position of the Railway Department is hopeless. I admit that railways to an extent have passed their golden age, but I do not think that the proper course is to adopt an attitude of defeatism, which seems to me to have been the case during recent years in this State.

The Premier: If the department attempts to increase the price of anything, objections are raised in this House.

Mr. WATTS: I well remember the discussion on a protest against the 12½ per cent. increase in railway freights. I said then that the position might not be so bad if the people could see any prospect of improvement in the railway service. However, the people were simply asked to pay an extra 12½ per cent. without the least addition to the facilities and conveniences that were being offered. Therefore we continue to protest, as loudly as we can. If there

were to be some slight increase in facilities alongside the increase in freights, then would be the time to decide whether the increase should be paid or not.

The Premier: That proposition never appeared.

Mr. WATTS: The then Acting Secretary for Railways, in giving evidence before the Commonwealth Grants Commission, gave rise to the idea. I had no intention of raising the subject again, because so far as I am concerned it is past and gone. The Premier has reminded me of it, and I give him my views over again as to the matter in question.

There is another excess, and that is in the case of the Fremantle Harbour Trust, the amount being £94,000. We dealt yesterday with the question of increased charges on certain activities of the Harbour Trust, and I do not propose to go into that again. Obviously, the Harbour Trust has been used as a machine for taxing the people. It is making a specific profit, which goes into, and for many years has gone into, the Consolidated Revenue of the State. The question arises whether we are justified in using a public utility of that kind for such a purpose. I suppose there can be room for disagreement. I say we are not justified. However, it has been a long-standing principle in Western Australia that, if the Fremantle Harbour Trust made a profit, it should be paid into Consolidated Revenue.

The Premier: And so help to offset losses incurred at the outports.

Mr. WATTS: I noticed that no provision was made in the Estimates for writing-off the State Shipping Service losses. Was not the position of the State Shipping Service apparent when last year's Estimates were produced? I think by that time the Government was well versed in what had taken place in regard to that undertaking and what the position of the service was likely to be so far as this year's operations are concerned. When one feels that—and there has been nobody to assert to the contrary—and finds no provision made for any losses to be written off, does not one come to the conclusion that this item has been left out purposely? I should say that one is forced to that conclusion irrespective of whether one wants to have it or no. One gives consideration to the circumstances of the case, and that is the conclusion one arrives at unless there should be some satisfactory

explanation; and up to the moment there has been no such explanation.

I pass next to the item, mentioned by the Treasurer, of £35,000 which has been set aside to meet loan losses on drought relief. Does this indicate that the number of farms on which drought relief advances were made a couple of years ago have since been abandoned? If it does, that would be a satisfactory reason why this writing-off should be done. But if that is not the reason, then on what ground does the Premier assume that the £35,000 was uncollectable when it is not due for recovery for another 4½ years? So far as the Government is concerned, anything may happen in the interim. I notice from the Agricultural Bank's reports for successive years, up to the end of the financial year before last, that since 1933, 3,281 farms have been recorded as having been abandoned. That is a most unenviable position during the term of office of a Government which claims that its attention to the agricultural community has been second to none. The number of these abandoned farms is very large, representing a very substantial proportion of the total number of Agricultural Bank farms which at the end of 1932 were settled in this State.

There are, of course, some farms that have been resold on the time-payment basis by the Bank's selling agents, and there are some which have reverted to the Lands Department and have become Crown lands. Further, there are some 2,000 farms on the Bank's hands at the present time; and some of these, for all I know, may be the subject of temporary leases for grazing or agricultural purposes. But the fact remains that during this period there have been upwards of 3,000 Agricultural Bank farms abandoned. If the Premier has decided that this £35,000 should be written off, or made provision for, not because there have been new abandoned farms but because he thinks that the agricultural industry in Western Australia is in such a parlous condition that the greater part of the amount will have to be written off, there may be some grounds for his point of view. Running alongside of that, comes to my mind the question of the Commonwealth Government's attitude towards wheatgrowing in Western Australia.

If that Government continues its present policy—which is one of restriction—I do not think the agricultural development of

Western Australia will ever proceed along very satisfactory lines. At present it is completely at a standstill. Worse than that, people who took up land before the war or took up farms which were not wheatgrowing properties—or if they were, wheat had not been grown on them for a period—find themselves without a wheat license of any kind. They could not put up figures for the basic years because they were not in possession of the properties and so they could not obtain licenses. No matter that such properties are unsuitable for any other purpose; these people cannot use them for the purpose for which they were acquired in 1937 or 1938 as the case might be. We have had a compulsory reduction of one-third in our wheat acreage.

We have had a further quasi-compulsory reduction because we cannot obtain enough superphosphate. That is a matter beyond the control of any Government in this Commonwealth at present, but the effect has been that Western Australia has suffered very substantially and it seems to me that the Commonwealth Government might be satisfied with the superphosphate restrictions as a deterrent to wheatgrowing without continuing to impose upon us this compulsory acreage restriction of one-third below the basic figure that was arrived at for the period of four years prior to the second year after the war.

The Premier told us that a reduction of £146,000 was expected in railway revenue because of the anticipated diminution of defence traffic. I would like to know on what data that amount is calculated. It seems to me we have been told nothing except that this is the estimate. I do not know whether the Premier is prevented from giving us any fuller account of the use by the military authorities of the railways of this State. If he is, at least he might have told us that that was the trouble. By interjection, I asked him whether this was not a very substantial reduction in our railway revenue, and he was not averse from telling me he thought it was justified by the diminution he expected in that traffic. But we do not know how much the Railway Department has earned by that traffic. We do not know whether the increased revenue was entirely due to it or how much was due to it and I think we are entitled, if it is possible, to be taken into the confidence of the Government in regard to this matter so that we may

have some idea of what effect this defence transport has had.

The normal amount of maintenance on the railways was not carried out regularly in the years before the war. In one year, at least, no provision was made to cope with deferred maintenance. I think that was in 1938-39. In consequence, the railways suffered. That was not a war disability but a pre-war disability, occasioned by the fact that the Treasurer would not see fit to make provision for something which obviously required attention. There is no doubt whatever that constant attention was necessary to the railways and particularly to the rollingstock, which has been steadily deteriorating for a very long period. That has been made worse by recent happenings to which I shall refer in a moment. The Treasurer says that certain sums have been set aside to meet this liability in the future.

I hope that if there is a change of Government we shall be able to find this money easily accessible, because I have been reading the observations of Sir James Mitchell when he came into office in 1930. He said that the funds he had hoped to find had been absorbed. He added "our overdraft totals £8,000,000 altogether and our creditors are getting a little restless about it." I spent some time examining the 1929 Budget Speech of the member for Boulder, who was then Premier, and I did not find in it any warning of the state of affairs referred to by the subsequent Premier. I am hopeful, therefore, that no such happening is likely to occur in regard to the funds which are available in connection with our railway maintenance and replacement account to which the Premier referred.

The Premier: Everybody knows that it was not possible to borrow money in 1929, 1930, and 1931.

Mr. WATTS: It was not a question of borrowing money, as I understand the speech of the Premier in 1930. It was that the funds that had been classed as trust funds had been absorbed in anticipation of loan raising and were non-existent and, loan raising being also non-existent, the then Premier was placed in an extremely difficult position. I am just saying that that was a sad state of affairs, a repetition of which I anticipate will by no means be permitted. I find that of the total of £338,000 stated to be in hand towards railway maintenance,

including replacement of worn-out rolling-stock, no less a sum than £218,000, or two-thirds of the total, is represented by sales of rollingstock to the Commonwealth; so that, in addition to the Commissioner's estimate of £500,000 for deferred maintenance there has to be found money to replace this rollingstock which has been disposed of; and, assuming that it is only going to cost £218,000 to replace, that is a total of £718,000 which has to be found as against which there is now only a total of £338,000.

If the rollingstock—as is much more likely—is going to take more to replace than the sum it was sold for, the position will be very much worse. Taking the sale price as being the replacement price, we are still £400,000 short of the estimate. That is particularly unfortunate and unsatisfactory in that there is no provision to add to this £338,000 during this year. That again, to my mind, is a sad dereliction of duty on the part of the Government. It is no use putting aside a few pounds a year to build up this necessary fund. A substantial figure will have to be put aside, even if the war lasts for four years—and that is something none of us wants to see happen. Not to put anything aside this year, when we are nearly £400,000 short on the reasonable estimation given us, seems to me to be an extraordinary thing. We all know that there was a sale of rollingstock to the Commonwealth during the year ended the 30th June, 1942, but it came as somewhat of a surprise to me to know that there was a further sale during the last financial year involving an even greater amount. The Premier said that its value was £116,000. It seems to me that by the middle of 1942 it had become quite clear that there was going to be a substantial movement for defence purposes in Western Australia and that the position of our railways, and its rollingstock difficulties, was sufficiently acute to warrant very close consideration being given to retaining in this State adequate rollingstock. I offer no objection as to the earlier years; in fact, up to that point I commend the Government for making rollingstock available to the Commonwealth. But last year we had become as much a theatre or likely theatre of war as any other part of the Commonwealth.

The Premier: What about between Katherine and Darwin where only one train a

week operated at that stage? Could we not help the Commonwealth to solve that difficulty?

Mr. WATTS: What about Derby, Broome and Port Hedland? The attack was coming slowly but surely towards the the southern portion of this State.

The Premier: Had the Commonwealth not adequately defended Darwin we would have been attacked before we were.

Mr. WATTS: My observations are slowly extracting from the Premier the information which he did not give us when he made the bald statement that rollingstock to the value of £116,000 was disposed of in the year just passed. We were all aware of the previous year's transactions but no one, except members of the Government, knew what was taking place during the last financial year. I propose to return to the debate of the 12th November, 1942, on the motion of protest against the Federal referendum proposals. At page 1327 of "Hansard" for that year the Premier is reported to have said:—

The Deputy Premier had to take a special trip to the Eastern States in order to make representations regarding the serious lack of defence measures that was apparent in parts of the State. The then Leader of the Opposition, who had to proceed East on other business, accompanied him and joined in the representations that were made to the Commonwealth authorities, which resulted in the defence provisions being made much more adequate.

While not much publicity apparently, was given to these proceedings, which took place early in 1942, members generally understood that representations had been made because of the failure of the Commonwealth Government to make provision for the defence of Western Australia comparable with that then being made in the other States. We all felt inclined at that time, on our understanding of the position to commend the Government for the action taken. Had it not been for certain statements made by the Prime Minister in recent months I would have had no doubt in my mind on the subject. But on the 23rd June last, the Prime Minister, the Right Hon. John Curtin, is reported in "The West Australian" of that date as having made the following statement:

In my own State of Western Australia the situation was too serious for description. The Premiers of the States had placed plans before me for the evacuation of Queensland, New South Wales and Western Australia.

The placing of a plan before the Prime Minister for the evacuation of the State is a very different proposition from the statement made by the Premier and one, so far as I am concerned, that calls for some explanation from one party or the other. I turn now to Federal "Hansard" of the 22nd June, 1943, No. 13. At page 26 the speech of the Prime Minister, which I have quoted from "The West Australian" is more fully reported. He said—

The Premier of Western Australia arranged for the Deputy Premier to visit Canberra. Plans of evacuation were formulated by three States as the result of consultations they had had with the military commands in those States. This Government rejected them all.

"This Government" refers to the Government of Mr. Curtin at Canberra. According to the statement of the Prime Minister, therefore, the proposals of the State Government were not for the defence of Western Australia, but for its evacuation.

The Premier: Nothing of the kind.

Mr. WATTS: How can the Premier get over the position? He has two alternatives. Either the statement of the Prime Minister is correct and our State Government has committed a dereliction of its duty; or the Prime Minister was not speaking the truth.

The Minister for Works: You are raising the question of the Brisbane Line.

Mr. WATTS: No. Here is "The West Australian." If that statement was not correct, why was no explanation furnished by the State Government? I do not attempt to sit in judgment; I have not the evidence or the possibility of getting it. I simply quote the two statements, both of which cannot be correct. One must be untrue. The only question that interests me is, which is true and which is not. Having arrived at a decision on that subject, it would be the end of it in this House so far as I am concerned. But, because I want to know the answer, I have raised the question. The Prime Minister said that plans for the evacuation of Queensland, New South Wales, and Western Australia were placed before him and, according to "Hansard," he went on to say, "My Government rejected them all."

The Premier: That is not our business.

Mr. WATTS: If they were not submitted to him how could he reject them? There are only two alternatives—either the Premier misled the House, or the Prime Min-

ister misled the people. All I want to know is which is correct. The next item in the Budget Speech refers to the provision of £40,000 for minor repairs and renovations to various buildings, in addition to the £100,000 provided last year. On the one hand we have nothing set aside for the maintenance of our railways which are known to be in an extremely difficult position and the provision for which is some £400,000 short. No provision is being made for railway repairs and maintenance. On the other hand, we have set aside £40,000 for the renovation of Government buildings. Of course, I approve of the renovation of Government buildings just as I approve of attention being paid to the Government railways. But if it is impossible to set both sums aside, which I would argue should be done, then why should we set aside the one which is of lesser importance, to wit, the maintenance of Government buildings.

I venture to suggest that in this year, at any rate, there is less need to make provision for the renovation of our Government buildings than there is to provide for the renovation of the Government railways. This is surely not an example of putting first things first. It is true that our Government buildings in some cases are out-of-date, but nevertheless it is practicable to carry on business quite successfully in them while, at the same time, it is becoming increasingly difficult to carry on the business of the railways. Continual complaints, from all over the place, are reaching us in connection with the unsatisfactory rolling-stock used. We are told of the inconvenience suffered by women and children owing to the lack of lavatory accommodation. The Government buildings, although, perhaps, they are not in very good order, do not cause as much inconvenience as is experienced by the people travelling on our trains.

A suggestion has been whispered by the member for Williams-Narrogin with which I agree, that the walls are not likely to break down but the locomotives are, and I might add that much greater consideration should be given to the railway staff at this juncture. I agree, too, that post-war employment will be greatly assisted by the construction of buildings. We know perfectly well that new buildings will have to be erected, and in many cases they will be most desirable, and employment will be greatly

assisted by work done upon the railways. We are entitled to expect both of these branches to receive adequate consideration, but this year's Budget provides for the one and ignores the other.

I regret—and this is no idle criticism—that no statement was made by the Premier regarding the cessation of work on the Perth Hospital. Perhaps we might get some information from the Minister for Health when we deal with his Estimates later on.

The Minister for Mines: Men and material are not available.

Mr. WATTS: We all know that men are not available to do the work, but I want to go a step further than that. When we reach the Health Estimates, I want the Minister to tell us why there is no labour or material available. What representations have been made to the authorities responsible for there being none such available? Has the treatment meted out to Western Australia in regard to the most important public building in hand in this State, from the point of view of the people's health—and last year all that accommodation might have been required—been the same as that meted out to the Eastern States? Where do we stand in this regard as compared with the Eastern States?

The Minister for Mines: I know nothing about the Eastern States.

Mr. WATTS: Then I recommend the Minister to make the closest inquiry and inform us whether we have had equal treatment, because I suspect there has not been the same difficulty as we have experienced in proceeding with the erection of similar public buildings in certain other parts of Australia. There ought to be very strong reasons why the work on this building should have been prevented, as I am sure it was, by the failure to supply any material or any manpower, in view of the type of building it is.

The Minister for Labour: You know the reason. Now you want the reason for the reason.

Mr. WATTS: I am not asking for the reason for the reason. I want to know what representations have been made, and with what result, and what is happening elsewhere. I want to know the facts, not the reason.

In the immediate post-war years I agree with the Minister for Industrial Develop-

ment in the remarks he made last night that the mere provision of employment should not be the alpha and omega of our endeavour. Of course we have to provide employment because it is well that every person should be engaged in useful and, as far as possible, congenial occupation. Of course we cannot all do exactly as we would like to do; even members here cannot do that, but we should make an effort, so far as lies in our power, to ensure that people are employed in useful and congenial occupations. I feel that there will be a great many difficulties to be overcome, and that they can be overcome only by the exercise of broad vision and hard work on the part of those in responsible positions.

Take the young men of this State who have attained the age of 18 years during the last two or three years and have entered one or other branches of the Armed Services! They will come back to civil life at an age of possibly 22, 23 or 24 years, and there has not yet been any set-up which is definitely going to put them into the position of not becoming another lost legion. We have to give special consideration to these young men who have lost what were really the best years of their lives, the years in which they would have passed from adolescence to manhood and entered upon normal occupations. These occupations they would have followed probably throughout their careers; they would have grown up with the work, and would not have had family or other responsibilities to shoulder until they had been three, four or five years in that employment and, had they fully applied themselves to their work, had made reasonably steady progress. But that has all been lost. They have been taken away from their normal occupations, their families and their friends, and some of them have started families of their own.

Those men will have to be handled very carefully and in a statesmanlike manner. We must make special provision for them because they will form a substantial number of the population; they will not be located in a few isolated places, but will be in every country town and in the metropolitan area in their thousands. We cannot afford to lose one minute of time in starting to make definite provision for their reception and return to civil life.

Their position will be more difficult than that of older men, many of whom, though

not all, will be able to return to their former employment. They will have their families and friends waiting for them. Great care and attention will also have to be paid to the older section. I am not denying this fact; nor am I trying to escape the fact that those men exist. During the 1930-35 period, there grew up one lot of youngsters who have been referred to as the lost legion, and there must not be another lost legion as a consequence of this war.

With regard to employment, the greatest difficulty will be to find skilled artisans in the State to do the work of the skilled character that will be required. This, of course, will give us an opportunity to utilise the skill that has been imparted to a proportion of our young men in the course of their service with the Armed Forces. They will be able to apply the knowledge acquired in the Service, although not in the type of work they will have to do after the war. Still, they will have acquired a certain amount of knowledge which, with a little time and attention, can be applied to other work without much difficulty. Some of the young men, however, have had no such opportunity. There has been a considerable movement of skilled workers from this State to the benefit of other States of the Commonwealth, and it is not likely that they will return here. Yet there will be, in proportion to population, just the same class of work to be done here after the war as there will be in the Eastern States.

The only prospect lies in the development of this State at a far greater rate than that which takes place elsewhere. That development is going to be seriously hampered, in my view, if the majority representation of the Eastern States—a substantial majority, too—is going to have too much control of the affairs of this nation. Here I again come back to the problem of unification, because that problem has definite application to this highly difficult aspect of the situation. If we are going to receive a greater proportion of development than the other States of the Commonwealth, then naturally we may succeed in attracting back the artisans that we have lost and finding suitable and congenial occupation for all those who wish to return when coming back from the war; but I do not look very hopefully to our being given a greater share of development than our population warrants. The attitude of the other parts of the Com-

monwealth will, I am sure, be to get further development in their own territories; and it will behove any Government in control of this State to take the strongest possible action to see that Western Australia shall not again become what it was when it was called the Cinderella State. In my opinion nothing less than the most determined front to the authorities in the Eastern States—who can be got at by their local brethren, by close contact, every day—will suffice to save Western Australia from again being placed in that position. It will be the duty of any Western Australian Government, whatever its complexion may be, to stand very firmly in its determination that this State is to have a better deal than it has had in the past.

Last night a Minister referred to the great need for the doing of road work by local authorities in the post-war period. It is true that many roads have fallen into a very poor condition and now show ample room for improvement; but notwithstanding that fact local authorities will soon exhaust the avenues of employment on any large scale, which they may have in road work, after the war. Over a short period they will be of very great assistance, but I think they will soon revert to the normal and it will then be a question of State-wide action to ensure that those who are displaced are found some reasonably congenial employment. Governments will then have to begin undertaking substantial works in order that there will not be any lag in employment to those desiring it in this State. The impending problem will not be so apparent in the first twelve months after hostilities cease. I may be quite wrong, but that is my view. The peak period in this respect I believe will be 12 months after the war. The provision of employment and the restoration of our people to civil occupations can best be undertaken by the State Governments. A State Government knows all about its people, and all about the State and all about the requirements. Either State House can furnish more information in five minutes about Western Australia and its difficulties and requirements and resources than could be obtained from the people in control at Canberra in 24 hours.

Mr. Cross: Or in six months!

Mr. WATTS: The hon. member may be right for once. As I said in this Chamber

on the 11th March last and am reported in "Hansard"—

I make no secret of the fact that I look on the workers of Western Australia as the cream of the workers of Australia, and I believe that statement can be justified by the evidence that can be brought forward in any part of this State. I believe that their rights and their wrongs are best entrusted to the Parliament of Western Australia.

I believe that Western Australian workers are of the type that will give a fair day's work.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: What do you think of the 40-hour week?

Mr. WATTS: The Industrial Arbitration Court will decide that matter. I am prepared to accept the court's decision and abide by it loyally, because I believe its decision will be given on evidence tendered to the court, and after due inquiry. But I am certainly not going to say that we ought to indulge in such things by legislation, because legislation should be preceded by that inquiry to which I have referred in order that there may be justice done to both sides of the community that are concerned in the argument. The Premier made one illuminating statement. He said that the Commonwealth wanted the State's surpluses transferred to it. I ask myself: When is this insatiable maw of the Commonwealth going to be sufficiently filled by the States? I do not doubt for a moment that the Premier voiced an objection to the proposal. Of course, there is only one remedy if that procedure is to be adopted; we simply will not have a surplus and the Commonwealth could not acquire it because it did not exist.

I hope the Premier's expectations in regard to the flax industry will be realised. We shall have to be on the watch that our Australian surplus flax is not sold on the world's market at some unprofitable price, so that the average price becomes unprofitable. Dr. Evatt, in his book on "Post-war Reconstruction," of which I have a copy, specially referred to the flax industry and to the point I am raising. He admitted that Australia was already producing three times the quantity of flax which it was likely normally to use. That has always been the position of our primary products. We can produce so much, as soon as we apply ourselves to the task, that we rapidly overtake the local consumption. We then find, as the sugargrowers found, that we have to

sell a substantial portion of the product in some market which is definitely unpayable. So we Australian people, in order to maintain an industry, as well as maintain our ability to supply our own demands, have to pay an extraordinarily high amount for the quantity consumed in Australia in order to reach a reasonable price overall for the production. I do not want that to happen, if we can avoid it, to our flax, although I feel that competition from outside will be so tremendous that we will probably be unable to give a payable price to the flax-grower. Dr. Evatt, in the work to which I have referred, says at page 27—

Although as a war measure flax cultivation has increased to more than 60,000 acres, evidence shows that Australia's post-war requirements are likely to be met by an area of 20,000 acres of flax.

The quotation is an extract from the second progress report of the all-party Commonwealth Joint Parliamentary Committee on Rural Industries. Dr. Evatt goes on to say—

If such a reduction is to be effected, only a national authority can properly settle the basis. Each State will be anxious to continue to produce flax to its maximum. Without Commonwealth-wide control there will be no equating of supply to national demand.

We have already fixed up the sugar business without giving the Commonwealth the complete control which Dr. Evatt seeks. That, however, is only by the way. My point is that producers' costs in this State are high on account of a variety of causes. Our fiscal policy is one. The costs are so high that we cannot possibly compete with the outside world. We therefore are faced with the prospect that 40,000 acres of flax may have to go out of production. That is why I am wondering whether the Premier's optimism is well-founded. I hope it is. Personally, I believe that the eastern side of the Commonwealth has less to do with the matter than Dr. Evatt would like. Western Australia may be able to maintain the area it now has under flax and possibly to utilise some of the product locally, disposing of the remainder at a reasonable price, because in this industry I believe the cost of production is lower in this State than in the other States.

The Premier: And the quality of the flax is better.

Mr. WATTS: The quality seems to be better. We therefore may be in a better position to handle our own flax than if it

were dealt with on a Commonwealth-wide basis. It is gratifying to know that we have been able to give substantial assistance in the production of this commodity which, at one period during the war as far as the Empire was concerned, was practically non-existent and was facing us with an exceedingly difficult problem. It is essential that we should keep down the cost of production in every way possible. The cost of living is very difficult to control. Not even the Prices Commissioners have been able to cope satisfactorily with the problem during the last year or two. Nevertheless, that should not be an excuse for us to allow it to grow out of hand without attempting to secure a reasonable measure of control.

We do not want to have the dog chasing its tail as between the basic wage and the cost of living. Nobody is desirous in the slightest degree of lowering the standard of living of those who are workers. We have to continue with the system of increasing the basic wage commensurately with the cost of living, but the worker is no better off, as he is usually at least six weeks behind the cost of living before he secures the increase in the basic wage. Even then his money certainly has no greater purchasing power. If we could leave the cost of living and the basic wage stationary, it would be better; but if we could reduce the cost of living substantially, then we would improve the position of those people with fixed incomes, including superannuation and pensions, because now they have no means of coping with the increased cost of living. In my view, it is our duty to control the cost of living to the best of our ability and the utmost of our capacity, so that harm will be done to none and the position of a substantial number improved.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

MR. WATTS: Another matter to which I wish to refer is the deficiency in officers of the Agricultural Department. I understand that that has been occasioned by the war. Agricultural officers have been withdrawn to undertake national service. The agricultural adviser who has been stationed at Katanning for many years—and there are very few more capable officers—has been withdrawn to undertake some service which is allied with war work. I feel that never was there a time when the services of such

men were more urgently required, and their replacement, as early as it can be arranged, is an absolute necessity. I mention this matter only because I hope the Minister for Agriculture, when he is dealing with the Agricultural Estimates, will give us such information as is at his disposal in regard to the possibility of these replacements. I notice that the sum of £18,000 has been placed on the Estimates for the destruction of grasshoppers. I was attracted by the fact that there had been in past years—amongst them the last four or five years—quite substantial amounts placed on the Estimates to deal with the destruction of these pests and that by no means had the whole of those amounts been expended in that work. In this particular year, a much greater amount has been placed on the Estimates than heretofore, and I am wondering whether it is intended to expend that amount freely or whether this figure is only—as the other figures have been—a sort of hopeful anticipation.

I find that in the year 1939-40 an amount of £4,000 was placed on the Estimates and only £903, or 25 per cent., was spent. In 1940-41 the estimate was £4,000, of which only £289 was spent, or 8 per cent. In 1941-42 the estimate was £2,000, of which £259 was spent. In those three years the total amount spent was £1,440 out of an estimated amount of £10,000. In view of this estimate of £18,000, which far exceeds the figure for any of the previous years, there can be only two viewpoints. One is that the Government expects a considerable increase in the pest which will therefore occasion a demand for an expenditure far exceeding what has been evidenced in the past; or, alternatively, that the amount spent in past years has been inadequate—unless there be the position that to the Government's knowledge there will be a lot of people available to do the work and that will occasion the expenditure. If that is not the position, why put £18,000 on the Estimates?

The Premier: Climatic conditions will make a lot of difference to the amount of money required.

MR. DONEY: It is difficult to forecast the amount needed.

The Premier: Yes.

MR. WATTS: It is such a sudden rise that I find it difficult to understand why such an amount is provided.

The Minister for Mines: You are looking for the nigger in the woodpile!

Mr. WATTS: The Minister for Mines has suggested the real idea which is that there is a nigger in the woodpile. Perhaps we might have that nigger explained at some future time. I would say this: If the Government thinks the pest is going to be very bad during the ensuing 12 months let us spend the whole £18,000—and even £36,000, if it is required. Do not let us hesitate to do that. The point is, however, that no reason has been advanced why the amount has been suddenly increased, and I hope the reason is not an expectation that we are going to have serious trouble with grasshoppers this year. If it is so, let us know what are the plans for the expenditure of this money in a helpful way. That is all I ask.

In the course of his remarks, the Premier referred to the putting in of a siding at Collie. He made reference to this matter when dealing with the shortage of coal. Apparently this siding was intended to help along an increased production of that commodity, which is so essential at the present time. I am informed that 10 weeks elapsed between the time when the work on the siding was approved and the time it started. We are told repeatedly that one of the great reasons there is so much difficulty with regard to railway transport is the shortage of coal. It seems to me that if this is such an urgent matter—and I fully believe it is in regard to railway administration in these days—there should have been no hesitation in providing some of the men from other branches of the railway service to undertake the erection of this siding. The Premier said the work had to be held up until labour was available from the Allied Works Council, which I understood him to say had now been obtained. But ten weeks is a long time, in a state of emergency such as exists in this State, for work to be held up. Surely if shortage of coal has been one of the major reasons for a lot of our railway transport difficulties, it would have been practicable to take sufficient men from various places in the service without seriously diminishing their current activities, in order to make a start on this work earlier than ten weeks from the time it was approved.

The Premier: On the advice of the Chief Civil Engineer, that could not be done be-

cause they were about 100 men short out of 1,000.

Mr. WATTS: Did I understand the Premier to say it would take 60 men to do this work?

The Premier: No, between 30 and 40. I think there will be 40 engaged on it at the end of this week.

Mr. WATTS: I suppose the Premier is in a difficult position if his technical adviser tells him a thing cannot be done, but I venture the suggestion that if private enterprise had been dealing with the two matters and had found itself in the same difficulty in regard to shortage of labour on the one hand and shortage of coal on the other—the latter almost preventing it from carrying on business at all—it would have found ways and means of overcoming the difficulty, technical advisers notwithstanding.

The Premier: We had an assurance that the Allied Works Council would not be able to provide the men.

Mr. WATTS: Dealing further with this whole question, it seems to me there has been an inexplicable delay in prospecting the coal seams of the Irwin district. We know perfectly well that there is in this State no coal of the highest quality, yet we are much better off than are certain other States—South Australia, for one—in that we have coal seams at Collie that have contributed much to Western Australia. But we know that at present, and for some time past, they have hardly been producing up to the demand. Some time back—six years ago, I think—the Government appointed a Royal Commissioner in the person of Dr. Herman, to inquire into the position, and he submitted a recommendation that the coal mines of the Irwin district should be exploited. He stated in his report—

It is quite within the bounds of probability that somewhere within the several hundred square miles there may be found a coal seam or seams of quality comparable with that of Collie.

Notwithstanding the fact that the supply of coal has been short now for upwards of two years, and notwithstanding the difficulties that have been occasioned as a result of that shortage, it is only recently that we heard the Government expressing the view that anything should be done in that district to ascertain what supplies are there and to exploit them.

The Minister for Mines: There is no more coal at Eradu than at Collie. That is our trouble.

Mr. WATTS: I am suggesting that this should have been done long ago. This policy of leaving everything for post-war reconstruction is, to my way of thinking, going to be somewhat disastrous to Western Australia. Everywhere we turn we find that things that should be done now, or should have been done previously, are to be done after the war.

The Premier: What you suggest now is socialism, which you oppose.

Mr. WATTS: Let us think carefully about socialism and the opposition it has had in regard to reasonable enterprise by the State Government. Will the Premier tell me when I have opposed any reasonable proposals that he has brought forward for the development of our natural resources for the advantage of the State?

The Premier: Your party has always stood against State enterprises.

Mr. WATTS: The Premier started by saying that I had opposed them.

The Premier: You represent the party.

Mr. WATTS: I do, and I tell the Premier that there would have been no objection to a reasonable attitude towards the exploitation of the Irwin coal deposits. What objection has been raised by this side of the House to the development of potash at Champion?

The Premier: That is a late development. Your party might have become more liberal under your leadership.

Mr. WATTS: Have we objected to the proposal for the establishment of charcoal iron? There are times when activity along these lines by the Government is undoubtedly justified.

Mr. North: Even Churchill said so!

Mr. WATTS: Even as great a man as Winston Churchill made a similar observation to that, but in far better terms. There are times also when, as the Premier himself admitted in his Budget Speech, it would be better for private enterprise to do the exploiting or developing.

The Premier: I did not say that.

Mr. WATTS: The Premier said that if private enterprise would not tackle a proposition, the Government might have to do it. He went on to say that the Government would not be niggardly in providing money and technical advice.

The Premier: We gave private enterprise every opportunity.

Mr. WATTS: Exactly, and when the Government arrives at the conclusion that private enterprise either cannot or will not do it, if I understand the Premier aright, then the State will get to work and do whatever has to be done. I quite frankly say that I will not quarrel with that point of view. In fact, I thought, when reading the Premier's Budget Speech, that he put it in a very reasonable and decent manner. I was going to commend him, but he would not let me. As a result, I am reduced now to an argument of this character. But the fact remains—getting back to where I was when I was sidetracked—that it is a pity this should have to wait until the period of post-war reconstruction. Here we have a Government the members of which have been sitting on the front Bench at the right of the Speaker for approximately 11 years now—10½ years—and the administration of which in the daily Press has been described by a gentleman called T. G. Davies, who claims to be the secretary of the A.L.P.

The Minister for Works: He is the secretary of the A.L.P.

Mr. WATTS: I accept the Minister's assurance that he is. Mr. Davies praises this excellent administration—an excellent administration which has done nothing in ten years and proposes to leave all development for Western Australia until the post-war period! That, in short, is the policy of the Government of Western Australia. For ten years all these things have stood still, while Western Australia has cried out for development; it has called for population and fairly shrieked for the development about which we hear so much today. But it is all to take place in the post-war period. It cannot take place during the war.

The Premier: This State quite wrongly concentrated on primary industries.

Mr. WATTS: This Government has had 6½ years during which the State was not at war. During that period, if the policy was wrong, the Government should have rectified it. I confess that I did not observe, in that time, any steps taken to remedy it. On the one hand the Government says, "Look at what we have done for the rural industries," and on the other hand the Premier states that it was the

wrong way to go about developing Western Australia.

The Premier: No, I did not.

Mr. WATTS: I will follow my own line of argument. Ten and a half years have elapsed and little has been done, and now nothing can be done until the post-war period. I will be frank and admit that some things that should be done would not have been advisable or even thought of without the war, but quite a number could have been safely indulged in prior to the war and one, I believe, was the exploitation of the coal deposits in the North.

Mr. North: Would that save transport?

Mr. WATTS: It is obvious that it would, because coal has to be transported a long way from Collie for use in the Geraldton-Mullewa district—approximately 600 miles as against 100 miles if it were produced from the deposits in the neighbourhood!

The Minister for Works: Is it good quality coal?

Mr. WATTS: I do not know any more about it than does the Minister, but I have read the observations of Dr. Herman, who said there was every reason to believe that it was comparable to the coal at Collie. No interest has been taken in its development until very recently. That development will take place in the post-war period.

The Premier: I drove locomotives on Irwin coal 15 years ago. It was no good. It is only 75 per cent. of the quality of Collie coal. Private enterprise said that the Government should develop it as it was no good.

Mr. Doney: It is surface coal.

The Premier: That coal was used 40 years ago.

Mr. WATTS: I will leave the coal, and turn to some other topic which will, perhaps, be of less interest to my friend opposite. I noticed a statement that money is to be made available for University bursaries, and I think it was said that the Treasurer would not object to providing £20,000.

The Premier: I did not say that at all.

Mr. WATTS: Then I misread the observation. I think such a sum should be made available at the earliest possible time provided—

The Premier: Yes, provided!

Mr. WATTS: —provided there are reasonable means of ensuring that the benefits of the University will not be confined to the boys and girls living in Perth and the vicinity. The report of the Select Committee

in 1938, to which reference has been made, shows the vast proportion of University students as having come from the vicinity of the metropolitan area, and I think one of its members stated that the opportunity of the metropolitan youth was opportunity plus while the opportunity of the country youth, on the contrary, was opportunity minus, as far as the matter had progressed at the time of his remarks. We must ensure that these educational facilities which, in many respects, are sadly lacking at the present time, when they are improved or when new ones are provided, shall be at least equally available to country youth and that some trouble is taken to give the country child an opportunity to compete with its more fortunate urban brother or sister.

I note, too, the decision of the Government to extend technical education in all the areas of the State. We have to remember that the rural districts have definitely been very short in supply of technical education. I am not dealing now with the case of any particular rural area. With few exceptions—and those exceptions are entirely allied to the goldmining industry for which there has been a peculiar need for this sort of thing—the opportunity for the technical education of our country youth has been sadly lacking. It is all very well to say that the education vote has been increased by this amount or that amount. The greater part of the increase has been due to the higher salaries paid to the teaching staff, often because of compulsory increases in the basic wage and the necessary adjustments that have had to be made. I do not complain of this, but I say there is definite need in this State to make provision for a greatly increased expenditure on education, and to spread the increased facilities equally amongst all sections of the community. I have no wish to deprive the people of the metropolitan districts of the smallest amount of opportunity they have. Quite the contrary. I am glad to see the opportunities they have improved, but I say there is a decided lag in the opportunities for rural children and this lag must be caught up with so that there may be equality of opportunity in every area in the State.

As long ago as 1937 a deputation waited on the Minister for Industrial Development on the subject of delinquent youth. Approximately six years, however, passed without any attention being given to the

questions raised. Last session a member of the Legislative Council succeeded in getting a motion passed for the appointment of a Select Committee, which was afterwards converted into an honorary Royal Commission. On behalf of the Government, the Chief Secretary opposed the motion for the inquiry, just as the Government had opposed a great many other moves for the purpose of evolving some order out of the chaos that has existed. The evidence taken by the Commission revealed a state of affairs which should be the grave concern of every citizen of the State. I know that some provision has been made for the detention of delinquents who were formerly held in the Roe-street lock-up quarters, and of course that received very strong comment from witnesses who appeared before the Royal Commission. Other matters were dealt with by witnesses before the Commission that require our attention as early as possible.

I suggest that members read some of the evidence given by the Commissioner of Police, Inspector Doyle and others well qualified to speak of what is taking place in regard to these youths. I have read a most interesting report, by courtesy of the Premier, in regard to the prison at Barton's Mill. Some people have raised considerable objection to the frequent escapes from Fremantle and Barton's Mill prisons, and I wish to make some reference to both those places. The case that attracted most attention was that of the incorrigible prisoner, Sutton. Many people were inclined to criticise the prison authorities, which means the Government, for the fact that Sutton was permitted to escape. His escape might certainly have led to serious consequences, but I must say in fairness that I consider the Government was in a most difficult position in regard to that man. If my information is correct, the Government was practically ordered to move the prisoners from Fremantle and advised to open a temporary prison at Barton's Mill. It was difficult, then, to know where to put such prisoners. The man I have mentioned was incarcerated at Barton's Mill and made trouble there. Then he was moved to Fremantle, but shortage of staff, manpower difficulties, were experienced and he escaped again. Without being critical I must say this does ask for a tightening of the regulations existing at both those prisons, because it would never do for the State prison to get a reputation

that escapes from it are easy, particularly for such a man as the one I have mentioned. I think everybody would feel satisfied if some definite statement were made by the Premier or the Chief Secretary regarding this matter so that we might have an assurance that a period will be put to these escapes.

The Premier: A committee is now investigating a site for possible future development.

Mr. WATTS: I was surprised to learn that the Premier only hopes that the farm schools at Denmark and Narrogin will be retained. I should have thought it obvious that a favourable decision would have been made weeks ago. I think it is a question of making up one's mind quickly whether both should be retained and taking steps to see that they are kept in operation. I had an opportunity when at Denmark a few weeks ago of seeing the work that is being done there. At that time the Narrogin School of Agriculture had been transferred, but it was gratifying to notice the excellent work being done, and the staff should be complimented upon it. But, as the Premier said, there are two types more that we can deal with now of agricultural development in Western Australia. One is the dairying and allied industries in the south-western corner of the State, and the other is mixed sheep and wheat farming. Those two industries represent distinct types. We require tuition in either one or the other, but certainly not in both. Facilities at Denmark are excellent for development of the one, and facilities at Narrogin for the development of the other. There should be no hesitation in keeping both establishments open and developing both. A proper state of efficiency should be established both in buildings and equipment as speedily as possible. I hope the Government will give that matter attention.

I contend that this State is in a highly favourable position to supply a portion, relative to its productive capacity, of international food requirements; but this will not be so unless the Commonwealth Government's policy towards Western Australia is reversed. Farms will have deteriorated so much, and production will have been so tremendously restricted, and costs so greatly increased, that in many cases we shall not be able to meet the position after the war so as to take part in any increased demands.

Other countries will be prepared to expand their production of foodstuffs immediately hostilities cease, and there is a grave risk that those other countries will get in on the ground floor and deprive Western Australia of its proper proportion of that trade. The evidence goes to show, and responsible Ministers have told us frequently, that we have been denuded of manpower to a greater extent than is the case in any other State. We have, as I have pointed out, been restricted in production. We find it very difficult indeed to obtain supplies, even supposing we had the manpower needed to keep our farms in order.

Today I was informed at the Fruit-growers' Conference of the deterioration which has taken place in orchards because of some of this very difficulty in regard to manpower. We have experienced, owing to no fault on the part of this Government, the shortage in super; and this will be felt much more next year, or the year after, unless there is a much more substantial improvement than has been felt in recent years. If the war should come to an end suddenly—as is quite possible—other States will be in a better position to cope with international demands than this State will be. Indeed, we should be in a very much less favourable position than other States. The aspect of the position requires the most careful attention by the Government of Western Australia. It is useless to assume that “it is going to be all right.” That is a mere policy of wishful thinking.

We should take every action possible to ensure that in the very near future there will be an improvement in the position, for if we do not, then instead of our development being rapidly accentuated, as it ought to be, the contrary will be the case. This State will never cease to be substantially independent of primary production, and therefore we must do many things to ensure that our rural industries are reconstructed so as again to occupy an important position in the State's economy. I regard secondary industrial development as desirable and advisable. We should make every reasonable effort to develop our secondary industries, especially if they are of a useful kind and will use up resources which this State can supply in great quantities. I think we shall for years have our hands full to develop those secondary industries. At the same time Australian economy, unless it is

going to be radically altered, and although there is little sign of that at the moment, despite much talk about the Atlantic Charter, is not in such a condition as to enable our secondary industries to compete in the outside markets of the world to a sufficient extent to warrant unlimited expansion. We can very soon fill up the home market; and unless we re-establish our industries by some means, either by a reduction in their production costs, which I cannot easily see the way to do, or by bounties, of which we have not yet any definite promise, then their production in many, though not in all, respects will be strictly limited. Therefore it is quite clear that the question requires most careful consideration on an Australia-wide basis.

Representatives of all the States should, in my opinion, be called together to discuss this involved problem. If we are going to have, as we are told by some people who read the Atlantic Charter, a great measure of international free trade, that will have a detrimental effect on some of the already existing industries here, and we are going to find ourselves developing something for future benefit, and on the other hand something that has developed in the past ceasing to have any usefulness whatever. I consider that we shall have to make a very strong effort to see that our development is on an Australia-wide basis and is co-ordinated. In my opinion that co-ordination will be arrived at in the best way by not placing the matter in the hands of gentlemen at Canberra with agents in the respective States. That method has not produced important satisfactory results during the war; there has been more blundering and more trouble in departments so administered during the last two or three years than ever we want to see again. I do not wish to draw invidious distinctions between Federal departments. My reference is to only two Federal departments, and those departments I am prepared to name privately later. I maintain that those two departments have made lovely muddles, but I do not wish to draw public attention to them.

The Minister for Works: They are all suspect now!

Mr. WATTS: I have my own opinion as to how I should proceed in this matter, and I shall do it in my own way or not at all. If the States and the Commonwealth get together and decide on a plan of action to

be brought into operation in each State by the State Government, we shall get somewhere, I think. In fact, I believe we shall. And then we would find that Western Australia would probably develop on these lines in the hands of people who know something about the subject. It is a curious thing, though, that the three great periods of advance in Western Australia have been times when there were not Labour Governments in office. I do not know that the Premier has ever given that aspect consideration. I suggest he should do so, and then he will be able at some future time to express his views on the aspect in question. I may mention that it was not a Labour Government that conceived and put into effect the Goldfields Water Supply scheme. The Goldfields development was made possible by that water supply.

Again, it was not a Labour Government that conceived the plan to develop the wheat areas of Western Australia. That development was a great conception. Without it, I wonder what would have happened to Western Australia in the intervening years. I wonder whether we would have had as many people as we have here now and whether the State would be as well settled as it is. Even great men make mistakes—I would not suggest that even the Treasurer would say he never made any—and mistakes have been made in the settlement of our South-West. This portion of the State was developed by a Government which was not a Labour Government. From that development have grown our dairying industry and all the other improvements that have been made in that portion of the State. I do not believe it is necessary that there should be a Government of the complexion of the one which I see opposite me before the State can make any further improvement. In fact, rather do I believe the contrary. I work on the evidence before me, not on any wishful thinking. The Minister for Labour was not present to listen to the pearls of wisdom I was dropping a few moments ago, when I said there had not been a great deal of development that one could notice during the last 10½ years.

The Minister for Labour: There never was.

The Premier: There has been a big improvement, though.

Mr. WATTS: Perhaps somebody will be kind enough to tell me where it is. I know

that we have had three surpluses in succession; but a far greater man than I once said, on his being charged with having incurred a deficit of one million pounds, "Well, it is all in the pockets of the people." That was the late Hon. J. Scaddan, who at that time was a distinguished Labour Premier, among the first, I think, in Western Australia. Were he here now, and I wish he were, he would say that the development of the State would be far better achieved by spending all the money we had, rather than trying to achieve surpluses which the Commonwealth Government might ask the State to pay over to it for war purposes. That seems to be the position as far as I can see.

In the course of his speech the Premier said the Government had not been niggardly in assisting to establish industries. I have already said that I regret the Auditor General's report has not yet been tabled, because I am interested to know the position with regard to assistance to secondary industries. We have some general idea of the position as to assistance rendered through the I.A.B. to rural areas. On referring to the Auditor General's report for last year, I find that the outstanding principal for assistance to secondary interest was then £435,000, the outstanding interest being £68,000. The collections for the year, both principal and interest, amounted to £13,000.

The Premier: Most of the assistance was not by way of advances of money, but by guaranteeing accounts at banks.

Mr. WATTS: Which the Government has to pay afterwards.

The Premier: We might have to.

Mr. WATTS: That is what I desired to know, but could not ascertain because of the absence of the Auditor General's report for this year. Perhaps the Treasurer, if he feels equal to the task, will tell members what has been the result of that expenditure, because there is nothing to show for it. It is an indication not only that greater caution should be exercised in making advances, but that new methods should be adopted in order to ascertain what prospects there are of the industries becoming firmly established. If the prospects are not good, there should be no assistance, as it would mean for the industry concerned only the long straight road to bankruptcy.

The Treasurer expressed the opinion that after the war there would be a continued

demand for gold. Many people have expressed a contrary opinion but, so far as the State is concerned, few people would desire to see the reverse happen. Nevertheless, the policy of the Commonwealth Government has dealt a severe blow to Western Australia's mining industry, and, as far as I can make out, it is unlikely that the industry will recover from it. A report in the Press of this week discloses that we shall be very lucky this year if our gold production equals one-half of that of last year.

The Premier: That would be a good performance for a third of the men previously engaged in the industry.

Mr. WATTS: Many of the mines that have been closed down will never be reopened. I know strong arguments can be used against mining for gold any longer. The Premier will remember that it has been said it is simply taking it out from one place to bury it in another. I have heard that observation made from time to time.

Mr. Sampson: I think it was the member for Murchison who said it the first six times.

Mr. WATTS: That may be so. The fact remains that as long as there is a demand for gold it is our duty, as Western Australians, in the interests of the State, to ensure that the demand is met so far as we are able to meet it.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: What would it be used for in future?

Mr. WATTS: That is a question the hon. member can answer for himself: I have no desire to enter upon a controversy on it. I prefaced my remarks by saying that as long as there is a demand for gold and we can produce it, it is our duty in the interests of the State to encourage the industry, whilst at the same time making as certain as we can that the men engaged in it are not subjected to unnecessary risks of health. We take as many precautions as we can; but at the back of it all we realise there is that handicap to the industry.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The gold will not be used immediately.

Mr. WATTS: Our dairying industry, too, has been retarded because of the war situation, manpower shortage and many other difficulties, and also because of some diminution in the number of cattle available. A considerable period must elapse before the industry will be restored to its

pre-war position. It is unfortunate that many of these things should have occurred; to my way of thinking, many of them should not have occurred. We have been unnecessarily handicapped in this State for reasons I find it extremely hard to fathom. I think the intervention which has caused these things has been rather thoughtless, because the goldmining industry, the dairying industry and the wheatgrowing industry—and the goldmining industry, I suppose, most of all—have from time to time assisted to keep Western Australia off the financial rocks. We do not want to find ourselves at the end of the war in the position that we shall not be able to keep off those rocks. We want rather to be in the position where we can make rapid and sure progress, and anything anyone can do, without any reservations of any kind, to assist in the restoration of those industries, should be very gladly done.

The Minister for Mines: If gold is required after the war, we shall be able to place 20,000 men at once.

Mr. WATTS: As I have said, if the demand continues, we must do our best to comply with it, at the same time ensuring that the men in the industry are given the best possible conditions. As my friend on my left says, other countries seem to think that gold will be needed. I find it difficult to arrive at that conclusion, but, since we cannot exercise any great influence over the matter in this House, I am content to ascertain what will be the position in a year or two.

The Minister for Labour: What does your friend on your right think?

Mr. WATTS: Unfortunately he is away ill. As I have said, intervention in these industries in most instances has been thoughtless—that is the word to use. It has not paid sufficient consideration to our position or to the affairs of the outside world. But there is an old saying that it is not of much use to cry over spilt milk. The damage has been done, and all we can do is endeavour to restore these industries at the earliest possible moment. The Premier did not, I think, mention many other matters that are of great importance, but with which I need not take up the time of the Committee. He did make some slight reference to the post-war period and what is desirable so far as Western Australia is concerned.

What is desirable is something in the nature of a co-operative spirit in this State. We want to work together to the utmost of our ability. By working together I do not mean that we should, one or the other, submerge our individual views; but, as far as we can, we should let one another know exactly what is being done, so that all our citizens may be acquainted with the real efforts that are being made for the development of this State. I suppose after this war the great and rightful cry in Western Australia is going to be, "How are we going to develop this vast State of ours?" I refuse to believe that the question of finance is going to be nearly as important or nearly as great a deterrent as in the pre-war years. After all that has taken place in the last four years, I refuse to believe that, when we have a project which is going to improve conditions and present the State with an asset which can be made use of, anybody will be able to refuse to assist in making finance available for that purpose. I think we shall be entrusted with considerable works and with money to spend on them. If we are not, we shall have to take such action as we can to ensure that we are.

Mr. North: Vindicating the Claremont cranks!

Mr. WATTS: To an extent, yes! So far as the Opposition is concerned, I say that we desire to make provision for the betterment of the conditions of the people of this State. We believe that the reconstruction of rural industries must receive adequate attention, including, among other things, those matters which we deem vital to the restoration of those industries to which the Government so far has refused to pay any attention whatever, despite our frequent efforts and reminders.

Mr. Needham: You are getting your policy speech out very early!

Mr. WATTS: This is not a policy speech but an indication of what I think the opposite side of the House should be doing instead of wasting time and fiddling about, as it has done. The increase of the State's production will be one of our first considerations. Thirty years ago, before a series of Labour Governments checked the prospects of advancement, as I have already mentioned, our educational facilities held a high place as compared with the rest of the world.

The Minister for Justice: The rest of the world was behind the times.

Mr. Cross interjected.

Mr. WATTS: The member for Canning had better keep quiet in regard to education or I shall refresh his mind concerning his own activities in 1938. I told him something about them last week. Our educational facilities must be restored to a proper level of efficiency, below which they have dropped severely, even in the electorate of the member for Canning, according to the hon member himself. What we also want to do is to provide for a reorganisation of our public transport utilities. We need to endeavour to instil into our people a spirit of co-operation and, above everything else perhaps, to restore some respect for this Parliament, whose decisions the Government has so frequently ignored, and particularly the decisions of this House in matters to which I referred during the Address-in-reply debate. I think also that co-operation to the fullest extent with the Commonwealth Government in the war effort should take pride of place but, at the same time, let me suggest that it is necessary to fight in order to prevent this State from becoming for all time a mere vassal of Canberra. That is something which this side of the House, if it can do anything to prevent it, will certainly not tolerate.

The Minister for Labour: That sort of thing did not cut much ice at the election on the 21st August.

Mr. WATTS: Propaganda seems to be the only thing in the Minister's mind. That occurred to me on an occasion quite recently when I heard him speaking. Is it not possible for him to conceive for one moment that anybody can desire to make a plain statement of fact or opinion which is not for propaganda purposes? Have I ever said anything different from what I have just said, except in different words? Has the substance of what I have said ever been any different in the last 12 months?

The Minister for Labour: I am only suggesting that this part of your election speech will not be very effective.

Mr. WATTS: In that case it is like some of the hon. gentleman's remarks.

The Minister for Mines: This is how arguments start!

Mr. WATTS: I had better not remind the hon. member of them. I have made the point I desired, despite the Minister's desire

to turn it into propaganda. He is conspicuous amongst those who meekly and weakly surrender everything, because he has already done his best in that direction.

Mr. McDonald: He wants to be a vassal!

Mr. WATTS: That is so; or a serf, which is another word that could be made use of. I have already indicated that we aim at the maximum use of the State's natural resources and the industrial development necessary because of them; also at the restoration of our goldmining industry. Why should we not strive for equality of opportunity for our citizens? I have given one or two examples of where it does not exist, and it is about time we undertook to see that it does exist. The Government will shortly be on trial for its administration over the last ten years. It will have to defend the position in which this State finds itself by comparison with other States of the Commonwealth, and in general. So far as we are concerned, we would much prefer to lead in the forward march of progress so that we can continue our existence as a democratic and self-governing community and not be made the vassal that I referred to a few moments ago. For that reason there must be co-operation. Suppose we say that we should give practical aid to all the areas of the State so that we may help to achieve the reasonable desires of the city as well as the country? That has not occurred to the Minister for Labour and Industrial Development.

The Minister for Labour: My word, it has!

Mr. WATTS: No, it hasn't, except that the Minister occasionally looks across Fitzgerald street when he goes to the handsome city he represents.

The Minister for Labour: You wait until the estimates for the Department of Industry come up for discussion.

Mr. WATTS: We will then have a lot of talk and not much more. We were getting the Minister's policy speech last night, but he got leave to resume it at the next sitting of the House, and so we did not hear it at all.

The Minister for Labour: You are not making my speech of last night the reason for delivering this one?

Mr. WATTS: Partly. I have little more to add. Without precedent there can be no progress. If we want to make progress we must break new ground and I for one think

—and those associated with me are of the same opinion—that we will not do any good for the development of this State until we initiate reforms for the greatest good for the greatest number of our people.

Progress reported.

BILL—WOOD DISTILLATION AND CHARCOAL IRON AND STEEL INDUSTRY.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 9th September.

MR. PERKINS (York) [8.33]: This Bill which has been brought down by the Minister for Industrial Development introduces an extremely important subject, and the Minister gave the House a wealth of detail in his second reading speech. He has also had the courtesy to furnish me with the reports both of the special committee which was set up to report on the project, and which has been largely responsible for bringing the matter to its present stage of development, and that of an officer of the Broken Hill Pty. Ltd., who has gone into the project very thoroughly indeed. The report of the latter is most comprehensive, and contains much technical detail which, I am afraid, deals with aspects I do not fully understand, but I am prepared to take the document as being a fair exposition of the prospects of the undertaking. The committee set up to do the preliminary work consisted of the Under Treasurer, the Government Analyst, the State Mining Engineer, and the Director of Industrial Development. Its report is also comprehensive and it apparently submitted detailed reports to the Broken Hill Pty. Ltd. The report of that company's officer, Mr. Young, is a most comprehensive and instructive one.

One cannot but be struck by the very helpful attitude adopted by the company, and the tribute which the Minister in his second reading speech paid to it is apparently well deserved. Some puzzling questions arise in my mind. Over the years, and in the few weeks immediately preceding the 21st August last, particularly, I have heard a good deal of the iniquities of big business. We have been told that in politics big business is the villain of the piece, and some of the most critical opinions have come from members of this Parliament sitting with the Minister for Industrial Development on the Government side of the House. I

cannot say that I am very conversant with such matters, but from what I can gather the Broken Hill Pty. Ltd., together with its subsidiary companies, controls the major part of the heavy industry in Australia as well as other important industries. In other words, it is big business spelt with a capital B. Yet this company has placed its best technical advice at the disposal of a Labour Government which aims to set up an iron industry to compete directly with the Broken Hill Pty. Ltd.

Our Minister for Industrial Development, is not the sort of man who falls for the first confidence trickster to place his wares before him. I cannot believe that he would put before this House a project that had so little hope of success that the Broken Hill Pty. Ltd. would consider giving it every possible assistance, without fearing that that industry would ever become a danger to it. I prefer to take the Minister's words at their face value and accept the implication that the Broken Hill Pty. Ltd. has been actuated by the very highest motives, and that its assistance has been given with a sincere desire to promote the industrial development of Western Australia, even though that entails some new competition for itself. We can, therefore, only assume that some of this information, which colleagues of the Minister for Industrial Development in the Labour Party have given to the people, in connection with the selfish, parochial and narrow outlook and policy of big business interests, is only partly true and that much of it is cooked up for political purposes.

Mr. Thorn: You heard what the member for Mt. Magnet said, "Thank God for the Broken Hill Pty. Ltd."

Mr. PERKINS: I do remember that. There can be no question that if the project is successfully established it will be of great benefit to the industrial development of Western Australia. If we accept that, there is the question of the site on which the industry is to be established and the raw material available for the purpose. All the reports I have seen—those from the panel of departmental experts and from the officers of the Broken Hill Proprietary Co.—state that the site, both as regards location and material, is about as good as one could expect in the circumstances and that there is a reasonable

prospect of success. That is why I stated earlier in my remarks that, in view of the technical efficiency of those people, we must accept their reports. They pointed out that the site is favourable for obtaining not only the raw material but also the wood and iron-ore, and it is suitable also for the production of the iron, acetic acid and wood naphtha that will be produced by the plant. So the situation of the industry will be favourable.

If we decide that it is desirable to set up the industry, the question arises as to the best method of proceeding with its development. The proposal provides for its development under State enterprise. In the circumstances I consider that is the only way to develop an industry of this sort. There is very little practical knowledge of such an industry available in Australia. I understand that there is not a similar undertaking—one using charcoal fuel for the smelting of iron-ore—elsewhere in the Commonwealth, so naturally private enterprise would regard the project with a good deal of uncertainty. If the industry is to be developed, it is one in which the State might properly take the initiative. I have no objection to the development of any similar project by State enterprise.

If State enterprise can make a greater success of it than could any private undertaking, it is only right that the State should do it. At the same time we should retain the safeguard that private enterprise should be allowed to enter into reasonable competition in order that we might have a check on the costs and efficiency of the Government concern. In this case there will be any amount of competition because the Broken Hill Proprietary Co. is smelting a similar material, except that it is using the coke fuel. Its product will enter into competition with the iron-ore smelted by the charcoal process, so there is not much danger of abuse by reason of this being a State undertaking, and there will be a guarantee of efficiency in that those in control will know that, if they do not maintain high efficiency, their costs will be such as will prevent the undertaking from paying its way or showing a profit in competition with the iron produced by the Broken Hill Proprietary Co. The iron turned out by that company, I understand, is about the cheapest produced anywhere in the world.

The next question that arises is whether it is wise to go ahead with a small project such as is outlined in the Bill, or whether it would make for lower costs to start the industry on a large scale from the outset. Although it is to be expected that a large scale plant would be able to keep down some of the costs, in view of the lack of specific knowledge of the industry and the possibility that some mistakes might be made in the initial stages which, if we were operating on a large scale, would involve large sums of money, one cannot help thinking that the report of the committee advising that the project should be started on a small scale is a wise one. Even though the costs might be a little higher than they would be if the output were larger, the knowledge we shall gain if the undertaking is successful will enable us to put in the larger plant on a sound basis later, and possibly in the long run will save a considerable sum of money.

The Minister for Industrial Development: There is also the question of marketing.

Mr. PERKINS: Yes, we do not know anything about marketing the ore, and there is also the difficulty of obtaining material and labour for installing a large scale plant immediately. On that aspect I accept the committee's report and the Minister's judgment. The Minister raised another material point as to whether we should go ahead with the project immediately or wait until the war is almost over when material and labour might be more easily obtainable and perhaps a little cheaper than it is at present. In that connection I consider the committee's recommendations are well based. There is the possibility that if the war continues for any lengthy period, and the plant is erected and in production, the prices we shall be able to obtain for the acetic acid and particularly for the wood naphtha will be much greater than the normal peace-time returns. That is a possibility to be considered although I admit that there is considerable uncertainty about that aspect. Unless the project is under way, it will be some considerable time after the termination of the war before we can expect the plant to be in production and to provide an avenue for employment; nor shall we have gained the experience desired regarding the production of iron ingots and the various by-products.

In my opinion there is full justification for going ahead with the scheme as soon as we are able to obtain the materials and manpower necessary for the plant. The Minister made the point that at present we will have some protection while there is also the possibility that we may secure favourable treatment from the Commonwealth Government in connection with the undertaking. Even at the present juncture the necessity arises for the opening up of further avenues in the interests of engineering firms now not fully employed on war or munitions work. Perhaps that subject cannot be discussed publicly just now, but the fact remains that the transition from war work to peace-time operations must be expected sooner or later, and provision should be made accordingly.

The Minister for Industrial Development: The work of fabricating this plant will be very helpful.

Mr. PERKINS: I have heard considerable comment about that in the city, and it has been favourable. The Minister might consider that aspect so that some of the engineering shops may make a start on producing such civil requirements as will be needed on a large scale immediately hostilities cease. Some of those lines may not have been required in large quantities for war purposes, but the demand for them and for many new articles will develop heavily from the standpoint of civilian needs. The steps I suggest would enable manufacturers quickly to revert to normal civilian operations. I think I have dealt sufficiently with the prospects of the enterprise. The reports furnished by the Government's special committee and by the officials of the Broken Hill Proprietary Co. are very comprehensive, and we must accept as unquestionable the technical knowledge possessed by those responsible for their preparation. Personally, I believe that those officers presented the prospects of the project in a reasonable manner.

The special committee's report is backed up by that of the Broken Hill Proprietary Company's officials, who estimate the profit to be earned by the plant at about £24,000 on a capitalisation of £125,000 for the actual plant itself and a working capital of about £25,000. That is a reasonable proposition and, so far as one can judge from a perusal of the reports and an examination of the figures, the estimate may be regarded as reasonably conservative. Most of the con-

tingencies one could think of have been allowed for and, unless one possesses very special knowledge regarding similar industries, it would be impossible for one to question the reports, which, in the circumstances, must be accepted. They suggest every reasonable prospect of the project being successful. As to the contents of the Bill itself, provision is made for the undertaking to operate under this special legislation rather than under the State Trading Concerns Act. I have no special knowledge of that Act and I am not particularly conversant with the limitations imposed by it. If there are any, I cannot see that there is really any objection to this enterprise operating under special legislation because Parliament will still retain direct control.

Accounts will have to be submitted to members who will be able to keep a check on what is happening. The measure, it seems to me, will provide sufficient elasticity for the management of the concern to proceed with its establishment and operations and probably, in view of the lack of experience we possess regarding such a project, there is necessity for that elasticity. Difficulties may arise that cannot be anticipated at present. There may even be the necessity to provide more adjuncts to the plant than is apparent at this stage. For instance, in the Broken Hill Proprietary Company's report it is stated that the plant had been designed on the very simplest lines in order to keep down the capital cost, but the point is also made clear that in doing that the tendency is to increase labour costs in working the plant. I notice that provision is made for handling the ore into the furnace by manual labour, whereas I understand the practice in the larger furnaces is to make that operation entirely mechanical. Probably the extra labour involved is not very great, and the device to keep the plant simple and keep the total cost down is quite sound in view of the uncertainty under which we labour as regards the general working of the plant. But, of course, it is possible that some modifications may be required at a later stage in order to make the plant fully efficient.

A provision of the Bill which departs from past practice is that of having a representative of the workers in the plant on the board of management. I am indeed pleased that the Government has taken this action in preparing for the management of

the concern. I regard it as a highly desirable reform, and am glad that the workers—with whom presumably some contact has been made on the question—are willing to accept responsibility in the development and working of the project. That is something which could well be extended into other spheres. Workers on the plant will know as well as anyone else connected with it that unless the undertaking is successful and produces a profit, there will be little future indeed for their employment. This should be an incentive to them to see that there is good co-operation between the workers and the management. One cannot help thinking that if the same principle were extended to others of our State undertakings and the workers were really prepared to pull their weight, it would make for more efficient working of others of our Government enterprises.

Unfortunately, in the past, I fear, there has been some reluctance on the part of organised workers to assume much responsibility for the efficient running of some of our Government undertakings. I hold that such interest on the part of the workers in the efficiency and success of any undertaking is an absolutely essential factor if the undertaking is to be really prosperous. We notice that fact in regard to many private enterprises. Most of us, I dare say, can call to mind private firms in our State that secure indeed a great degree of co-operation from their employees. Many of us who have had experience as employers know that the success of individual undertakings is due to the co-operation that has obtained between workers and managements. We know of cases where the management complains of poor service from employees. On looking into such cases, however, one often finds that the fault does not lie with the workers, but rather with the management, which has not secured that good co-operation from the workers which is absolutely essential to any undertaking. Therefore I regard the Minister's proposal to allot one seat on a board of five to a representative of the workers as a sound innovation. I sincerely hope it will prove successful. However, its success will depend entirely on whether the workers do take a personal interest in the success of the enterprise. In this case there should be every incentive to them to do so because, without excellent co-operation in the running of the plant, in the

management generally and in promotion of efficiency, there can be very little hope of the project proving successful.

We must always bear in mind that here we are dealing with something that in every other instance is produced by very large and highly efficient concerns. I mentioned earlier that the iron bars, sheets and so on produced by the Broken Hill Proprietary are the cheapest in the world at the present time. I understand that comparative prices range as follows:—The price of Broken Hill steel at Australian ports is round about £12 10s. in Australian currency; that of British steel at British ports varies in Australian currency from £17 to £19.

Mr. Cross: But Britain has to get its ore from Norway in normal times.

Mr. PERKINS: I understand the comparative American figures to be round about £15 to £16. It is evident that Broken Hill steel is very cheap in comparison with anything now produced in any other part of the world. The figures I quoted apply to rolled-steel. What is contemplated in the case of this proposed plant is the production of ingots, which still have to be rolled. I understood from the Minister's speech that the ingots would have to be sold to other concerns, which would do the rolling and turn out the finished product of iron bars or sheets, or whatever might be required in any section of industrial enterprise. I think I have covered the main points of the project as set out in the Bill, and I am indeed pleased that I have been able to agree so fully with the Minister for Industrial Development regarding both the desirability of the project and the need for the State to take some hand in the development at this stage; further, I am also in agreement with the method by which the Minister proposes to set up and manage the project. I support the Bill which the hon. gentleman has brought before the House to enable this project to be set up and to carry on its management in the future.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth): In proposing a project of this kind, the Government owes a duty to the people and to this House to explain fully what is involved and what the prospects are. That duty has been discharged by the Minister for Industrial Development in what I thought was an extremely informative speech. I agree with the member for York that, as far as the technical features of this proposal and its

prospects are concerned, as well as its financial aspects, we must accept the advice of the Minister and his experts. I do not think any of us would feel justified in claiming to be able to give an independent opinion on a matter so highly technical from every point of view. On the recommendations of the experts there appears to be justification, to my mind, in setting up this plant for an industry of this kind on a modest scale. We have to regard this plant and the industry we are about to establish as being tentative in character. It is exploratory. It may form the basis itself of a large industrial enterprise in the future; but whether that be so or not it will have this feature, that it may pioneer the way for the development, possibly by such companies as the Broken Hill Proprietary, on a large scale of the iron and steel industry in this State. Therefore, I think the project is justified.

It should be the duty of the Government and of Parliament to examine this venture from time to time. It will have to be determined whether the venture can be expanded into a large enterprise of a permanent nature, or whether we shall ultimately have to treat it as having fulfilled a certain function in pioneering the iron and steel industry in this State. I make these reservations because the iron and steel industry is generally undertaken successfully only by very large enterprises. Recently some questions were raised in England as to whether the industry there could stand up to the competition of the Broken Hill Proprietary. That company is producing steel at so low a cost that inquiries were instituted in England as to whether some form of protection would be required for the English iron and steel industry, in order that its products might not be undersold by those of the Broken Hill Proprietary. If that should be so, then it might well be that an enterprise on a small scale, such as is authorised by this Bill, would not be able to compete against the Broken Hill Proprietary, and its competition would not be justified in the public interest. It would only mean that people would be charged for this commodity a price greater than that which they would have to pay for it to the Broken Hill Proprietary, or to Australian Iron and Steel, or any other company that might be operating in a similarly successful way in Australia.

The time will come when an examination of the project will need to be made to ascertain whether the industry to be started under the authority of this Bill should be expanded into a large and permanent one in competition with other steel-producing organisations, or whether it should be treated as having fulfilled its function in pioneering the industry here. Whatever the situation may be in the post-war period—a period of so much hope and promise, I trust, to this and other countries—it seems to me it would not be unreasonable to demand of a company such as the Broken Hill Proprietary that it should, as an incident of its right to carry on its business, expand its operations to a State like Western Australia. That would be a Commonwealth matter. The Commonwealth would say to the company, "If you desire to carry on business in Australia then you must expend part of your money, funds and capital in developing the iron resources at Yampi Sound in Western Australia and establishing in that State works which will, at all events, be dealt with as a part of the product which your company proposes to put out for consumption in Australia and for sale overseas." It seems to me that that would not be an unreasonable condition to impose on any industry which was doing well, and whose activities should be spread over more than one State in the interests of the balance of the industrial development of Australia.

This Bill says that the proposed industry should not be a State trading concern within the meaning of the State Trading Concerns Act. The measure, as brought down, follows very largely the terms of the State Trading Concerns Act, although some sections have been left out and others varied. In one respect the Bill is, in my opinion, an improvement on the Act, because it provides in particular that the industry shall be under the control of a board of five men, whereas under the Act each industry is under the control of the Minister. The present proposal is more satisfactory and more likely to bring about efficient management than would be a State trading concern under the general direction of the Minister. It would be better if all the State trading concerns were each controlled by a board such as is proposed to be set up by this Bill.

As a matter of principle and consistency I prefer that all our State trading concerns

should be administered under one Act and on a uniform basis. If our State Trading Concerns Act is not satisfactory—and apparently it is considered to be open to some objection, otherwise this industry would simply be administered under it—then I suggest to the Minister that he might invite Parliament to remodel it in any way which may be desirable. I do not think it a good principle to have seven or eight of our State trading concerns operating under a general Act, another State trading concern under a special Act, and still another one under a third Act. It is desirable to have consistency in the framework, regulation and control of our State trading concerns and, unless there is very good cause, what is applicable to one should be made applicable to all. In some respects, as I have said, the machinery for running this proposed industry is more satisfactory than is that which is set up in the State Trading Concerns Act. I do not know whether the Minister intends that the workers' representative on the proposed board shall be a worker drawn from among those employed in the enterprise. The Bill does not say so. Personally, I commend very strongly the idea that one of the workers should be on the board of control, but I would like the man appointed to be one who is employed in the industry day by day.

Mr. Needham: Does not a clause provide for that?

Mr. McDONALD: No. I would not like to see appointed a man who sits on three or four boards. I think the value of this idea mainly springs from the fact that the man on the board is one who day by day works with his fellows in the industry. I hope that will be the principle and, if the Minister thinks fit, it might be made quite clear.

The Minister for Industrial Development: The workers nominate their own representative.

Mr. McDONALD: Yes, but the Bill does not say he shall be one of their own number.

The Minister for Industrial Development: I do not think they should be bound to choose any one person from amongst themselves. They should be left free to select anybody they like.

Mr. McDONALD: I should say that is one of the main ideas of the scheme. I know that in the industrial workers' councils which are now such a feature of English

industries—and particularly munition industries—the representatives are required to be men and women working in the particular industry, in order that they might bring into the management discussions with the employers' representatives a precise knowledge of the conditions they and their fellow-workers meet with day by day. I would not like to see—I do not say this disparagingly—some rather clever and plausible man come in and secure nomination as workers' representative. The job should be one to which the employees in the enterprise can aspire. It should be regarded as something in the nature of an honour and should be restricted to one of themselves.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is the correct ambition.

Mr. McDONALD: In the State Trading Concerns Act there is a proper provision, which is rather technical in nature but very important, to the effect that the Minister, as a body corporate, representing the State Trading Concerns, may sue and be sued in contract or in tort—being sued in tort meaning to be sued for a wrong. In the absence of that provision, the Minister cannot be sued at all for a wrong. For example, one of his men, in driving a truck, may knock down somebody in the street and injure him. The Minister cannot be sued, because the theory is that the King can do no wrong. The necessity for providing for that has been recognised in the State Trading Concerns Act but there is no such provision in the Bill now before the House.

There is a provision which says that the board shall be a body corporate and shall be capable in law of suing and being sued and of doing and suffering all other such acts and things as bodies corporate can, by law, do or suffer. But it would be a matter of considerable argument as to whether or not that provision would enable the board—which, after all, is a Crown instrumentality and represents the Crown—to be sued by any person who had been injured by some wrong being done to him. I invite the Minister to discuss the matter with his Crown Law officers with a view to making quite sure that this enterprise, as a State trading enterprise, will have exactly the same rights and be subject to exactly the same liabilities as any other State trading or other enterprise would be. That is only fair to the general public. I support the second reading of the Bill.

MR. HILL (Albany): Previous speakers have dealt with the Bill fairly generally. I propose to confine my remarks to the reference made by the Minister to the establishment later on of a bigger plant adjacent to a south-west port. Three years ago I had the pleasure of spending a very interesting afternoon going over the Broken Hill Proprietary Company's works at Newcastle. I wish hon. members could have been with me before I went over the works and when I was speaking to the harbour master of Newcastle in his office. It was a very dirty day. A south-east gale was blowing and that was why I went over the works instead of around the harbour. Newcastle and Port Stevens constitute one of the great port tragedies of Australia. Four years ago I was speaking to Mr. Jacobs, who assisted Sir Leopold Saville in the investigation of Australian ports for a dock site. He advised me that the site of the dock should have been at Port Stevens but the trouble was—

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think the hon. member can connect that dock with this Bill.

Mr. HILL: I propose to do so. The trouble was that there was no engineering works at Port Stevens so the dock had to go to Sydney because Newcastle, which had an engineering works, was unsuitable as a site for a dock. At Newcastle today there is an everlasting and continuous fight against nature to maintain the port. I hope our Government will not pass on to posterity in this State a tragedy similar to that which exists in Newcastle today. I have the greatest respect for the gentlemen who are investigating this problem but, like all gentlemen, they have their limitations. Not one of them is an authority on port or transport matters. I hope that, before a decision is reached as to what port has the big works, a thorough investigation will be made by competent authorities. I never realised we had such wonderful advantages in the place it is my privilege to represent until I saw the disadvantages of Sydney. In this State today we have already made very bad mistakes.

I refer firstly to what I might call the Willock port zone system. That is based on one factor—railway mileage. Associated with that is the Picton superphosphate works. Having that superphosphate works adjacent to a south-west port instead of on

the waterfront at Albany has been a very costly blunder. I would not mind taking on a friendly bet that if we could ascertain the cost of that mistake we should find that it ran into £300,000. I cannot see that iron-ore could be handled there at less than the cost of handling phosphatic rock. Today it costs 4s. a ton to haul phosphatic rock from North Fremantle to Mount Lyell works. When we establish an iron smelting works on a big scale in this State we need to have the works right on the waterfront. Such a works could be established at a reasonable cost in Princess Royal Harbour. The only cost would be the first cost, as maintenance would be practically nil. Right alongside the works we have millions of tons of limestone as well as a water supply at Limeburners Creek producing 300,000 gallons a day. At Ellekers, about seven miles away, there is another water supply which produces 500,000 gallons a day. We have millions of tons of timber within a few miles.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I must ask members to keep order.

Mr. HILL: Apart from that, one development will always lead to another. I hope that the establishment of this iron smelting works will be followed by shipbuilding and other industries. I have been over the dock-site in Sydney and am aware of what we have in this State. I know that there is no place in the world with such an ideal foundation for the dock as between the two jetties at Princess Royal Harbour. What I do ask the Government to do is not to rush in, but have a thorough investigation made as to what port should have the iron foundry and what port should be developed before establishing these works at one of our southern harbours.

MR. CROSS (Canning): This is one of the most important Bills to be introduced here in the last ten years. We must not on this occasion make any mistake. The Minister did say that this was to be a pilot plant.

The Minister for Industrial Development: I did not say it was a pilot plant.

Mr. CROSS: I believe that the post-war requirements for iron and steel will be tremendous. Western Australia is in an unique position in the British Empire in that it not only has the iron, but the manganese and other necessary metals for making steel. Incidentally members who have given attention

to the position of the pre-war axis countries will know that they, as well as Great Britain, had the greatest lack of these metals. The Minister gave us a comparison of the cost of British-made iron and steel and Australian-made—that is B.H.P.—iron and steel. The British manufacturers work under tremendous disadvantages as they have to import practically all their manganese and iron-ore, as well as hardening metals, from Norway.

Mr. Rodoreda: The Broken Hill Proprietary Ltd. have to transport theirs even further.

Mr. CROSS: Perhaps. It might be that Western Australia could bring iron-ore from Yampi Sound and smelt it cheaper at South Fremantle than it could treat the ore at Wundowie, where it is proposed at the moment to establish this industry, because the Yampi ore can be handled so economically, and, incidentally, it is better ore. I hope that the Minister is not carrying out this proposal because of any blind faith in his so-called State experts. A blind faith in public officials is all right provided it is founded on solid practical experience. Without reflecting on any of the experts—including Mr. Fernie—who have dealt with this matter, I say that not one of them has had practical experience in the smelting of iron, or the manufacture of steel. I will go further and say that there is no charcoal iron smelting plant at all in the southern hemisphere. The only one I know of is a very large plant in Sweden which deals with a special type of haematite iron-ore obtained from Norway.

The Minister for Industrial Development: I saw one in India.

Mr. CROSS: That is not in the southern hemisphere.

The Minister for Industrial Development: There are several others.

Mr. CROSS: The only one I know of is in Sweden. Experiments have proved that those works can produce one of the best steels in the world. This State cannot afford to make a mistake. It is a great move to establish a heavy industry because it is a prerequisite of sound and solid prosperity and economic independence!

The Minister for Industrial Development: Are you supporting the Bill?

Mr. CROSS: Yes, I am. I want this establishment to be successful. Once, in the past, we had a tremendous inquiry about

something and the State's experts made recommendations. I refer to the filter beds at Burswood Island. One million pounds was spent on them, but the smell was terrific. Whenever a complaint was made the officials always repudiated it.

MR. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Canning had better get back to the production of charcoal iron.

MR. CROSS: This is an illustration, and I think it is warranted. Eventually the filter beds were moved and with their removal the smell went. The truth is that the experts of those days made mistakes. There are only three or four experts on iron and steel smelting works in the world. There is probably only one expert firm in the British Empire, namely, Brasserts. In practically all the countries in the world they have had a hand in the designing of the machinery. Brasserts have reported on the projects and given assistance. That firm built one of the largest and latest plants at Tarabruk in Turkey. It took six years to construct. It built nine or ten in Russia, three in Outer Mongolia, one in China and, incidentally, I think one in India as well. This firm, a German firm, and an American firm are practically the only three expert firms in this business in the world.

What I want to make clear is this: If we start this industry and pour £100,000 or £200,000 into it and it turns out a failure, it will make all the difference to this State. If, however, we get the fullest advice, even though it costs extra money for the inquiry, we will receive a commensurate benefit. We have not got the experts in this particular industry here, so we should bring them to Western Australia in order to get the benefit of their experience and advice for the successful establishment of the industry. You, Mr. Speaker, know as well as I do how the American mining companies open up a mine. The company which developed the Big Bell mine spent £50,000 on inquiries before it touched the project, but when the company got going it made a job of the mine. Brasserts might say, "This charcoal smelting of iron will not pay. You should get into it on a big scale so that you can produce cheaply in order, perhaps, to sell to Germany and other places as well as to provide the steel that will be required here."

If it is decided, as is quite on the cards, to build a railway from the south of Western Australia to Darwin, millions of tons of

steel will be needed. Steel will be needed for other things as well. If a naval base is built in Western Australia tens of thousands of tons of steel will be required. In the course of the next ten years, the Midland Junction workshops will probably have to be doubled or even trebled in size. Much steel will be required for bridges, and various works will require steel, wire and corrugated iron. If Brasserts had been consulted, we would have had sound advice and could have been sure of what we are doing. I want to see this industry established successfully. The effort being made by the Government, while commendable as a start, is really a tin-pot effort. If we set out to manufacture 250 tons of pig-iron a week, the cost would be considerably greater per ton than if we were turning out 2,000 tons a week.

The Minister for Industrial Development: Provided we could sell the 2,000 tons.

MR. CROSS: To provide successfully for all our people after the war, this State must make a bold step forward. When we establish an industry of this sort, the greatest care should be taken to ensure that there is no risk of failure. The Government should certainly have obtained the advice of Brasserts or of the British Admiralty. The Admiralty has experts, because it buys steel for its works and is interested in where and how the steel is made. Had we approached the British Admiralty, it would not have been the first time we had sought its advice.

MR. PERKINS: Only a little while ago you said that aluminium would replace steel.

MR. CROSS: I did not; what I said was that aluminium was another metal that this State should exploit. I want the fullest possible inquiry made so that there will be no risk of spending £200,000 or £300,000 and then having the industry close down. The officials of the Broken Hill Proprietary Co. are not experts in the designing and setting up of machinery of this sort. I would sooner deal with a firm that has been doing this work over a long period. Brasserts have a long and successful record and have dealt with all sorts of steel. I support the Bill.

MR. NORTH (Claremont): I support the Bill in one sentence. An ounce of performance is worth a ton of propaganda.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan): My feelings are divided between enthusiasm and caution.

From what I have heard, I am a little doubtful about the establishment of iron and steel works as set out in the Bill. Although I feel a little doubt, I am inclined to support the Bill because it is of such importance to Western Australia that this industry should be established here. I do not claim to be qualified in the technique of the production of iron and steel. I want to see this industry established here and, this being so, perhaps I am not as cautious as I ought to be. The British Prime Minister, Mr. Churchill, said that the front line in the war effort runs through the factories, and this enterprise will be one of those factories when it is established. We live in an age of steel, and steel is of first importance. Iron and steel are of outstanding importance, but steel is of greater importance than any other metal.

Mr. W. Hegney: Even gold?

Mr. SAMPSON: Certainly. This industry is not to be brought under the State Trading Concerns Act, but another method of control is to be adopted. I think it would have been wise to overhaul the State Trading Concerns Act to see whether it would be possible to amend it in such a way as to make it safe to establish the industry outlined in the Bill. The measure lays down that there shall be a panel or board of control of five members, one of whom shall be a nominee of the workers in the industry. To that proposal I raise no objection. The day has gone when it was thought that workers in an industry should not receive full consideration. The members of the panel should understand what is required of them. I am hopeful that the industry will prove successful. Nevertheless, I am a little nervous about it. If this effort is to be but an experiment, then the experiment should be made in some locality where there is ample iron-ore and where the work, if successful, could be developed so that it could stand up against the competition of larger concerns throughout the world. We know that State trading concerns are far from popular in the minds of very many people.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Bill does not relate to a State trading concern.

Mr. SAMPSON: No, but I am wondering whether it should be one or whether we should have the proposed panel of five members to control the undertaking. Of course, the concern is nothing until the Bill

becomes an Act, and the question arises as to which is the better method in the interests of the State. We have a number of trading concerns to which most of us are not very partial. For instance, the Government electricity supply undertaking would dampen the enthusiasm of anyone.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must confine himself to the Bill.

Mr. SAMPSON: I will!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must not refer to the Government electricity supply.

Mr. SAMPSON: I was about to observe that the appointment of a nominee of the workers on the proposed panel is quite a sound proposition. The name of the Broken Hill Proprietary Co. occurs frequently in a booklet which I issued, and to me it is synonymous with the development of the iron and steel industry in Australia. When I made my inspection of its activities I felt proud that I was an Australian, one who could claim some association, if a little remote, with the efforts that are being successfully made by the company with respect to the production of steel. There is one other gratifying feature that appeals to me, and it is that, generally speaking, there is a change of thought regarding the Broken Hill Proprietary Co. I am not a shareholder in the concern; I wish I were. I certainly wish my lines had fallen in such pleasant places so that I should now be occupying a responsible position in that very successful company, which is most exemplary in the consideration it extends to its employees who receive help in every possible way.

I am glad that the Minister has been so generous and fair as to acknowledge that an official connected with the Broken Hill Proprietary Co. gave him valuable advice. I know that the Minister has set his heart on this project, and I respect him for his desires. Because of the advice he has received from the Broken Hill Proprietary Co., I feel that the project may have a measure of success that would not otherwise have been possible. Doubters may suggest that the company would lead the Minister into a tragedy. I do not think so. The B.H.P. is a remarkable concern. I honestly believe that its first thought is for the welfare of Australia and of those associated with it.

The Minister for Industrial Development: What is all this in aid of?

Mr. SAMPSON: The Minister's Bill. I am pointing out that there is some justification for the hope that the Bill will be passed and that there is a measure of safety in the project from the inception. It is interesting to note that this big company to which, I presume, the Minister appealed for advice, is such a wonderfully good employer. It builds homes and—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I do not think that comes into the subject-matter of the debate.

Mr. SAMPSON: I should imagine so.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Bill is not concerned with the Broken Hill Proprietary Co., but the remarks of the Minister can be dealt with.

Mr. SAMPSON: As a member of His Majesty's Opposition it is my duty, if not my pleasure, to criticise what the Minister has said—if I think his statements are open to criticism.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The building of homes does not come into this matter.

Mr. SAMPSON: Except—

Mr. SPEAKER: Except nothing!

Mr. SAMPSON: It shows that the example of the Broken Hill Proprietary is worthy to be followed.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I must ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to the Bill.

Mr. SAMPSON: I regret that the Bill does not provide an alternative which, I suggest, should be the establishment of a limited company with an opportunity afforded those working for it and the public generally to provide the necessary finance. What a good thing that would be!

Mr. Marshall: It might make a few cheap printing presses.

Mr. SAMPSON: There are a few printing presses available, including one in the hon. member's town that has been lying idle for some time.

Mr. Doney: That is the stuff that will keep the member for Murchison quiet!

Mr. SAMPSON: I do not want to keep him quiet.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will address the Chair.

Mr. SAMPSON: I think it would be most satisfactory if such a company were to be established. Governments from time

to time are cramped because of the lack of finance, but I hope that will not be the experience of the present Government. History tells us it will be so, and we can judge the future only on the basis of past experience.

The Minister for Industrial Development: Did you hear the speech of the member for Claremont on this Bill?

Mr. SAMPSON: I listened with some degree of respect to what the Minister said.

The Minister for Mines: Did you understand what he said?

Mr. SAMPSON: I did on occasion. The Minister for Industrial Development expresses himself with a fair degree of clarity; I shall not be personal in replying to the Minister for Mines in that respect.

The Minister for Mines: You had better not be!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will confine himself to the Bill.

Mr. SAMPSON: Too often concerns are shackled from the outset, and I do not want that to happen in this instance. Since the name of the Broken Hill Proprietary Co. has been mentioned, may I say that I would like a man of the vision and capacity of Mr. Essington Lewis to be brought in to take charge or perhaps to assist the Minister and his panel, and by that means ensure success for the undertaking from the start. When it is a matter of establishing an industry such as this, a man of special capacity is needed. I can only hope that careful thought will be given to that phase and a satisfactory selection made. I trust that the prospects of the undertaking will not be endangered by any member of the staff being wished on to the Minister or the panel.

The Minister for Industrial Development: I do not think we shall be employing you!

Mr. SAMPSON: I hope that is so. It is gratifying that this effort is being made to establish the industry. Another essential is that first-class key-men shall be obtained, and I hope there will be no cramping of the proposition by lack of realisation of the opportunity which, as the member for Canning pointed out, certainly does exist. The production of 10,000 tons of pig-iron per year has been promised, but when we are talking of pig-iron, that is comparatively a flea bite.

The Minister for Industrial Development: Ten thousand tons?

Mr. SAMPSON: If the Minister can give an assurance that that is not the limit of capacity—

The Minister for Mines: That is the first letter of pig-iron!

Mr. SAMPSON: I understand that that is what is aimed at. I would like to see a bigger effort with wider possibilities. I know there are acetic acid, 480 tons a year, and wood naphthalene, 112,000 gallons. We shall never look outside the State in regard to this; Western Australia offers a market for wood naphthalene in which 10,000 tons will not go very far. Some time ago I had the opportunity to bring forward a motion urging that men on intermittent work should be given the right to take up blocks of land of from three to five acres. The proposition now under consideration affords an opportunity to put that scheme into effect. Those who work at a blast furnace or adjacent to it will be working intermittently. They will be short-time workers on occasions, and they should have the opportunity to select a three or five-acre block so as to be enabled to grow their own fruit and vegetables and keep a few fowls and a cow, thus bringing to their families all the advantages which are possible under the conditions. I will not dilate on that aspect at greater length. I believe the matter is well understood by members. It is important that workmen engaged in this industry should receive all the consideration it is possible to give them.

Now I want to read two paragraphs from a booklet which I issued under the title "Iron and Steel—Western Australia's Future Wealth." One paragraph is from a statement made by Mr. F. Mills, Chief Mechanical Engineer for the Western Australian Government—a man of wide knowledge and, I believe, connected with this proposition. The paragraph reads—

With high quality iron-ore and excellent fuel in the form of charcoal, Western Australia is in a position to produce very high quality iron and steel. This superiority in quality is sufficiently marked to command a considerable premium in the world's markets. It is difficult to insist too strongly on this feature of specially high quality easily attainable.

I should not omit to mention that Mr. Mills had already referred to the small deposit at Clackline. Further on he made these interesting remarks—

By using charcoal the best quality iron is produced. At the same time, by having a blast furnace and steel works to absorb the

otherwise waste products of charcoal manufacture, practically everything is put to use. There can be no doubt whatever that this combination results in—(a) High grade iron at lowest cost; (b) First quality steel at lowest cost; (c) Cheap charcoal; (d) Low cost acetic acid; (e) Low cost acetone; (f) Cheap methyl alcohol.

Another well known citizen who was good enough to assist me with some statements, Mr. A. H. Malloch, said—

I would like to see a plant installed that would produce 30,000 to 40,000 tons per year, and then extend later. It might not be economical to produce all commercial sections to begin with, but the State could certainly do with a good many thousand tons of pig iron...

That is highly significant, because it shows that here Mr. Malloch realises the importance of a plant which would produce 30,000 to 40,000 tons per annum. Writing to the Chamber of Manufactures Mr. Malloch stated—

In my opinion our energies should be directed to the development of our iron ore deposits, and the establishment of the steel industry, particularly as we have all the necessary raw material available within the State. There is a great shortage of steel in Australia today, even for making munitions, and the establishment of an industry here, while considerably helping to alleviate this position, would also be of a permanent and everlasting benefit to the State.

That, I think, will give the Minister some useful food for thought. With those words and with acknowledgment of the very helpful nature of the contributions of the two gentlemen I have quoted, I am now inclined to say something which I was disinclined to say earlier. I acknowledge that I have received many congratulations on the decision of the Government, for, somehow, the belief has grown up that because of my booklet, "Iron and Steel," some encouragement was given to it to proceed. I will not claim to have achieved that distinction, but that was the opinion of two of the people who spoke to me about it. I said I could not accept it, but if the Minister had read the book and it had influenced him, and as a result a good, workable enterprise were established, then indeed I would feel well pleased. But while I appreciated the kind words, my modesty prevented the unqualified acceptance of them. If my booklet did assist, I am pleased. The main thing is that success should be achieved and I earnestly hope it will. I support the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—MINE WORKERS' RELIEF ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 14th September. Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair; the Minister for Mines in charge of the Bill.

Clause 4—Amendment of Section 49 (partly considered):

Mr. MARSHALL: I ask the Minister what the proviso to be inserted in line 11 of paragraph (b) of Subsection (1) really means. I have always contended that a man who is being compulsorily treated might undertake some form of light occupation, and that if he did so, he would receive under this proviso the difference between the benefits under the Act and his weekly wages. The Minister implied that what the proviso meant was that not only would the man receive the benefits under the Act, but that he would receive them until he obtained suitable employment. I differ from the Minister's viewpoint. I contend that immediately the board issues a certificate to that man it can determine within 24 hours not to grant him any further benefits. The man would consequently be forced to seek employment. The proviso does give the man a helping hand if he will accept employment while he is being cured, but once he gets the board's certificate the benefits cease.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: This point was argued for about an hour on Tuesday. All I want to say is that the clause gives the board complete discretionary power to deal with the man who has received a certificate saying he is cured. The board is constituted of two representatives of the men themselves, two representatives of the Chamber of Mines, and one representative of the Government, and I have not the slightest doubt that such a man would be treated in the best possible manner.

Mr. MARSHALL: It is no use the Minister—

The Minister for Mines: I am not going to try again.

Mr. MARSHALL: If the Minister's contention is correct, the proviso should be amended. It reads—

... if, before the above-mentioned benefits have been determined by the board as aforesaid, the prohibited mine worker engages in any kind of gainful occupation. . . .

The Minister for Mines: That is right.

Mr. MARSHALL: That means that the man is working before his treatment is finished. After he gets his certificate—

The Minister for Mines: What is the certificate?

Mr. MARSHALL: A certificate to say he is free from tuberculosis. The benefits then prescribed shall cease, because the proviso says, "as soon thereafter as shall be determined by the board." The board, therefore, has discretionary power. Let me show the Minister where I stand. The proviso has these words—

shall cease as soon thereafter as shall be determined by the board; and, if, before the abovementioned benefits have been determined by the board as aforesaid—

That is to say, before the board sits and determines that his benefits shall cease—the prohibited mine worker engages in any kind of gainful occupation or employment—

That is, before they cease, and not after. It is as plain as day, though the Minister will insist on saying my interpretation is wrong. If before the board sits and determines that his benefits shall cease he obtains gainful employment, the Minister proposes, that should the man not earn the amount provided in the benefit, the difference between his wage and the benefit will be made up to him. That is my interpretation. I am not prepared to deny, after what I have heard, that the board will hesitate to determine, but the contention is not in the Bill. The benefits can cease at any time. The only time a man is entitled to a payment to make up the difference between his wage and the benefit is after he obtains gainful employment—before the benefits cease and not after. I think the board will be reasonable in assessing the period when the benefits shall be determined and probably will pay those benefits until the man obtains gainful employment, and then will cease payment so that he can comply with that proviso. But the board could stop his benefits and he would not be entitled to anything more, whether he worked or not.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 5—New section:

Mr. MARSHALL: I take strong exception to the compulsory aspect of this proposed new section. If the Minister is going to give these miners all he suggests—and I believe he is—such as free treatment and the cost of examination, hospitals and doctors, I do not think the miners will require

any compulsion. In my judgment, they will readily accept the scheme, but they should have some freedom of choice. I do not know why the Minister has so much doubt about the men not being ready to take treatment, seeing that they will lose nothing by it. We are all too prone nowadays to endeavour to fashion the lives and destinies of other people without giving them the right of choice. If the Minister had written to these men and pointed out exactly what he intended to do, the Bill would not have been necessary. He would have got that section of the men who are willing to undergo treatment, and I suggest that those who do not desire further medical examination or treatment and would rather live their own lives should be entitled to say so. Australians do not take kindly to compulsion, though they may be persuaded to do things. To test this matter, I move an amendment—

That in line 12 of Subsection (1) of proposed new Section 49A the word "shall" be struck out and the word "may" inserted in lieu.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: The amendment is a good one. It makes a contribution to the ideal in the mind of the Minister and goes far enough for a beginning. This is experimental legislation and I agree with the member for Murchison that, when an attempt is made to drive or compel men to do things of this sort, there is likely to be a reaction that is not desirable and one that will lead to a considerable amount of trouble, especially, as in this case, when there is no indication as to what the method of treatment is going to be or where it will be carried out. I should like to know whether these men are to be compelled to leave their homes in the congenial Goldfields climate and go to the less congenial climate of Wooroloo for treatment. Under the existing legislation, a miner who contracts T.B. establishes for himself a claim for £750. Under this legislation, as I read it, he is going to be compelled to take treatment and, when he gets a certificate, the benefits cease and he loses his right to get the full amount of £750 that he is at present entitled to.

From what has been said regarding the modern methods of treatment, it seems that people have to be made to work in order to cure them of this disease. I have had some experience of cases of T.B., having been associated with people working

in the mines and having been secretary of a lodge for 18 years, and the only cure of which I have heard up to date has been to give people plenty of nourishment and rest. This new treatment conflicts with the ideas of the past that were successful in many cases that I know of. For that reason I do not like the compulsory clause.

These men are not to be given the choice of being treated. When they are told they are cured they are deprived of the balance of the compensation they would otherwise be entitled to. In addition, there is the question of how and where they are to be treated. At one time a sanatorium was established at Coolgardie in a climate suitable for the treatment of this complaint, and suitable for the longevity of the people who had it, to a greater extent than that of Wooroloo has ever been. I can recollect that many years ago men were herded together and sent to Wooroloo for the treatment of this complaint, and great objection was raised. If under this measure they are to be taken from their homes to be treated great objection will again be raised. I favour the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: This clause is the basis of the Bill. The hon. member who has just resumed his seat dealt with what happened in the past. Had I thought that Wooroloo in the future would be the same as it has been in the past I would not have introduced this Bill. Men were not being treated at Wooroloo; they went there and died, but today they are looking on it as a beacon of hope rather than as one of despair! This curative treatment does not take two or three months, but three or four years. The men who have contracted the disease in the past six or seven years have been between 30 and 35 years of age. If these young men can be cured in four or five years the remainder of their lives becomes worthwhile.

The basis of the arguments used by the two previous speakers is the feeling that it is not possible to cure these men. It is a tedious job to cure a man over a period of four or five years and one can easily visualise the man, long before the expiration of that time, getting fed up and saying, "I will get out." That is one reason why I want this to be on a compulsory basis. I have previously referred to the fact that 20 men will have to be medically examined to see if there is any probability of curing them.

Possibly only a small proportion of them will be taken in. The provision in this Bill is already in the Health Act. The member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe asked, "Why do you not put it into operation?" If the money were available I would not hesitate to put the Health Act into operation immediately and send these people to places where they could be treated. Where these men are to be treated must be decided by the medical profession. Some will probably be at Kalgoorlie. They will be handed over to some local doctor under the instructions of Dr. Henzell and Dr. Muecke. Other cases might go to Wooroloo. If this amendment is carried we might as well drop the whole Bill.

Mr. STYANTS: I hope the Minister will not insist upon the compulsory clause, which is objectionable. As he says, the power is already vested in the Minister under the Health Act to compel anyone to take treatment, but that power is not exercised.

The Minister for Mines: There are good reasons.

Mr. STYANTS: Yes, there are in many instances. In the majority of cases a man would not be in a position to go into an institution for treatment and at the same time make financial provision for his wife and family, and we do not compel him to go in. I do not think we should compel a miner to undergo treatment. It should be optional for him. If he elects to take the treatment and makes a start then I am in favour of the compulsory clause to make him continue. Many of the men shifted from Coolgardie to Wooroloo would have preferred to stay in Coolgardie and die rather than go to Wooroloo on the off chance of being cured; and that is the attitude of many of these people today. If we were enforcing the provisions of the Health Act I would be agreeable to miners being compelled to undergo treatment.

I am doubtful whether these people are a particular menace to the public. If they are they should not be permitted to move around in public as they do. People are permitted to visit Wooroloo Sanatorium and mix with patients, and certain patients are allowed to leave the institution so there cannot be great danger to the public. Therefore the miner who does not wish to go to the sanatorium would not be any greater menace to the community if he remained at home. The Bill affords a wonderful oppor-

tunity for an affected man to take the treatment if he feels so inclined. If he does not wish to take it, we should not compel him. I believe that 99 per cent. of the men would be ready to undergo the treatment.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: The Minister rests his case on men of 30 to 35 years. A miner on the Lake View recently retired at the age of 75 suffering from T.B. What interest would he have in going to Wooroloo for five years' treatment? My stepfather died at the age of 65 of tuberculosis contracted in the industry, and he would not have had much interest in going to Wooroloo on the chance of being cured. It would be interesting to know the ages of the miners found to be suffering from T.B. The Minister said that 60 per cent. of the men in the industry in 1942 were under 40 years of age, but the tendency will be for the average age to increase. What interest would old men have in this curative treatment? Is any exception proposed in their case? I suppose if treatment is compulsory for one, it will be compulsory for all. If that is so, the miner should be able to elect whether he will undergo the treatment.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.46 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 21st September, 1943.

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

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Presentation.

The PRESIDENT: This morning, in company with the officers of the House, I waited on His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor and presented to him the Address-in-