

ing their way to the school which, three months before, had had a new wing opened by the Minister for Works. It formed a wide space open to the air. Unfortunately, soldiers and girls were going to this place each night and having a great carouse, and leaving all the evidence of their various abuses behind them. Bottles of beer and various gloves were found there. It was a disgusting matter. The school teachers had to hurry to the school ahead of time in the mornings in order to clean up the place before the children arrived. We are told that the Education Department is asleep and that we cannot get a penny from it. On this occasion little agitation was needed. The matter was brought before the notice of the department and the Minister concerned. The member for Mt. Hawthorn was very concerned because the building was really in his district—by about 20 yards.

The Minister for Works: You had better be careful; it is just on the edge of your electorate.

Mr. NORTH: It is very close. I was in the district within a few days and carpenters were on the job. The whole place was closed in so that the couples referred to by the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe were kept out. On that occasion there was quick action.

I have to bring forward another matter connected with schools. We have a lot of trouble in Swanbourne in regard to the air-raid shelters. They have been dug at the schools, as members are aware, and they fill up with water and also, being constructed in loose sand, fall in. As a consequence, the parents and citizens are anxious to have these trenches covered and if possible roofed. The money required is being sought from the Civil Defence authorities.

The Minister for Mines: It is not so much a matter of the money, but whether the children will go into the trenches.

Mr. NORTH: Another question is that of shatter. We are now told that the school children have to attend at school during an air-raid. We are asking whether some assistance could be given to provide anti-shatter for the school windows. We have been told that the money must come from the parents and citizens. These things are not really affairs of State, but they are big matters in the local districts. They apply to other districts besides my own, and

that is why I have brought the subject forward.

The only other question I desire to raise follows on the remarks of the member for West Perth. He dealt with post war employment and public works, and mentioned a long list of valuable works which he would like to see carried out. I remind the Minister for Works that we had a motion on this subject last session, and six or eight big works were mentioned as being worthy of investigation. It was considered that they would provide post-war employment. The House carried a resolution suggesting that the Government might see its way clear to having these works brought to the attention of the officers concerned with the object of providing for them to be carried out during the war, thus avoiding a hiatus afterwards when men are ready to return to work. Has it yet been possible for the Government to start any inquiries in connection with those matters?

On motion by Mr. Needham, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 3.37 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 11th August, 1942.

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

QUESTIONS (2).

NATIONAL SECURITY ACT.

Lighting Regulations.

Hon. J. CORNELL asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Are the black-out and brown-out regulations enforceable against Army authorities? 2, If so, why are the authorities not prosecuted for flagrant and consistent breaches thereof?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, No. 2, Answered by No. 1

TRAFFIC ACT, ACCIDENTS.

Hon. A. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary: 1, How many motor accidents were recorded during the last fourteen months—(a) in the metropolitan area; (b) in the country? 2, What was the number of fatalities in the metropolitan area and in the country? 3, In how many accidents were military vehicles involved? 4, Are military drivers subject to traffic regulations? 5, Have persons, injured in accidents by military vehicles, recourse for damages against the Commonwealth, or must they proceed against the driver?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, 3,326—(a) and (b) Complete records are not available, and to obtain them would mean writing to all local authorities outside the metropolitan area. For 12 months ended the 30th June last there were 219 serious accidents in which life was endangered. 2, In the metropolitan area, including Fremantle district, 108; in country areas for 12 months to 30th June last, 29. 3, Records are not kept. 4, Yes. 5, This is a matter for legal opinion, to be decided on the merits of the case.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fourth Day.

Debate resumed from the 5th August.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central) [2.21]: In supporting the motion, I desire, as I did last year, to preface my remarks with a brief but very sincere reference to the wonderful heroism displayed by the people of the British Empire to whom those of Great Britain itself have furnished such a remarkable example in confronting the consequences of the struggle the Allied Nations are engaged upon in support of all that makes life worth living. If ever there was a time when all sections of the Empire were as one, it is now, and so there is no need for me to labour that phase. Those of us who are past the age enabling us to render military service believe it is our duty to do everything we can to assist the war effort, even if it is only by contributing our money seeing that we cannot sacrifice our blood in actual warfare. There are few of us who have not boys and girls giving up their all in order to participate in the cause we have so much at heart. I extend my deepest sympathy to the Premier in his severe illness and I trust the improvement in his condition, which was recently notified, will continue and that he

will soon resume his position at the head of the affairs of State. As I visited Mr. Baxter I know how serious has been his illness and my sympathy goes out to him as well. I also visited Mr. Thomson when he was ill and I am glad to see that he is now back with us. In common with other members I extend a very hearty welcome to our two new members, Mr. Cornish and Mr. Gibson.

In making reference to a subject that he rightly said most people do not care to discuss, Mr. Parker is to be commended. The subject of course is rather unpleasant, but that is no reason why we should not manfully face up to a consideration of the occurrence of venereal disease in our midst. Since Mr. Parker dealt with the subject, I have read a pamphlet issued by Dr. Cumpston, the Commonwealth Director-General of Health, in which he states that despite reports to the contrary—he is in a position to know and it is very reassuring to have his dictum—venereal disease is not increasingly prevalent in the Commonwealth. He states that current assertions as to the prevalence of venereal disease in Australia are unjustified. Dr. Cumpston's assertion satisfies me. I hold that a medical gentleman occupying such a position as his would not make such a statement unless he had facts and figures supporting it. He assures the people of this country that every effort will be made to eradicate venereal disease if possible.

I am glad Mr. Parker mentioned the subject, for we in this State can be justifiably proud of our Principal Medical Officer, Dr. Atkinson. Some years ago he issued two letters, one for girls and one for boys, copies of which were available for any parent in the State. Two or three years ago I secured a number of the letters, and wrote to the Geraldton Press stating that I would be pleased to forward copies to any parents who supplied me with their addresses. In response I had a few applications—not many. Those letters are very fine indeed. I do not know how other fathers have faced up to the position, but I candidly declare that I did not keep those letters to myself. I hold that it is the father's duty to take the subject up with the sons, and the mother's duty to take it up with the daughters. When the appropriate time arrived I showed Dr. Atkinson's letter to my son, not as coming from a minister or a parson but as from a professional man speaking to a youth who might fall into

danger through ignorance. That is how I proceeded with my one boy, who is away serving in the Air Force today. I am glad that there is at all events one danger against which I have endeavoured to guard him, and for that I have to thank Dr. Atkinson, but for whose published letters a false sense of delicacy might have refrained me from mentioning the subject to my boy. Many people say: "Why worry young persons with these things?" I know that amongst men and women who have studied the subject there is a strong body of opinion that these matters should not be broached to young people of either sex by parents. However, I do not think that a fitter person for the purpose could be found than the Principal Medical Officer of Western Australia. To make his letters more widely known would not cost much, and parents could then be invited to send for copies.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Why not send them out to parents?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I thank Mr. Miles for that interjection. What he suggests would not be too much to do. I have heard that people scan the births and deaths advertisements, being anxious to sell birthday presents and sending along catalogues, and similarly suggesting the supply of wreaths in case of death. We should be interested in safeguarding young people from the terrible scourge of venereal disease.

I support another suggestion made by Mr. Parker, which he said would effect a worthwhile saving. It has reference to the sending out of copies of "Hansard." We receive the weekly numbers, and have them for reference at our respective homes. Therefore, I consider that the present issue of half a dozen additional copies could be reduced. Six copies for every member is, in my opinion, excessive. The members of the Printing Committee, who deal with this matter, have filled their positions for 20 or 30 years, and therefore possess a good knowledge of what is required. I, myself, am to blame for not having made the suggestion earlier. However, I support Mr. Parker's proposal, being quite willing and even anxious to save the expense of unnecessary distribution of "Hansard."

We now have uniform taxation. In "The West Australian" a fortnight ago I read a leading article stating that any opposition to the measure would be ill-timed and out of place. Such may be the opinion of the

gentleman who wrote the article, but most of us who have the welfare of Western Australia at heart are sorry that uniform taxation had to be enacted. It was made effective by a majority of only one judge—three to two. If the Federal authorities would take the view they are expected to take—namely that Australia does not consist merely of New South Wales and Victoria—and if they would remember the huge State we are developing here, they would do everything they possibly could to assist us in our very heavy task. We are greatly afraid that uniform taxation will bring about further centralisation. That is a very real danger. Just as the people in, say, my district—I shall not refer to the North Province, for which its own representatives speak—feel that they have been neglected by the Government located in Perth, so do they believe that they would be neglected by a centralised Australian Government. Therefore we should create as strong a party as possible in favour of economical, as well as efficient administration. I believe that the cost of government could be cut down without impairing efficiency. For example, some of the other States have combined Federal and State Electoral Departments. I know some members object to that, but having been in the Commonwealth Electoral Department at its inception, I think the case is one to which applies the old saying, "Where there is a will there is a way." It is essential to cut out needless expenditure. About that there can be no two opinions. Many of our people are asking why it is necessary to have two electoral departments to bother them. Getting down to bedrock and facing facts, we must realise that an amalgamation of the two departments could easily be effected. This course, besides reducing expenditure, would prevent people from being bothered, as they are today, by the requirements of two departments.

Again, there is the quarantine position. I was an officer of the Commonwealth Quarantine Department during the 1914-18 war. I was transferred to that department under the Chief Quarantine Officer, Dr. Cox, and was in charge of supplies to the Woodman's Point Quarantine Station. I can assure members that I am never likely to forget the unnecessary expense incurred in setting up the administration and providing equipment for that department. Although in Perth we had a State Health Department

with equipment and experienced personnel, the Commonwealth Government felt it necessary to handle the problem involved in the influx of patients from oversea. There is not the slightest necessity for such a procedure. If a person with a disease enters this State from oversea he is handled by the Commonwealth Quarantine Department whereas if he contracts a disease ten minutes after arriving here he is dealt with by the State authorities. It is about time we got together, and the lead must come from the State Government.

Another direction in which uniformity is necessary is the treatment of children placed under the care of the Child Welfare Department. That department, quite rightly, costs us a lot of money but I cannot see why a child in one State should be on any different footing from a child in another State. To those who would say that to hand over this work to the Commonwealth authorities would be to give them more power, I reply that I am not concerned about that so long as we have efficient and economical administration.

Hon. L. Craig: Will not uniform taxation secure that end?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: That remains to be seen. There is another matter with which I desire to deal. Frankly I am somewhat reluctant to suggest that the Commonwealth Government should assume control in this regard because people will say, "According to you, the Commonwealth should take over everything." I make the suggestion, however, because I realise that what we have been told in the past is true, namely, that we have not the money to deal satisfactorily with this very painful problem. I refer to a minority in our midst that is being treated anything but fairly. I feel ashamed that although I am a member of Parliament I am helpless when it comes to improving the lot of human beings who have been brought into existence through the frailty of white men. I am speaking of the half-caste problem, which is one that we cannot side-step. We may postpone it for a while but it must be tackled eventually, and the sooner the better. I am ready to admit that the State Government has not chosen to get the money with which to deal with this very important matter in the requisite manner. I will be asked what I mean and will be told that we have settlements. I know we have, but that is not enough. What I suggest is not some-

thing that has never been done before; it has been done in other countries. I have incurred the displeasure of a gentleman who wrote a letter to "The West Australian" concerning my proposal that half-caste children should be taken from their parents at a very early age. I think he asked me how I would like my children to be taken from me when they were only infants.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Hear, hear!

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I want to remind that gentleman and others who feel that I am cruel, that our own white children are taken from their parents when it is proved that those parents are not doing the right thing by them. We are told by those who have made a study of this subject that environment counts just as much, or nearly as much, as hereditary considerations. It is impossible to expect half-caste children living in an environment such as most of them do to exhibit anything but the traits and conduct of those amongst whom they have been reared. I desire to pay a tribute to Sister Kate, that very fine lady, for the remarkable work she is doing amongst these children, and for the excellent training she is giving them in order to enable them to take their place in the country to which they belong. I know that many men who have had a lot more experience than I have had will say, "You cannot do anything with these people," but my answer is that we must try. The mere fact that we are teaching them to read and write does not satisfy me because it is not enough. The sooner the problem is tackled the better it will be not only for them but also for the State generally.

I hope that metropolitan members will pardon my reference to a subject that more directly concerns their constituents because they suffer more acutely than do people in the country, though the situation has been bad enough in my own home town of Geraldton. I refer to the distress occasioned by the shortage of firewood. The very people whose interests it is our duty to safeguard, namely, those who cannot afford to have radiators, are those who suffered most. I do not propose to read extracts, as is my custom, but I have here a statement by the Mayor of Fremantle who happens now to be a member of this Chamber. In that statement he said that women came crying to him about the difficulties with which they were faced. I desire to be fair. I know

it will be said that men were not available to cut the wood. However the wood is here and the matter should have been pressed with the Commonwealth authorities more than it has been. On Friday last the Federal Minister concerned took a certain amount of credit for the fact that many aliens are now employed on charcoal burning, wood-cutting, etc. There is no good reason why that should not have been done earlier. If it had been, many people would have been saved considerable discomfort and inconvenience.

I may have missed some departmental report as to whether it is possible to grow soya beans in this State. I have read quite a lot about what a wonderful plant it is and have an extract from remarks made by a man who keeps abreast of such subjects. I refer to Mr. Braine, secretary of the Wheat Pool. He says definitely that from inquiries he has made our climate is not suitable for the growth of soya beans. The Department of Agriculture may have issued a statement on the matter, but if so I have missed it. If not, I should like the department to tell us whether any part of the State is suitable for growing this product. I understand that soya beans grow in light rainfall areas and that the land does not need to be of the best. Goodness knows, we have large areas in Western Australia that come under that category. I hope the Department of Agriculture is giving attention to the matter and would like to know its views on the subject.

We were all pleased to notice that there had been a surplus at the end of the last financial year. To show a surplus is comparatively easy if we fail to keep in repair our essential services. I know from personal conversation with enginedrivers that they have a lot to complain about regarding the worn-out state of their locomotives. I have a copy of "The West Australian" of the 28th July last wherein appears a statement by an advocate before the Arbitration Court to the effect that one of the reasons why the loading was asked for was the deterioration in the condition of railway locomotives, some of which were 40 years old. I have discussed this matter with enginedrivers. I know the great work they are doing. They are out in all weathers, both day and night, and are battling along with engines that are not in a fit condition for use. It may be said with truth that we cannot get new en-

gines. It may be equally true to say that fitters and other men, whose knowledge is required in order that the engines may be kept in repair, are few in number. We cannot go on treating our essential services in that way. Unless we have men to enable us to do the work required, the services cannot be rendered.

Hon. J. Cornell: The locomotive is a very essential part of our defence system.

Hon. E. H. HALL: I am thankful to the hon. member for the interjection. The Midland railway line, on which I frequently travel, has once or twice been taken over altogether for defence purposes. Many of those matters that affect us from the civil point of view are closely related to the defence of the country. Since I prepared my notes for this afternoon it was stated in the local Press on the 6th August, that the Commonwealth Government had made a grant of £2,600,000 available for marginal areas. I recognise the ability of the Minister for Lands and the extensive knowledge he possesses of the affairs of his two departments. This is a very difficult matter. I hope he will not be above appointing men with a knowledge of conditions appertaining to the various areas extending from north to south of the wheat belt, to advise him how to get the best results from the expenditure of that money. Primary producers have been promised many things after the war for the betterment of their position. We know what Professor Murray and Professor Murdoch have had to say on this question. Members will realise what a very important matter this is for Western Australia. We have said over and over again until they must be sick of hearing of it, that the land is the source of all wealth, and that our farmers are the salt of the earth. The land, it has been said, is the economic structure on which the State rests. We have not many secondary industries, so we must do what we can to prevent any further exodus from the land.

Take the matter of base metals! In August last the Under Secretary for Mines was reported in the Press to have stated that Western Australia possesses four good sources of copper supplies at Ravensthorpe, Whim Creek, Igerarie and Northampton. It was also said that reports concerning these deposits had been placed before the Federal authorities. I

should like to know whether the Commonwealth Government has done anything in this matter. A book was issued in 1926 under the authority of Mr. R. C. Wilson, then Assistant State Mining Engineer. Today that officer is the State Mining Engineer. Mr. Gibb Maitland also reported on the Northampton mineral field and its lead and copper deposits. Notwithstanding that copper is bringing £105 per ton compared with £30 or £40 at the time when the deposits in Northampton were first reported on, nothing seems to have been done. Copper has been imported into Australia, despite the reports of our State officials. Messrs. Malloch Bros., of Perth, together with a friend of Mr. Malloch, have made available to the Government a small plant which is being tried out at Ravensthorpe.

I trust something will be done to permit of the copper that undoubtedly exists in the Northampton district being put to economic use. We have had miners working up there for years. If the copper is not there, or if it is too expensive to recover, we should be told so. I am continually asked, "What are you doing to induce the Government to open up the Northampton copper deposits?" The Murchison goldfields form part of the Central Province. Goldmining in this State has been dealt a severe blow. We went fully into that matter during the last special session. I cannot understand how it was that a Government headed by a Western Australian, who must know how much the economy of the State depends upon the industry, could have done what it did. I do not know whether members noticed what appeared in "The West Australian" on the 6th instant, but I was pleased to see it. I refer to the publication of the results of the working of the Wiluna mine last month. This mine is supposed to have been a dying concern, and yet the returns show that for June, 48,084 tons of ore were treated for 5,630 ounces of gold, that the revenue produced was £54,893, that the working expenses excluding expenditure on development and exploration, amounted to £43,818, leaving a working surplus of £11,075. We built a railway line from Meekatharra to Wiluna. The line does not pass anything of importance, but it was built for the sake of the mine. The blow that has been

dealt to the industry by the Commonwealth Government was undeserved. I may be pardoned for quoting from "The West Australian" of the 4th instant, a statement made by Mr. E. J. Hogan of Victoria. It is as follows:—

"Statements have recently been made in Western Australia in relation to the Commonwealth Government's proposal to close down the goldmines in Western Australia and Victoria that no one outside Western Australia had the slightest interest in the goldmining industry. It is said that Mr. Panton, the West Australian Minister for Mines, informed members of the Legislative Assembly that, on his mentioning the matter at the Premiers' Conference, his plea for the retention of sufficient labour was received with indifference. Victoria is also reported to have displayed only an academic interest in the matter and that Western Australia was left to fight a lone battle." These preliminary remarks were made by the Victorian Minister for Mines (Mr. E. J. Hogan) in refuting the suggestion of his Government's inactivity.

"The Curtin Government's proposals to close down the goldmines, which would have meant the extinction of the goldmining industry in Victoria as well as in Western Australia, was opposed by the Victorian Premier (Mr. Dunstan) at the Premiers' Conference," continued Mr. Hogan. "As Minister for Mines in Victoria, I opposed the Curtin Government's proposal on behalf of the goldmining industry of Western Australia as well as Victoria. Having worked 10 years on the West Australian goldfields, I knew the value of the industry to Western Australia and I tried to protect the goldmining industry of Western Australia as well as Victoria from absolute extinction."

Mr. Hogan proceeded to detail the numerous occasions on which he had strongly protested against the Federal Government's proposals, and concluded: "As a result of our opposition, the Curtin Government eventually allowed 450 of the 1,300 men employed in the Victorian mines to be retained. This number is not enough, but it is better than their original decision. It is not fair to place any part of the blame for the Curtin Government's retrograde proposal on Victoria, or on the East. We object to being used as a whipping horse. The Prime Minister represents a Western Australian constituency. He and the Federal member for Kalgoorlie and the Minister for War Organisation (Mr. Dedman) are the people to blame. If the defenders of the goldmining industry in Western Australia and in Victoria had not resisted the attempt of the Curtin Government to close down goldmining in Australia, it would have been subjected to a blow which would have resulted in its extinction."

I now wish to refer to another matter of importance, although I am under no delusions as to what effect my remarks will have, seeing that the matter is one purely for the Commonwealth Government. As other members have said, this is our only

opportunity to make our protests on behalf of the people we represent. I am not dictating to the State Government when I suggest that it should take this question up with the Commonwealth Government. The matter is serious and affects numbers of our farmers and other people. I dislike having to say it but must refer to the unwarranted damage done by troops from eastern Australia. I can speak from first-hand knowledge of what is happening around Geraldton. The incidents are almost unbelievable. One could not imagine that decent young men would be guilty of such acts. One citizen said to me, a very quiet, decent farmer, "If the Germans came here, they could not do as much damage to my property." Orange trees have been rooted up, other trees broken down, furniture has been removed from houses in the absence of the occupants, and smashed. I have here a statement published in "The West Australian" from the general secretary of the Primary Producers' Association, Mr. Prater. I am sure he has not heard of the incidents relating to our district, so that what I have stated cannot be referred to as an isolated instance.

Hon. A. Thomson: That sort of thing has been very prevalent around Northam.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I have heard similar complaints from at least seven members. I brought the matter under the notice of Col. Collett, and he sent me on to Francis-street. Col. Collett said that during the 1914-18 war if this type of complaint could not be sheeted home to one or two or several individuals, responsibility for the damage had to be shared by all members of the unit concerned. However this time nothing has been done. I can see no insuperable difficulty in the way of paying for such damage, and I hope some action will be taken by the State Government. I have no cause to feel aggrieved at being slighted by the military authorities because the Leader of the Opposition in another place has had similar experience. Very little notice seems to be taken of any statement we put up to Headquarters here. Some men took charge of the premises of a widow and removed and broke up her furniture. That was three months ago and she has not had a penny by way of compensation. Yet, on the 29th July, the Minister for the Army made a statement that delays in settling these claims for damage were quite unjustifiable.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Men have had board and lodging in the back country and it has never been paid for.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I am glad to have that interjection in support of my statement. There is not very much that we can do for our people, but these complaints are well founded and the Government should take action.

I must give a meed of praise to the present Government for its endeavours to establish new industries. Right from the time when Sir James Mitchell and Mr. Scaddan were in office, efforts have been made to get industries established and to educate people to patronise locally made goods. I have read with pleasure the reports concerning the opening up of the alunite deposits at Lake Campion. I attended a meeting recently at which the Government was strongly criticised, and although I stood alone I said that, although I was opposed to the Government politically, I was not prepared to listen to statements that were entirely incorrect. It is to the credit of the State Government that steps have been taken to open up the alunite deposits. It should not be too much to ask the Government to make a statement as to why flour has to be brought here from the Eastern States.

Hon. A. Thomson: And salt, too.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Yes. Another line being imported is gas-producers, something which this State might almost be said to have pioneered. Notice should be taken of these matters. To import such articles is adding insult to injury. Another matter with which Mr. Pi-ssé is more competent to deal is the price of potatoes. I understand that the price for export is £12 per ton and that the local price has been fixed at £11.

The State is enjoying a good season but farmers are in danger of being eaten out by rabbits. Yet the Commonwealth Government has created a serious position by increasing the export duty on rabbit skins, and in consequence of the reduced return, many of the trappers have ceased trapping. Six road boards have protested to Mr. Prowse. It has been pointed out that the farmers are working short-handed and are unable to deal with the rabbits. This sort of thing makes me think that we are not receiving from the National Parliament the sympathetic treatment to which we are entitled. Here is another matter that should be

brought under notice. Six months ago ice-works were erected in Geraldton for preserving fish, and provision was made for the freezing of rabbits. A man from the Eastern States, with several trappers, was doing a good job for the district, as well as providing freight for the railways. The rabbits were being frozen and exported. I do not profess to know much about this industry but it occurs to me that we could do much more with rabbits than we have in the past. The value of the rabbit export trade from the Eastern States is considerably greater than it is here, and I cannot help thinking that we ought to be doing more. When travelling down from Geraldton a few nights ago an engineer who had been driven out of Singapore told me that rabbit was a food much appreciated in Singapore. At a time when we are compelled to seek ways and means of economising and turning everything to account, surely we could do something more in that direction. The municipal council at Geraldton has insisted upon the new freezing works being constructed of brick, though the old building, which was destroyed by fire, was of galvanised iron. The owner, however, does not feel disposed to incur the expense of a brick building and so the place will not be rebuilt. Consequently the export of rabbits from Geraldton has ceased. Could not the State Government finance the erection of refrigerating works to treat rabbits or, if not, could not the Commonwealth Government be approached for assistance? I intend to follow this matter up with the Minister for Agriculture.

I have an article from the Adelaide "Chronicle" dealing with the sowing of guayule seed in California and pointing out that Australia could grow its own rubber. Recently I read a statement by the Minister for Agriculture to the effect that our land is not suitable for the purpose. Perhaps the experiment has not been successful, but I urge the Minister to keep on trying because the production of rubber is a matter of considerable importance. We shall have to rely upon motor transport in this large undeveloped State of ours and we should therefore persevere with the experiment of producing rubber for tyres as is being done in California. We ought to be on our guard against statements that we cannot do this and cannot do that. We should keep on persevering.

It was pleasing to note in the Press recently a statement by the Minister for the Navy (Mr. Makin) denying an assertion by the president of the Boilermakers' Union that he had said the State Government could have done more to assist shipbuilding in this State than it had done. It is bad enough for a Minister to be blamed for something of which he is guilty, but to be blamed for something of which he is not guilty is very hard. Some months after the statement was made it was brought before the notice of the Minister in the Commonwealth Parliament and he denied having made it. Why the president of the Boilermakers' Union should make a false statement is inexplicable to me. The president of the union also said that Western Australia was the only State of the Commonwealth where shipbuilding was not being carried on. Of course I have only his authority for that statement, but I think we are entitled to an explanation. If there are sound reasons for this apparent injustice to Western Australia, they should be made public. If the work can be done more efficiently in the Eastern States, we are entitled to be told. I was interested in some correspondence in the Press between Hon. W. D. Johnson and the chairman of the Western Australian Industries Expansion Commission, Professor Mauldon. I desire to quote the chairman's statement about the Commission. He said—

Whether it (the Commission) could, as an instrument of the Government, perform more useful functions if its powers were widened, is a matter for the Government itself to determine.

I hope the Government will lose no time in making such a determination. The inference to be drawn from the chairman's statement is that the Commission could be granted wider powers, and I would respectfully urge the Government to consider immediately whether that is not possible. The sooner the Government does that, the better.

I shall not detain the House with remarks about the evils we have been witnessing and hearing of so much. I refer to drinking and betting. These matters have been dealt with by other speakers. I nevertheless deem it my duty, as a country member, to refer to the answer given to Mr. Wood's question about the number of accidents in the metropolitan area. He was told that there had been 372 accidents for the three months ended the 31st July last.

Does that not point to something wanting? Surely the members of this Chamber were not altogether without commonsense when they disallowed the lighting regulations. These may have been necessary on the coast. I shall not say what Mr. Parker said about the Rottnest Island lights and other lights, but I maintain that drivers of motor cars should be allowed to use more light.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: Similar regulations have been rescinded in South Australia.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: It will be said that the reply referred to metropolitan accidents. I do not want it to be thought for one moment that I am concerned only about people in the country districts. Such a number of accidents in so short a space of time surely deserves the close attention of the Government. It is with regret that I must enter my protest as an individual against the unwarranted interference with the sovereign rights of this State that we have witnessed during the past week with regard to the basic wage. I am a Western Australian born and bred and am neither a secessionist nor a unificationist. Australia is a wonderful country.

Hon. G. W. Miles: It was the most diabolical act ever committed by a Government.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: We should remember that we have one flag and one destiny; we should get together and do the best we can for our country. The matter I mentioned was before the Arbitration Court and we were promised in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech that it would receive the attention of this Parliament. I regret exceedingly the action taken.

On motion by Hon. H. Seddon, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 3.20 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 11th August, 1942.

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

QUESTION—AGRICULTURE,

Marginal Areas.

Mr. BERRY asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Is it the intention of the Govern-

ment to include marginal area farmers in the restricted acreage compensation to be paid to wheatgrowers in this State? 2, Are farmers in the marginal areas who have received no assistance under the reconstruction scheme to be permitted to grow wheat if they so desire?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST (for the Minister for Agriculture) replied: 1 and 2, These matters are now being considered and the Government hopes to be able to make an announcement at an early date.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motions by Mr. Wilson, leave of absence granted to Mr. Styants (Kalgoorlie) for one month and to Mr. Holman (Forrest) for the remainder of the session on the ground of military service; and to the Premier (Hon. J. C. Willcock, Geraldton) for one month on the ground of ill-health.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fourth Day.

Debate resumed from the 6th August.

MR. NEEDHAM (Perth) [2.20]: Nearing as we are the end of the third year of the war, we find ourselves today in a very serious and grave situation. We have passed through the horrors of Dunkirk and we realised then the position in which the Allied Nations were placed. Two more years have been added to the struggle, and unfortunately today the news given to us in the public Press does not suggest that the Allied Nations are in any better position than they were during the fateful days of Dunkirk. Russia, after having put up a magnificent struggle, finds herself in a very dangerous position; we have no reason to feel comfortable regarding the situation in Libya and in the south-west Pacific, right at our doors, we find that the enemy has gained rather than lost. Therefore I say that the outlook is not at all bright.

This serious situation, however, should prove only an incentive to the whole of the race to still greater effort and to increased determination to continue the struggle until the curse of the Nazi hordes is removed from the earth. We in Australia now realise that these are not days for complacency. Whatever we have done in the past three years, we must do more in the immediate future if we are going to hold this continent for