

that it cannot carry through the State Parliament a reasonable proposal? If that is so, it should no longer exist. It ought to have confidence in the institution which gives it its life. That is the present position. This Parliament gives the Government its life. It is not here at the wish of the electors; it is here at the wish of Parliament, and yet it ignores Parliament on every possible occasion and, as I said, rushes off to Canberra.

Mr. Seward: You will be asking it to do some work directly.

Mr. WATTS: If the Government were bona fide in its determination to upset the decision of the Arbitration Court, because that decision was an injustice to the workers, which—as I said—I am not at the moment prepared to deny, if it was bona fide in its intention to upset that decision, then why did it not let the member for East Perth discuss the Bill which he introduced on the 21st April last?

Mr. Cross: The member for East Perth was not present when the Bill came on. You know that.

The Minister for Labour: He was at Northam earning a legal fee that day.

Mr. WATTS: I was not aware that the hon. member was absent; but, in any case, the Bill was perfectly clear.

Mr. Cross: The member for East Perth was absent.

Mr. WATTS: The position is that there was a Bill on the notice paper to amend this section of the Act. If the matter were of sufficient importance, a Bill could have been introduced to make the increase retrospective to the day on which the Federal order was made. If the worst came to the worst, the Bill could have been discussed last week. The Standing Orders could have been suspended for the purpose.

Mr. Marshall: No. They could not.

Mr. WATTS: I have made two mistakes in five minutes, but that cannot be helped. The present Government, which does not hold office because the electors asked it to do so, but because Parliament said it could do so, owes a duty to Parliament which it has not faithfully discharged. Instead, it has run away from its duty and gone to the Commonwealth Government to help it out of its difficulties, when it ought to have come to the right place. If it believes that State rights should be upheld, it should uphold those rights; but it has not done so in the

last few months in all matters of vital importance. Today we hear of another matter that is under Federal consideration. I refer to the cream zoning. If the State Government will oppose that, I shall be led to believe that what I have said might have had some effect.

On motion by Mr. J. H. Smith, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.21 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 13th August, 1942.

	PAGE
Questions (2): Taxation, deductions for A.R.P. expenditure	174
Coroners' committals and court convictions	174
Address-in-reply, sixth day	175

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

QUESTIONS (2).

TAXATION.

Deduction for A.R.P. Expenditure.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT asked the Chief Secretary: Will he inform members the result of the motion carried in this House on the 12th May, 1942, protesting against the non-allowance of certain A.R.P. expenditure as a deduction for the purpose of income tax?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: The motion referred to requested an amendment of Section 52 of the State Income Tax Assessment Act, 1937. This Act is not now operative. Representations have been made to the Commonwealth Government, so far without result.

CORONERS' COMMITTALS AND COURT CONVICTIONS.

Hon. H. TUCKEY asked the Chief Secretary: 1, How many persons have been committed for trial by coroners in the metropolitan districts during the past three years? 2, How many of these cases have been withdrawn from trial by the Crown Law Department entering a nolle prosequi?

3, How many of those who were tried before a judge and jury were found guilty?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Eleven. 2, Six. 3, Two.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Sixth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. H. V. PIESSE (South-East) [2.19]: It is the duty of every member of Parliament to aid our great war effort in every way possible. Both in our country centres and in the metropolitan area the dominant desire is to render assistance and any adverse comment that may be voiced will, I am sure, be expressed with the idea of being helpful and not for the purpose of indulging in destructive criticism. Unfortunately I was not present when the Leader of the House moved the motion of condolence with the relatives of the late Hon. J. M. Macfarlane. I desire to express my regret at the passing of our late colleague, which was a loss not only to this House, but also to business circles in Western Australia. I well remember him as a young man, and as one of the founders of businesses that have proved so important to primary producers. We shall all miss him and both we and the people who dealt with him for years in the business sphere have lost a good friend.

It is a pleasure for me to see my old friend, Mr. Gibson, in this Chamber. With his knowledge, experience of local government affairs and business training he will be a valuable addition to the House. Every acquaintance of Mr. Gibson knows that he is a kindly man and has always been helpful to those who have required his advice. I can assure him I am delighted to see him here. I have also known Mr. Richard Cornish from his early youth. As a boy he was in my district. Listening to the speech he delivered yesterday, I was struck by the fact that in him we have a very sympathetic primary producer from the North. His remarks about keeping people on the land were interesting to hear. In him I feel that the House has gained a practical, energetic man. Eighteen months ago I paid a visit to the North—really a health trip—and I called at Carnarvon. I was there for about 1½ hours and during that time Mr. Cornish showed me more than I have seen in a similar period anywhere else. A man with the energy he

possesses is bound to be a very good member in this House.

I desire to refer to the rabbit problem and the imposition of the royalty on skins. Mr. Craig asked the Minister whether the Government was doing anything about this matter and was assured that a case had been put to the Eastern States, where it was considered that the impost was no great detriment to trapping and that the shortage of manpower was the cause of the great increase in rabbits in the farming areas. That may be so from their point of view, but I have here an article that was printed in the Victorian Press on the 19th June in which it is stated that before the imposition of the royalty the highest grade skins were worth 78d. and the lowest grade 30d. When the royalty was levied the price fell to 52d. and 17d. respectively.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Per lb.?

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: Yes. After that the prices for successive months were as follows:—66d.; 58d.; 50d.; 54d.; 48d.; 45d., and 51d. It is now 52d. That is definite proof that the impost must have interfered with the price of skins. When the Government introduced this legislation the only objection raised in the Federal Parliament was that voiced by Mr. Prowse, M.H.R. Moreover, the Federal legislation was introduced in the early hours of the morning. The Government asked to be permitted to levy 2s. 6d. a lb. It has already by regulation charged 1s. 6d. a lb. If the levy is raised to 2s. 6d. a lb., goodness only knows what the ultimate effect will be. Last night's "Daily News" contained a statement by Mr. Jack Grose whom I know well—he operates not only in Katanning and Narrogin but in Northam and Perth as well—indicating that the menace of the rabbit pest is greatly increasing. Notwithstanding that fact, in view of the Commonwealth royalty trappers are not operating to any extent, and in consequence insufficient supplies of rabbits are available for the Perth market. The price of meat is frequently referred to as excessive and because of the impost by the Federal authority, a good substitute that is available in plentiful quantities cannot be procured by the public. It is time the State Government was induced to press the Federal Government to remove the royalty. Throughout the South-West and other areas where the rabbit

scourge has not been serious, the position is rapidly changing. The other day I took a trip through the Gnowangerup district, and in the late afternoon I noticed rabbits in vast numbers running across the road and disappearing in the neighbouring paddocks. The local road board has asked me to bring this matter before Parliament with a view to having the situation dealt with.

With regard to lighting restrictions, this House in its wisdom disallowed certain regulations with a result that the Government sent East to receive instructions from the Federal authorities. In that instance, as on other occasions, the State Government resorted to that course in order to minimise the effect of the disallowance of regulations or other action taken by this Chamber. I will place before members a report that appeared in the Adelaide "Chronicle" on the 23rd July last. The article reads—

MOTOR CAR LIGHTS.

Masking Regulation Rescinded.

Last week the State Cabinet rescinded the regulation requiring motor cars to have their headlamps masked or shaded. Headlights may now be used as on pre-war nights, except that they must not show a beam towards the sea.

In stating that this restriction would be continued, Mr. Playford said that it would be liberally interpreted, with the commonsense of motorists governing what they should do. It would not, for instance, be necessary for motorists driving down the Anzac Highway to Glenelg, to mask their lights, but it would be an offence to leave a car with its headlights showing out to sea.

That serves to indicate that the South Australian Government is able to deal with this matter itself. Why cannot the Government of this State act similarly?

—Hon. C. B. Williams: Hear, hear!

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: I take it that each State has its own regulations, yet the Western Australian Government has had to approach the Federal Government for protection because this Chamber disallowed certain of our local regulations. Dealing with another phase affecting this question of lighting, I understand that arrangements have been made by whoever is responsible, for one or two Perth firms to manufacture motor headlight masks, priced at 18s. 6d. each. In country districts there are many plumbers quite capable of doing that work and turning out an article that will cost motorists only 10s. 6d.

Hon. H. Tuckey: They can make the masks; there is nothing to prevent them doing so.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: I understand that in a reply from the authorities concerned it was stated that masks were available and that the country masks allowed more light to escape than those manufactured in the city. I trust it will not be necessary for country motorists to procure their masks from the city. One of the outstanding desires of those representing country districts is to ensure that the primary producers remain on their holdings. To achieve that end is essential for the well-being of the State as a whole.

Hon. G. W. Miles: City members realise that fact.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: I think everyone realises it. Those who represent country districts are more keenly aware of the disabilities under which farmers are labouring, and appreciate to a greater extent the pin-pricks that in some instances are forcing the producers off their properties. One matter that has caused some concern refers to the impressing of farmers' trucks. I have in mind an instance of an old gentleman who is 74 years of age. One of his sons was badly wounded a few weeks ago when he lost an arm. Unfortunately another son died. The five men who were working on his property have gone into camp and his daughter has linked up with the R.A.A.F. This 74-year-old man is left alone to control his farm. He is responsible for shearing 3,500 sheep, and for looking after 13,000 acres of land, not all of which is first-class country. Recently he received notice that his truck might be impressed. He wrote to me and I communicated with the authorities pointing out the disabilities under which the man was labouring and the position he would be placed in if his truck was taken. Three days ago the impressing officer arrived on his farm and placed the Government stamp on the old man's truck, which subsequently was removed from the district. The old man did not object to his truck being taken for war purposes. In fact he visited me at my office and with tears in his eyes said, "If they want my 3,500 sheep and if they want everything I have, they can take it if it is necessary for the war effort."

That is quite all right but why should that old man suffer as a result of the action

by the authorities when we see so many trucks running around Perth and elsewhere some of which could easily be impressed in preference? At the time the truck was taken the impressing officer visited me and said "Mr. Piesse, you wrote to the department about this man and his truck. He handed over the truck very willingly and did not even object." I said, "I know he would not object. He is not the type. A man who has all his family engaged in the war is not the sort to object if the military authorities want his truck." My point is that the impressing of vehicles should be done on an equitable basis. The other day 12 trucks were railed through Katanning alone and one carrier in the district has been notified that he will have to lose one of his trucks. Surely the board could leave untouched trucks used by carriers so that they will be able to handle farmers' goods. Unless means of transport are available for handling goods in the district, we shall be in a bad way. If the military authorities want trucks, I shall be the first to yield up mine. Indeed, I was one of the first to have a truck impressed in Perth, instead of a truck in the country being impressed.

I consider that the State Government might recommend the Federal Government and the impressing authority to purchase other trucks to replace those repossessed in the country, where they had been doing important work. I drove around the streets of Perth a little time ago and marked down 65 trucks which in my opinion though perhaps not in the opinion of the military authorities quite suitable for their purposes, could have been taken for Army work. Included in the number were several brewery trucks and seven or eight aerated water manufacturers' trucks. I listed the numbers of the vehicles because I wanted to have available evidence on the subject. On making inquiry I found that those trucks are not altogether suitable for the needs of the military; but if they are not suitable in that respect, they could be repossessed to take the place of trucks suitable for military purposes which have been requisitioned in the country or elsewhere while doing important work. This is one of the points to be borne in mind carefully. Every class of business carried on in Western Australia must receive consideration.

Yesterday after leaving Parliament House I walked into a fruit shop and said to the proprietor, "You seem to be having a pretty lean time." The reply was, "I don't think the stocks in my shop today are worth £20." He had no sweets on display apart from a line of cough drops, for which I had gone in, thus being a lucky customer. It is clear that a shopkeeper cannot go on long selling a few sweets. I asked the man, "As regards the business of selling sweets, at how much do you estimate your loss this winter?" His reply was, "Well over £400 in this little shop, and how long I can survive I do not know. I am merely hanging on from day to day, hoping that some regulation may be issued which will improve my position." I am told on good authority that in the Eastern States chocolates and other sorts of confectionery are still purchasable. In Western Australia, however, no confectionery whatever can now be bought. If that is necessary for the war effort, I do not object; but I hold that the Eastern States should not be producing confectionery while Western Australia is completely out in the cold, with shopkeepers and others going to the wall here.

From time to time complaints are heard about our natives and their treatment. At the outset let me say that I have no complaint to make concerning the Department of Native Affairs and its Minister. They are doing their best with the relatively small Vote granted them. They are frequently the subject of condemnation because of the way in which natives and half-castes carry out their work. They are told to bring in all sorts of regulations compelling these people to work properly. Let me give an instance which occurred on a farm of mine. Instead of applying to the Manpower Board for a white man to carry on the farm—as I had the right to do—I said to my foreman, "We will put up with a nigger; we will have a half-caste." We did so, and the result was that the half-caste went away four or five times and was not to be found when wanted. Eventually I reported him to the Manpower Board, and he was put into camp. Of course this does not involve any responsibility as regards the Minister or his department. The department makes those aborigines and half-castes available. I shall be starting shearing in Katanning on the 5th September, and all the men handling the wool will be natives. In fact, one of the

shearers is a half-caste. But when one sees the number of men in Carrolup, one sometimes thinks that in some way or other they could be brought under necessary regulations, making them amenable to control by the people employing them. They seem to have a glorified holiday when in employment, after which they go back to Carrolup to spend a vacation, as it were. Yesterday's "West Australian" stated that all those native and half-caste men and women had their occupations set out for them.

It was with great pleasure I listened to Dr. Hislop's speech yesterday. In fact, it was one of the most interesting speeches I have heard in this Chamber. The delivery of that speech goes to prove that when men of knowledge and experience are elected to this Chamber and give advice, that advice should be accepted by every member. I suggest that the Chamber should appoint a select committee to consider Dr. Hislop's recommendations.

In country centres I have had a great deal to do with the Police Department. I was associated with the police as a Justice of the Peace for many years, and in my opinion nine times out of ten the average policeman carries out his duties with great credit to the department and to himself. The vice squad, to which references have been made, was appointed when it became essential. It is most necessary now. I feel that the work carried out by it will prove helpful not only to the young people of Western Australia but especially to our girls and the soldiers.

The drink question has also been debated. Where it is possible, the military authorities should, I think, give notice to eating-houses when there is likely to be a sudden influx of returned soldiers. This was brought to my attention on Wednesday last, when a convoy arrived. My son happened to be in that convoy, and he and I took tea in a cafe. Three soldiers came in and asked for a meal. The proprietor had to refuse them, having sold out every single article of food in his place. I know his statement to that effect to be perfectly correct. He had not even an egg in the place. One of the soldiers then said, "This is a nice way to treat men who have returned after being at the Front for 2½ years." And so it was. It was not the fault of the proprietor. I said to one of the soldiers, "Why do you not endeavour to get a meal

somewhere else?" He replied that he had already been to eight places. He had had a few drinks. As an old soldier I know what happens on those occasions. The soldier would have been quite content if he had been able to get a decent feed, but at seven o'clock at night he was still walking around the streets looking for one. At least 300 soldiers were congregated at the Palace Hotel corner. The cry was, "Where can we get something to eat?" At that time there was a big influx of men, somewhere about 2,000. Very fine work has been carried out in Perth by the Citizens Reception Committee. The men I speak of were strangers to Perth. They were having a little jollification up to six p.m. and were then shot out into the street. That was when the trouble started. The military authorities should permit the cafes to keep extra food on hand to meet cases of emergency such as I have mentioned.

Hon. G. W. Miles: You are not forgetting potatoes I hope.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: I thank the hon. member for that interjection. Members, owing to the present shortage of potatoes, wonder what has happened to the market. Some of them, as well as the public, have gone so far as to say that since the Government brought in potato licensing it has been impossible to get potatoes. It is absurd to think that after the Potato Growers Licensing Act had been proclaimed some three months ago, we cannot now buy potatoes. The condition of affairs appertaining today has induced me to say something on the subject, and to indicate why potatoes cannot be purchased now as heretofore.

Hon. A. Thomson: You must educate the public.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: And members as well! I was very pleased to receive Mr. Clem Foster, the potato controller of the new Australian Committee that has been appointed under the Commerce Department. Mr. Foster is an old friend of mine. I have met him every year I visited the Eastern States, and have had many opportunities of discussing with him matters affecting the potato industry. He is a practical grower himself. On his arrival in Perth he was met by Mr. Morgan, the head of the Inspection of Potatoes Branch of the Agricultural Department. The first remark he made was that of a practical man who knew what he was talking about. An

itinerary had been prepared for the visitor, and the department had done everything possible to assist him in his work here. Mr. Foster said in my office, "I am going to visit the growers. That is my job. I will deal with them first, and then with the merchants and other people in Perth." Through the courtesy of the Department and of Mr. Murray the trip was arranged. Mr. Burvill accompanied Mr. Foster and they had an interesting trip. I have heard many remarks and received many letters indicating that it is a change to have a practical man sent to us by a Federal Department.

Throughout Mr. Foster's visit to Western Australia he was received as a practical grower and looked upon as a good man. He has done excellent work. True, he has been ably assisted by Mr. Morgan and other officials, as well as by the Minister for Agriculture. All those who stand behind the industry have done what they could to help Mr. Foster. While he was here he formed a committee. It has on it an officer of the Price Fixing Department, who is acting as a liaison officer. It is unlike any other primary producing scheme of supply to the military authorities, and is run by the Commerce Department. A representative from the Military Supply Department is a member of the committee and two growers have also been appointed. I think the organisation will prove very workable. City interests are also represented. The idea is that the committee shall supply the military authorities and the consuming public with potatoes, if possible maintaining the present trade channels. The State is to be divided into zones, and each zone will receive its quota of potatoes delivered to wholesale merchants. The wholesale merchants are to be licensed, and their profits are to become practically a service charge. The charges will be checked by the Potato Committee in collaboration with the Price Fixing Commissioner. That is an outline of what the committee will do. Mr. Foster was delighted to know we had a Potato Growers Licensing Act. That enabled him to obtain information as to the number of growers who had been registered to date.

In war-time an Act soon becomes operative, and the necessary regulations are usually promulgated without loss of time. One regulation issued by the State Government under the Potato Growers Licensing Act, provides that unless a grower is

registered he cannot get any supplies of super. Naturally, the growers will lose no time in becoming registered. That will save the department a lot of work in making a search for those people who are growing potatoes. When I have discussed the measure in the House on different occasions I have been subjected to a certain amount of criticism. Here I would express my thanks, on behalf of the growers, to the Government for bringing the Act into force. Several people have written to me and asked why I had selected Mr. Burvill and Mr. Rose to be members of the board, and it was suggested that I might have selected a better pair. I point out that the Minister in control has the power to select the members of the board, and that no-one else has anything to do with the matter. It is purely a Government selection, and it has nothing to do with any member of Parliament.

With regard to the shortage of potatoes, I point out that about six months ago we approached the Price Fixing Commissioner. Mr. Burvill and I, as representatives of the Federal Advisory Committee, came to Perth and discussed the price that was being charged. We asked the Commissioner to increase that price, and put it on a parity with that obtaining in Eastern States capital cities. The Commissioner in his wisdom said that the instructions he had received as well as the cost of production would not permit of his increasing the price above £11 per ton, Perth. That meant a price in the country of, roughly, £9 5s. Some weeks later an export price for potatoes was fixed at £12. Can anyone imagine a farmer growing 50 tons of potatoes and accepting a local price of £11 per ton when by exporting them he could get £12 per ton? If freight was available the grower would not be likely to turn down £600 in cash for his 50 tons of produce. He would not consider that people in the city might want potatoes. We brought that matter up, and I know that the department also brought the export phase before the notice of the Commerce Department at Canberra, but received no satisfaction.

Hon. A. Thomson: The position is absurd.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: Officials dealing with the position knew nothing about it. Had they gone to the Department of Agriculture and taken the advice of Mr. Morgan and of the Under Secretary no export price would have been fixed. If the Minister had

his way the export price would be knocked out on the spot. The 1,500 tons, approximately, of potatoes which have been exported in the last six months would have remained in Western Australia.

Hon. W. J. Mann: People would have been able to get potatoes.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: The Military Supply Department came into the picture and immediately competition arose between it and the merchants. The question was: Who had the most money? The military authorities won, and bought up a tremendous quantity of potatoes.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The soldiers have so many potatoes they can hardly look them in the face.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: That is so. A loss of potatoes has occurred. That would not have happened if a storage price to the grower had been fixed. The Price Fixing Commissioner could have said, "We will give you £11 per ton, and will allow you so much per ton for storage." The grower would have looked after the potatoes, if he knew his job, instead of their being forced on to the market. Any man who has produce to sell will dispose of it at the best price. I myself would accept 2d. a bushel less for my oats in the field if I had 1,000 bags and the buyer had agreed to cart them off my property.

The Chief Secretary: What is the nature of the loss?

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: The loss amounts to pure waste. The military authorities were over-supplied whereas the public are going without potatoes. Had the supply been properly regulated through the Department of Agriculture, there would have been enough potatoes for the consumers as well as for the military authorities.

Hon. L. Craig: There is always a big loss on potatoes that are stored.

The Chief Secretary: Is there any loss as a result of fly?

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: Yes, when the potatoes are stored. That is the position today. I have great hopes regarding the new committee. It is made up of practical men who can speak with authority. People who go to them will know that they are going to men who understand what they are doing. Another thing we have to contend with is the difference between the price of potatoes in Perth and the price in Sydney. This matter was brought before the

notice of Mr. Foster. The price in Perth is £11 per ton, but in Sydney it is £18. Why should we be treated as exporters when we have not enough potatoes for ourselves? We do not want to export them.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Who is responsible for that?

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: The Price Fixing Commissioner.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: State or Federal?

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: The Commissioner fixed a local price of £11, and the grower has therefore decided to sell at the export price of £12. The Government did its best from the very outset to prevent export.

Hon. A. Thomson: The question is why a price of £11 was fixed for Western Australia and £18 for Sydney.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: It appears that Professor Copland went into the cost of production and declared that that was the price that would be fixed for Western Australia. Apparently the officials knew in about two minutes what they wanted. They took their own cost of production and our price was fixed on that.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Did Professor Copland do that?

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: It was done by his department.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Then he is the man.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: He was responsible. I hope that the next time there is an Address-in-reply debate we will find a better state of affairs in this country. The growers have been asked to produce more potatoes, and they are prepared to do that. It was said in the Eastern States a few days ago that the Government intended to take over the land if the farmers would not produce the potatoes. Where it is necessary for a war, or a civilian, effort the land should be taken over. Everyone is prepared to do that, but the one big thing that we are up against in primary production is manpower.

The Potato Committee has the power if a glut or over-production should occur to leave the potatoes in the ground and pay compensation less the cost of the bags and digging. The farmer, for once in his life, has a little brighter outlook in this industry, which is very important to the State. Mr. Craig knows that at Dardanup and other places in his province, the farmers could turn hundreds of acres into potato-producing country very quickly. If

it were necessary, they could grow thousands of tons in excess of what is needed. Nevertheless, I feel that this new committee will be a step in the right direction. Mr. Foster asked me to join that committee as one of the Federal representatives, because all the other members from Western Australia on the advisory committee in the Commerce Department, had become State members. I thought it only right, however, that primary producers should be on that committee. I also declined the invitation because I live at the Albany end of the district and I want practical representatives from the South-West to come forward. I support the motion.

HON. H. L. ROCHE (South-East): I join with other members in extending a welcome to our two new members. We all regret the circumstances which caused the by-elections, but nevertheless the record of public service of the two newcomers affords us ample guarantee that they will prove worthy successors to the members we have lost. I regret once again that it has not been possible for the Government to make more use of the services of private members. Although the Premier expressed in a letter which he addressed to all of us a desire for assistance from private members, not much effort has been made by the Government to avail itself of our services. Last April I moved a motion for the formation of committees to assist the various State Ministers and so utilise our services, and the Chief Secretary, whilst he could not agree with the form of the motion, assured us that consideration would most certainly be given to the proposal. He must forgive me if I feel that the consideration promised has not been forthcoming. Neither I nor, so far as I know, any other member has heard one word more on the subject.

In discussing this question with members I gathered that the majority of them wish to be more closely associated with the work entailed in connection with the present state of emergency. It is a matter for regret that the State Government cannot avail itself of the enthusiasm of members to render their portion of service. Whether it is that the Government feels that the administration should be left solely to it, or whether it is that it is just allowing the position to drift, with Ministers acting as

the political heads of departments and the administration of the affairs of the State being left solely in the hands of civil servants, I do not know. Civil servants have their own work to do and their own problems to deal with. The position has been allowed to move along with little preparation to provide for the changes forced upon us.

We in Parliament cannot be utilised by the Government, and we can be given only such information on the position of Western Australia as the average man in the street can obtain by reading the Press. I have noticed in the papers on more than one occasion announcements that the Premier has been able to give to the Parliamentary Labour Party a full and comprehensive report, and it does seem to me that we are entitled to expect that this Parliament should be treated at least as well as the Caucus of the Parliamentary Labour Party.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The Beaufort-street Labour Party.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I am referring to the Parliamentary Labour Party. Beaufort-street has its own work to do. I have been disappointed, and feel somewhat resentful, that whilst that can be done to a section of this Parliament, Parliament itself is not taken into the confidence of the Government or the Premier. The non-Labour supporters in Western Australia are in just as much peril as are the Government adherents, and just as much concerned with present conditions and the well-being of this State as those people who stand behind the Government in this House. Although it is without any great degree of confidence, I still cling to some vestige of hope that the Premier may yet afford us some fuller information on the position of Western Australia and the place that we occupy, and give an outline of the dangers likely to confront this State within the next 12 months. The State Government could help considerably by utilising our services, and those of every public man in this country, or approaching the Federal Government to do so, in order that their time and energies might be devoted to broadening the attitude of mind of the people and awakening them more fully to the vital needs of the moment.

Many members will agree with me that as yet, although we have progressed some distance in this regard, the attitude of mind

of our people has not reached the stage when they fully comprehend what is ahead of them, and realise that this country has to experience in the near future, and for perhaps an extensive period, very difficult conditions. The people will be subject to discipline, service and sacrifice to as great a degree as has ever been forced on any people of our generation. They have not yet comprehended that we are engaged in something more than war; that the stage has been reached where it is a struggle for survival in which there will be no losers, because the losers will be blotted out economically and culturally, and if the Japanese over-run this country we will be blotted out racially. Our people do not yet understand what is ahead of them. It is for us and other public men to develop an appropriate attitude of mind in them. I am afraid it is beyond our ability to do it with any degree of success unless more confidence is shown in the private members of this Parliament.

Much as I admire a lot of the work achieved by the Prime Minister, I maintain it is a job too big for any one man or any one Cabinet, or any one Parliament. It is a job for all of us! It spreads throughout Australia, although we must confine our remarks largely to the conditions in Western Australia. I appreciate to the utmost the need of this State for a strong, effective State Parliament. It is a matter for the keenest disappointment that the State Government should be so ready in this time of emergency to leave responsibilities well within its powers to discharge, to be assumed by Canberra, or, as happened in the case of the liquor question, only to act belatedly when kicked into some form of activity by the public denunciation of the Prime Minister. The liquor position in this State is not satisfactory; a genuine attempt has not been made to grapple with it. To impose 6 o'clock closing for an indefinite period, is not a remedy or even a palliative, and many abuses are still occurring under that scheme. The Press today reports that in Victoria, where 6 o'clock closing has been in operation for some considerable time, great concern is expressed at the abuses that are so apparent. Before the position is allowed to drift further, and without waiting until the Prime Minister or the Commonwealth Government is forced to take action, some effort should be made by the State Govern-

ment to review the situation from a commonsense standpoint.

Greater supervision of the lounge and bottle trades and much more control of people found under the influence of liquor in the street, together with a staggering of trading hours, would go a long way towards correcting the abuses that are taking place and would undoubtedly assist the civil police in maintaining reasonable behaviour in the streets of the city. I believe that, except perhaps when large bodies of men from overseas are here for a day or two, the hotels should be open until an hour later than 6 p.m. A couple of weeks ago a large body of men from overseas were on leave in Perth. I was informed that in central Hay-street on the previous night, although a difficult position did not actually develop, all the possibilities were present. I went to see what steps the military authorities were taking to control their own men. I should like to pay a tribute to Chief Inspector Doyle and Major Harvey on the manner in which they took and maintained control of what might have developed into a very difficult situation. By 6.30 p.m., in central Hay-street where there are a couple of hotels in which bother might have occurred at closing time, the street was nearly as normal as could be expected, having regard to the large number of men on leave. It was brought home to me more forcibly than ever before that with the military authorities playing their part, the civil police are well able to maintain law and order. I think the military authorities were much more effective on this occasion than previously because officers had been placed in charge of the military police and pickets to take some responsibility. Up to that time I had not seen an officer in charge of pickets or military police.

The liquor trade is always subject to a certain amount of opprobrium. Although there are one or two what might be termed plague spots in the town, which the civil police, given the power, would be only too anxious to clean up, it is within the power and responsibility of the State Government to take action without allowing matters to drift, as they will drift if we are to believe what we read in the Press. The proposal of the Prime Minister to the Premiers' Conference has not been accepted. I do not want to see this State again placed in the position of being subject to regulations

drawn up in Canberra by some bureaucratic "stuff-shirt" who cares nothing about conditions in Western Australia and knows less. This is a matter we ourselves can handle. If we cannot do so it is a confession that the Government cannot govern the country.

Reference has already been made to the conditions obtaining under the lighting restrictions. I may be wrong, but it seems to me that this is another instance where the State might have acted before the Commonwealth came along with its regulations, which obviously are not suitable to the conditions prevailing in a State of the size of Western Australia. Maybe the Government was somewhat disgruntled that this House disallowed its regulations. For five weeks the Government did nothing, and then the Commonwealth authority was either forced by our inactivity or prevailed upon to reimpose regulations almost identical with those that had been disallowed by this House, which, in adopting that course, showed itself better acquainted with public opinion and possessed of a better knowledge of the conditions obtaining than did the Government. Our position now is, I think, not quite as Mr. Piesse mentioned when he suggested that Western Australia is the only State whose lighting restrictions are being regulated from Canberra. We are in the same position as Victoria and Queensland. The States of New South Wales and South Australia are acting under regulations of their own. There was no need for the State Government, unless it took the view that it was going to have its regulations, the whole regulations, and nothing but the regulations, to let the matter drift so long that Mr. Lazzarini took action. If he did not take action at the behest of the State Government, he imposed almost exactly similar regulations to those disallowed by this House.

On the point I am now about to mention, I am not quite clear. Perhaps the Chief Secretary will deal with it in his speech. I have been given to understand that it is not a matter that need necessarily be referred to Canberra, although the restrictions are imposed through the authority conferred under the National Security Regulations. The point is that the Premier, who today seems to have quite extraordinary powers conferred upon him by the Federal authority, together with the local military

commander in collaboration, has the right to bring in such amendments to these regulations as they think desirable. I believe that the street lighting of Perth could be increased considerably, but I am more concerned about the motor car headlight restrictions, particularly as they apply in country districts. With the Fremantle Harbour, if not a beacon, then quite well lit, and with Rottnest Lighthouse certainly a beacon, surely there cannot be much danger if the restrictions are applied to motor cars within 25 miles of the coast. The conditions are bad enough in the City of Perth. I feel that some relaxation could be made there, because a motor car in the Perth streets at night is little less than a murder machine. The figures given to Mr. Wood in reply to a question reveal a terrible state of affairs, and the Government should not allow it to continue without making some effort to find a remedy. Seeing that there has been some lifting of the restrictions in a city like Sydney, which has been somewhat closer to the war than we have, there is ample justification for asking that a reasonable view be taken of the matter here and that motor car lighting restrictions be markedly relaxed in the country areas.

In my province a man who takes out his car and travels at night is courting suicide. True, there have not been so many accidents in the country as in the city, but it is almost impossible to see the road with headlights which a while ago were described as standard. Now I understand we are to have something else, and probably there will be another change later. All this costs money, and the motorist is not a great deal better off. I wonder what the position will be if the present lighting restrictions are continued. Will the Government, for instance, suspend the operations of the Bushfires Act? Under the present lighting restrictions applying to all the areas I represent, it will be quite impossible for any farmer to do any burning off or even to burn a tree off a fence, unless he is prepared to put the fires out at night. This seems foolish, because even 1,000 acres of country alight at, say, Dumbleyung, would not convey to a Japanese bomber that there are munitions works at Welshpool where we do not make munitions. The absurdity of the position could not be better illustrated than by my quoting a report of a meeting,

which appeared recently in the *Wagin "Argus."* The report stated—

As an instance of the extreme lengths to which the lighting restrictions go, it was reported that one farmer who had been burning up a tree which had fallen across his rabbit-proof fence was instructed by the police to see that the tree was not left alight between the hours of sunset and sunrise. A protest through Mr. Stubbs, M.L.A., to the Civil Defence Council on the absurdity of such an order being enforced on a farm 10 miles from the nearest township had elicited the following reply:—

"The order is a Commonwealth one, drafted by the Commonwealth authorities in consultation with the military authorities. It will be appreciated, of course, that a bush or tree fire might be of assistance to the enemy as it would undoubtedly be a local beacon."

The members of the road board left no doubt as to their opinion of such a red-tape attitude. I am not surprised at it. If we are trying by State authority to police regulations of that sort, God help this State if it gets unification, which some people think it should have.

Since the House last assembled, nothing has been done to counteract the drift that is taking place in the affairs of the farming community. The position is so serious that it is useless for us continually to close our eyes to it. The industry today is being carried on largely by men too old to do heavy work. Labour is unprocurable and all working costs are increasing. The great essential in this State—superphosphate—is up 50 per cent. in price and is in diminished supplies. If we are going to maintain the production of our industries on anything like the scale which I think is necessary and if we are to maintain a reasonable economy in this State, unless a marked reduction is made in interest rates, a moratorium for the fixed debt charges will have to be brought into operation. We are facing conditions under which costs are inevitably rising, and production must inevitably decrease. We cannot expect thousands of men who are little better than on the borderline—and when I use the term "borderline" I do not mean a district, but the distinction between the farmer who can farm comfortably with some profit and the farmer who is but merely existing, and there are thousands of them—to continue working unless they get some relief from those fixed charges. The difference between the conditions of the farmer and his family compelled, through circumstances,

to endure a mere existence, and those of the farmer who can obtain employment either in the Armed Forces or in some civil occupation, is so marked that it is ridiculous to think that he will carry on his farming operations.

In my opinion, there will be a lack of production of the commodities that this State will need. We are faced now with some shortages; for instance, potatoes. Although butter production is well up, butter and bacon are being required in increasing quantities. More and more men are leaving their farms in the Denmark area, which is a dairying district and a big producer of butter and bacon. The prospects are so unfavourable and the fixed charges and working costs take so much out of the farmers' returns, that it is not worth their while to continue their operations. Some decrease in production is inevitable, but we must maintain, to a reasonable degree, our State economy. We have to look forward to continuing some of our industries: one has already been destroyed, or well-nigh destroyed, owing to the exigencies of the war situation. I refer to the goldmining industry. We shall probably see a decrease in our meat and wool production owing to the rationing of superphosphate, the difficulty in obtaining labour and increased working costs. We shall not require anything like the quantity of wool which hitherto we have been producing; but we shall certainly need increased supplies of meat if we are to have an influx of Allied troops. As additional workers are withdrawn from production in these industries, a greater strain will be placed on the producers remaining.

The wheat industry seems merely to be carrying on with an indeterminate death sentence hanging over its head. Even at this stage our wheat farmers do not know how they will stand next year, and yet half the fallowing ought to have been done by now. They do not know what price they will receive for their wheat. It has not been made clear whether the restrictions on cropping are to continue in this State, the only section of the Commonwealth singled out in that respect, and the only one that has been so vitally hit by the destruction of its goldmining industry. One would think that at least the Commonwealth Government might have tempered the wind to the shorn lamb and left the question of the reduction of our

wheat areas until a little later, and thus compensate us for what we will lose in gold production. The Government might at long last give consideration to the introduction of a moratorium on the fixed debt charges affecting so many of our primary producers, and not wait until certain things had happened or certain tragedies had occurred.

There is another matter of topical interest to which I desire to direct the attention of the Minister, in the hope that he will mention it to the Minister for Agriculture, and that is the problem of shearing. This will most likely arise next year. We were somewhat belated in this State in organising for shearing this year. That was largely the reason, I think, for the abandonment of the attempts made to zone shearing. Fortunately, many men who have been shearers are still here in the Military Forces. Up to date the military authorities are adopting a helpful attitude in releasing those men for limited periods to assist in shearing this year. Of course, the military machine is slow, and there is some delay, owing to routine, in getting the men out, but in my opinion the authorities are proving themselves quite genuine. Although there will be some delay, if those men who have been applied for—or the great majority of them—can be released this year, we shall probably wriggle through without too much loss or inconvenience. But no-one can foretell where our Military Forces will be by this time next year, so that many of those men may not then be available.

We must therefore contemplate the necessity for introducing some zoning system. In that respect, I hope that during the forthcoming shearing season in the agricultural districts, the Minister will make available one or two of the members of the committee dealing with this matter, particularly Mr. McGarry, the chairman, to tour the country districts and see for themselves the conditions at shearing time. In this way they will secure valuable information as to the best way to organise the shearing next year. Conditions are not the same in every district. More sheep are being shorn in our agricultural districts than in the North-West, but it seems that in the North-West conditions are more clearly realised. There will have to be a working-in with the local authorities to some extent, and possibly with the owners of the larger properties, who may have to make available their plants. I am afraid

that one member of the committee, Mr. Murray, the Sheep and Wool Adviser to the Agricultural Bank, although he is undoubtedly an expert sheep-breeder—

Member: Merino.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: Sheep and wool— is somewhat prone to jump to conclusions on matters of management and control of sheep-owner's affairs. One or two of his statements in recent times have been altogether too irresponsible. We therefore cannot kindly contemplate allowing him unduly to influence proposals which may have a serious effect on the lives and well-being of thousands of our people. Before arrangements for zoning are decided upon, the views of level-headed people concerned should be obtained. To their points of view full weight should be given, otherwise trouble is likely to ensue. There would have been bother in my district between the farmers and the committee this year had the original zoning proposals been proceeded with.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: The farmers would not have worked at all.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: That would have been part of the trouble. There is another matter which I think has not yet been brought to a conclusion. It is another of those instances where, if what I hear is correct, the State Government has approached the Federal authorities to shoulder the responsibility for something for which it is not prepared to accept responsibility itself. The matter I refer to is purely within the State's sphere. I heard a report in Parliament House that Commonwealth regulations are being promulgated to effect the zoning of cream deliveries to butter factories. I hope that is not true. With the principle of zoning I have no quarrel; but before zoning is brought about, I want to feel reasonably satisfied that the farmers will secure at least as good a return by sending their cream to some other factory as they have been getting by sending it to a factory that is possibly outside their district. As I say, I have only heard this rumour within the precincts of the House, and I hope it is not true. I trust the regulation will be a State one, because even though Parliament may not always agree with the Government, the Government should, unless it wishes to emphasise the trend towards unification, at least treat Parliament as worthy of taking some responsibility for affairs which are purely of concern to the State. Although

apparently the Commonwealth Government is not anxious to have the assistance of State Parliaments in our country's emergency, I do not think there is any call for us to apologise for introducing matters which may be purely of Federal concern.

Hon. A. Thomson: It is the only opportunity we have to voice our opinion.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I was pleased to read within the last few days that apparently at long last the Prime Minister is taking it on himself to destroy the illusion and everything inherent in that unfortunate "business as usual" slogan that we followed so abjectly for the first couple of years of this war. To my mind that was one of the greatest weaknesses in our war effort. It placed a premium on the complacency and disinterestedness and selfish materialism of our people and that mental attitude has first to be destroyed before we can bring our people to face the cold, stark facts. Some of those facts are not altogether pleasant or comforting. I must confess to very grave concern when I realise that after nearly three years of war and nine months of war against Japan we are not yet ready to provide every man in this community with a rifle or fire-arm or weapon of some sort. Some members probably know the position is even worse than that, but that is bad enough. I am not one of those who believe we must content ourselves with merely arming our A.M.F., even including the V.D.C. If we have to face up to a Japanese invasion of this country every man has got to be in it, because we will go after they get the country if we do not go in the process, and I think that most of us would prefer to be in the position where we could take one of these "sons of heaven" with us. He could perhaps show us the way!

Omissions or weaknesses of that kind in our war effort are very disturbing to me and I feel sometimes that there is something rottenly wrong with our war effort and its administration today. There have been one or two purges of our leaders in the field, of those men responsible for strategy and tactics and the handling of our troops, and I think that we have probably reached a stage where we are as well served in that regard as we can hope to be, for the time being at all events. I very much doubt, however, from what I can see of it, whether the overhauling of our military department has gone far enough. Administration,

organisation, and supply count as much in total warfare as do strategy and efficiency in the field, and there seems to be very little attempt drastically to re-organise—or might say revolutionise—that part of the Defence Department. All that work seems still to be carried on in the same old way by the same old people and we have the spectacle of actual fighting units being unable to obtain from Ordnance the equipment required, owing to the ineptitude, red-tape and lack of interest on the part of some of the people concerned. Even in our own State—which I understand is not the worst—seems to be a question in some quarters of more jobs and still more jobs. We have captains and majors and all sorts of officers blossoming out everywhere. We have young men doing clerical and sedentary jobs. There are motor cars and trucks running all round the place often carrying men who have never owned a motor car themselves and who if they had done so would have been only too ready to drive it themselves.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: That is the regulation.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: It may be, but it is pretty stupid! We are measuring our war effort by the amount we spend. I only wish we could measure it by the amount that is being squandered. I am not one who believes that money matters two hoots in this war. The only thing that matters is getting results, and if money is not at hand we must do the job without it.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Cash exhaustion will finish the war.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I doubt it. Exhaustion of resources will finish it.

Hon. C. B. Williams: That is it.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: That, or the overrunning of our resources by one or other of our enemies. I doubt very much whether the Prime Minister, no matter how good he is, or even his senior officers conducting or trying to conduct the war machine from Canberra over a continent as vast as this, can hope to get any real show of efficiency in administration and supply unless the Ministers in charge of the service departments have a direct representative appointed to all the major military commands who will have direct access to the Ministers concerned without having to approach him through the ordinary stereotyped disciplinary channels of the Army with their foolish loyalties, regulations and routine. I know

that some people may say that involves the appointment of political commissars such as Russia has or something like that but I do not see how we can hope for any greater show of efficiency in any other way, and we have to get efficiency. We cannot go on throwing men—that is, blood and guts—against steel and efficiency indefinitely and hope to be able to last out this war strong enough to win it in the end.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Hear, hear!

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: As I said at the beginning of this later portion of my speech, the Federal Government is not interested in our views. Yet the position is drifting all the time and if we cannot make some effort to bring matters before those who today are the authorities—that is, the people in Canberra—it seems to me that a very hopeless outlook is ahead of us when our real testing time comes and that time, to my mind, is certain to come, whether it be next month or next year.

On motion by Hon. F. E. Gibson, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 3.54 p.m.

the law not being enforced? 5, Of the total number of fatal accidents, how many open verdicts were given by the Coroner, and in these cases, how many were proceeded against for manslaughter, and the reason for not proceeding against each case if any were not dealt with accordingly? 6, In the grand total of fatal accidents in the period mentioned, and where no action has been taken by the Crown Law Department on a charge of manslaughter, have the police taken action under the Traffic Act and secured verdicts against the offenders?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST replied: 1, 66 (72 people killed). 2, Three (3). 3, No. 4, Three (3). Nolle prosequi entered by Crown Law Department. 5, (a) Four open verdicts given. (b) None proceeded against for manslaughter. (c) Referred to Crown Law Department who advised no action. 6, Police have taken action in six cases and secured verdicts in two. In the other four cases proceedings have not been finalised. In one case where the accused was committed for trial, he was transferred to the Eastern States by the R.A.A.F.

NATIONAL SECURITY ACT.

As to Motor Lights.

Mr. SEWARD asked the Minister for Mines: In view of the fact that regulation 16 of the lighting of motor vehicles order stipulates that no person shall manufacture, or sell, or offer for sale, any mask or type of mask which purports to comply with the provisions of this order without the written consent of the approving authority—1, Is he aware that masks are being sold which cannot give the prescribed amount of light allowed by the regulations? 2, Have purchasers of such masks any redress? 3, What, if any, action is being taken to prevent the motor-owning public being exploited in this way? 4, Is it a fact that experiments are being made with the object of adopting a more suitable type of mask? 5, If so, will he issue instructions freeing motor owners from the obligations to purchase any type of mask until the Civil Defence Council finally makes up its mind as to a suitable type of mask? 6, If not, why not?

The MINISTER replied: 1, Yes, but the order only prescribes the maximum amount of light. 2, No. 3, There is no exploitation. The order only requires the amount of light

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 13th August, 1942.

	PAGE
Questions (4): Traffic accidents	187
National Security Act, as to motor lights	187
Metropolitan milk supply, price	188
Butter production	188
Leave of absence	188
Address-in-reply, sixth day	188

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

QUESTIONS (4).

TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS.

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister representing the Minister for Police: 1, What is the total number of traffic accidents with fatal consequences which have occurred in the metropolitan area from 1st January to 31st July, 1942? 2, Of this total, how many verdicts of committal for manslaughter were the outcome of the Coroner's inquiry? 3, Did the offender, in each case, stand his trial according to law and the Coroner's verdict? 4, If not, the number in this total that escaped the law, and the reason for