

principle or policy which now applies has not been so long in existence that it is impossible to root it out, and do what would be done if the public property concerned were the Minister's private property or my property. Members themselves would not be guilty of such shocking wastefulness. And so, as I have said, we must try to rise superior to the old red-tape barricade and do the job at lower cost. I could give details with regard to repairs of schools and the attendant cost of unnecessary inspection, but I do not know that there is any need for it and, in addition, I do not wish to say anything which might cast personal reflections on teachers at schools where a management policy as suggested by me would be helpful to all concerned.

The Minister for Mines: You would not suggest that many teachers were carpenters?

Mr. SAMPSON: No. I am afraid the Minister did not quite hear what I said. My statement was that the head teacher, or a representative of the local parents and citizens' association, might obtain prices from some local carpenter, a qualified tradesman, and have the work done. I take it the carpenter would report what the price would be, and he could then be instructed by the Education Department without the shocking waste of time and money and the shocking annoyance and trials generally which have to be put up with, all having the effect of involving months of time in carrying out little repairs that could well be effected at comparatively slight expense. If we can do something to eliminate the evils of circumlocution and red-tape so deeply rooted in this State, we shall have done something with which we may be justly pleased.

On motion by Mrs. Cardell-Oliver, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 4.21 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

*Tuesday, 18th August, 1942.*

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

### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, leave of absence for the remainder of the session granted to Hon. G. Fraser (West) on the ground of his enlistment in the R.A.A.F.

On motion by Hon. V. Hamersley, leave of absence for six consecutive sittings granted to Hon. C. F. Baxter (East) on the ground of ill-health.

### CHAIRMEN (TEMPORARY) OF COMMITTEES.

The PRESIDENT: I have to announce that in accordance with the Standing Orders I have appointed as temporary Chairmen of Committees for the current session the following members:—Hon. V. Hamersley, Hon. H. Seddon, and Hon. W. R. Hall.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Seventh Day.*

Debate resumed from the 13th August.

**HON. F. E. GIBSON** (Metropolitan-Suburban) [2.22]: Before addressing myself to the Speech delivered at the opening of Parliament by His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, I desire to express my thanks for the very cordial reception accorded to Mr. Cornish and myself on taking our seats in this House. For years it has been my privilege to enjoy the friendship of many members of this Chamber and I sincerely hope that I shall continue to merit that friendship. With the tributes paid by the Chief Secretary and others to the memory of the late Hon. James Macfarlane I should like to be associated. I was acquainted with him for many years and was aware of his worth to the State. I know the loss the community has suffered through his passing.

With the shadow of war hovering over us and the dire perils that confront us, it is difficult to contemplate any other matter than the war. I join heartily in the tribute paid by His Excellency and the Government to the courage and determination shown by the people of the Old Country in face of the blows that have been showered on them during the last three years. Our minds go back two years to the time when, after the fall of France, British troops were falling back on Dunkirk and we listened to news over the air and wondered what was going to happen to them. We can recall the feeling of relief we experienced when we knew that the greater proportion of those men had been successfully taken back to the Old Country. We remember the boasts made by Hitler and Goering at that time. We were told that the German troops would be marching down Whitehall about the 11th August. That was two years ago and they have not marched down Whitehall yet.

Following upon the evacuation at Dunkirk, Goering loosed his thousands of planes in an endeavour, by force of sheer numbers, to wipe out the R.A.F., and probably you, Mr. President, as I did, went to the radio almost every hour to ascertain how the Battle for Britain was progressing. Fear filled our hearts. The culminating point of the attack came about the middle of September, when our airmen shot 187 German planes out of the sky. Goering's forces did not go back, and we knew then that the Battle for Britain had been won. It was a few days later that the Prime Minister of England, Mr. Churchill, gave expression to words that have become historic when he said, "Never before in the history of the human race has so much been owed by so many to so few." We are some of the many, and I often wonder what we have done to repay our debt to the few. For some time, of course, we recognised our obligation; but memories are short, and I sometimes think we are apt to forget.

When Mr. Moore was speaking in moving the adoption of the Address-in-reply, it occurred to me that if the lads of the R.A.F. had been overwhelmed by Goering's hordes of war planes and if we had not won the Battle for Britain, our position in Australia would obviously be very different today. Another flag would be waving over Parliament House and our seats in this Chamber would possibly be occupied by a different

breed of men. I wonder if we are all doing what we should do to repay the debt created by the sacrifices of our Fighting Forces. Thus when I heard Mr. Moore's speech, and particularly when I noted his references to the movement in favour of creating a second front, I wondered what the people who are behind that movement are themselves prepared to do in furtherance of their objectives. Many of them have been heard over the air and from platforms, while others have gone round surreptitiously by night putting stickers on lamp posts and windows.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: A lot of them have not altered at all.

Hon. F. E. GIBSON: Quite so. Those people are not in uniform, nor will they ever be within thousands of miles of the second front, the inauguration of which they so strenuously advocate. Were they prepared during that difficult period when the absolute extinction of the British Empire was quite possible, to lift a little finger in support of the creation of a second front on behalf of Great Britain? I do not think they were. I find no fault with the proposal to furnish greater aid to Russia. Our duty is to do everything we possibly can to assist the Russians in their heroic struggle, but I object to the hypocrisy extant today which suggests that Great Britain is not doing everything possible to assist her Allies in the progress of the war. What disturbs me is to find that there are people in our own country who were prepared to cry out to Great Britain for further assistance. Do such people remember that that little island off the coast of Europe, following upon the fall of France, held the fort against the hordes of Mussolini and Hitler for two years without any outside aid at all? During that period she had to re-equip her Army and replace all that had been lost in France. She had to maintain her sway in the Mediterranean and keep the transport lines open. She had to fight in all parts of the world.

I wonder if we in Australia have done all we could have to assist the Mother Country. Our population is about 20 per cent. of that of Great Britain. Has our war effort represented 20 per cent. of what Great Britain has done? I do not think so. We should do all we possibly can to stimulate realisation on the part of Australians generally of what the Prime Minister, Mr. Curtin, has so often urged, that the war is one of total extinction

for us if we are not successful. I was pleased to see the reference made in the Speech to the aid furnished Australia by the United States of America. I must confess I felt much more secure and more confident of ultimate victory when I saw the Stars and Stripes flying in Fremantle harbour. I remember the words uttered by our Prime Minister when General Macarthur came to Australia after holding the Philippines for so long after such a wonderful struggle. General Macarthur came here to fill the position of Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Forces in this part of the world. When he arrived, the Prime Minister told him how grateful Australia was to the Americans for coming to our shores, and promised that we would go wherever he went, foot to foot, knee to knee, and shoulder to shoulder with him.

Curiously enough, some little time later a vote was taken in the Federal Parliament on the question of whether the Australian Military Forces should become part and parcel of the Australian Imperial Forces. To my horror, by a small majority, the decision was reached that the two forces should not be regarded as one. As a result of that decision, we have the spectacle of Americans after having travelled 12,000 miles for the purpose of helping to save Australia and having assisted in preventing the Japanese from invading our shores, being told by Australia, through its Federal Parliamentarians, "You helped us to save our country, but when it comes to pushing the Japs out of the Philippines, the A.I.F. and the Navy can go, but the A.M.F. will only be permitted to go as far as the three-mile limit!" When the time comes, I am convinced that the men of the A.M.F. will force our political leaders to allow them to go with their brothers of the A.I.F.

I have the utmost admiration for the Prime Minister, Mr. Curtin. I claim his personal friendship. I regard him as a great Australian, intensely loyal to that combination of democracies that we know as the Commonwealth of Nations. I am convinced that his Ministers are determined to do all they possibly can to win the war. Nevertheless, with some of their views and actions many of us do not altogether agree. I remember that in the early stages of the war, men occupying responsible positions in the political life of Aus-

tralia were definitely opposed to sending one Australian soldier or one Australian ship away from the country.

Hon. L. Craig: Including the Prime Minister.

Hon. C. B. Williams: And there appeared to be some logic in that, too.

Hon. F. E. GIBSON: Fortunately, other counsels prevailed and our men and ships went oversea. We will all agree that when the opportunity was given to them, the men of the Second A.I.F. worthily upheld the traditions created by their fathers and brothers who fought in the 1914-18 war. By their actions they fought as Australians always do. Of the Navy, it is unnecessary to speak. It did its job as it always does, and despite serious losses, is continuing to carry on as usual. It may interest members to know that from the very small naval depot at Fremantle, 1,250 men who were trained there are now at sea serving in His Majesty's ships. That is a wonderful record for a small centre like Fremantle.

Reference was also made in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech to the work done in a voluntary capacity by the A.R.P. personnel. As one of those associated with the movement from the inception, I know that the people owe a great debt of gratitude to the men, women and youths who have given so much of their time to equipping themselves with knowledge that will be helpful in times of emergency to those amongst whom they lived. For the last two years these people have attended courses of fairly solid lectures, in order to attain the standard required before they are attested and given the badge of warden. A period of intensive training is highly necessary before they can become cognisant of the work they are to be called upon to do. However, they have turned out in their thousands to learn that work so as to be qualified to make available their services for the benefit of the civil community.

Great trouble has been incurred recently as the result of the calling-up of many of our men for military service. The Deputy Director General of Manpower here has done everything possible to ease the situation, so that we may retain men in key positions. Unfortunately, many such men have been taken away and it has not been possible to fill their places. We have tried by all manner of means to induce others to come along; they have been pleaded with through picture slides and newspaper ad-

vertisements, but unfortunately we have not been able to attract the number of men required and available today, so that we might have sufficient manpower for the efficient carrying-out of this particular work. Here in the cities of Perth and Fremantle many of the wardens' posts are understaffed, and in many sectors there are no wardens at all. I tried to imagine just what would happen should trouble in the form of raids on Perth and Fremantle occur, especially in the residential areas. May I mention that one of the biggest undertakings in the State, and one which is absolutely vital to the maintenance of our business activities, is anti-air raid work, but no such authorised work is being done at all. The authorities have provided equipment, but equipment is not much use unless we have the persons to handle it. I hope that something may be done in the near future to remedy the present state of affairs.

I desire to express my sympathy with my goldfields friends on the conditions existing in the mining areas today. It is my privilege to have lived on the goldfields for many years, and I know very well what the gold industry has meant to the early development of Western Australia. I do hope it will not be long before some relief is given to the goldfields. I realise that the Commonwealth Government is prepared to help us in the development of some of our deposits, such as alunite, that are useful to the industrial life of the community; but this will not compensate to any great extent for the loss sustained by the goldfields through so many of their men being taken out of the industry. I sincerely hope that the effect of this depletion of manpower will not be so serious as the effect of the worst of the depression years; but it does not look as if there will be substantial relief until the war is won.

To the representatives of the primary producers also I would like to say how anxious I am to see that our rural industries are not hampered. It has been my privilege during the last eight or nine years to be associated with a small section of primary producers, namely, the men and women engaged in the whole-milk industry. I am most desirous to see improved substantially the conditions under which those people work. They have struggled very hard. The basic wage principle cannot apply to them. Not one person in the whole-milk industry is receiving the basic wage. I do not know

how that can be remedied. We have done our best to improve conditions, but the constitution of the Milk Board ties that body's hands in this respect. I see, however, that the Commonwealth Government has taken the matter up; and I hope for some relief. Another aspect is that owing to the calling-up for military purposes of so many men from primary industries, it is probable that many of them are not being used as effectively as they would be if they were still in their old jobs. There is much likelihood of a serious shortage in the milk supply to the metropolitan area next year. I trust something may be done to relieve the position. It is melancholy to reflect that a gallon of milk is now sold for less than the price of three pots of beer.

I have a comment to make regarding the establishment of the vice squad. I desire strongly to commend the action of the Minister for Police and all the officers associated with the staff. There has been much experience in the metropolitan area of the particular trouble, to cope with which the squad has been created. I hold, however, that the officers appointed to do that job are particularly suitable for it. They are carrying out a highly unpleasant job in as tactful a manner as one can expect. One aspect I would mention is that in no circumstances should the names of people picked up by the squad be disclosed. Further, I trust that it will be possible in the not distant future to arrange for better accommodation for the girls under consideration, where they can be treated, not only medically but also otherwise, to enable them to become rehabilitated and again take their place in normal life. Following my suggestion that the names of girls picked up by the vice squad should not be published, I point out that such publication would not help anyone at all. We can, however, imagine the shock it would give to the parents of a girl, who never anticipated anything of the sort. The disclosure would bring about in the home of the girl conditions that one would like to prevent.

At the request of the magistrate of the Children's Court I visited the Fremantle prison recently. A couple of lads were confined there who had remarkable records for their age of 17 years, but I was horrified to see that they were occupying accommodation in the same section as escapees from Barton's Mill who were certainly un-

desirable. Those lads had been sent there for punishment, no doubt, but also with the object of trying to prevent them from embarking upon a career of crime. I am wondering whether it is not possible to find some place where such youths could be properly looked after and given a chance to become decent citizens. I assure Dr. Hislop that anything I can do to bring about the conditions he has recommended will certainly be done.

As regards the drink trade I think the public has practically enforced reduction of hours. Until the closing hour was fixed at 6 o'clock it was unwise for any woman to walk along the streets of Fremantle between, say, 6 and 9 o'clock in the evening. In fact, the conditions resulting from lighting restrictions had made it dangerous—and I use the word advisedly—for women to be in the streets after dark. It was nothing to see soldiers staggering from hotels, all of them carrying bottles of beer, long after the establishments had been closed to the public. I do not altogether like the 6 o'clock closing. It seems rather inconsistent to permit a man to have a drink in his own home—as he should have—and yet prevent him from having a drink with his meal after 6 o'clock because he happens to live in a hotel. The hours should be staggered. The hotels should open from 10 o'clock till 2 o'clock and from 4 o'clock till 8 o'clock. Those times would be preferable to the hours now adopted. They would certainly cause a break in excessive drinking.

The hotel-keepers in Fremantle would welcome the 6 o'clock closing. They have been very concerned about the excesses that have been so noticeable. The vast majority of licensed victuallers want to carry on their business under decent conditions and to comply with the law as closely as they can. I should like to see the closing hours of hotels altered. I do not suggest an extension of the hours, but I do think that the staggering of hours would meet the convenience of a great many people. The instructions issued by the military authorities have prevented the sale of bottled beer to Australian soldiers. If it is wrong to sell bottled beer to Australian soldiers it is equally wrong to sell it to Australian sailors. And if it is wrong to sell it to them it is equally wrong to sell it to the American soldier or sailor. If there are

to be restrictions of this nature they should apply all round without any discrimination.

Hon. J. Cornell: That is an Army rule.

Hon. F. E. GIBSON: Yes, but if it is good for the Army it is good for all; otherwise the whole business is brought into ridicule. There is nothing to prevent the friend of a soldier from buying a bottle of beer and bringing it out to the man in uniform. If it is advisable to cut down the sale of bottled beer, it should be cut down for all consumers. I daresay the Chief Secretary knows that a good deal of wine is being sold to soldiers. In my province certain foreigners are growing grapes in localities in which a number of soldiers are camped. A vast quantity of wine is being sold to the Forces. I know the men are getting the wine, which is produced by foreigners, but I do not know whether the transactions are legal. The position is not satisfactory. A good deal has been said about starting-price betting shops. We have also heard a great deal about that as regards Fremantle, and some members of this Chamber have criticised what has been done there. Some action should be taken in connection with the matter, because it is interfering with the morale of the people and the morals of the police. One cannot make people virtuous by legislation, but I do think that evils may be minimised as a result of legislation. I suggest that in any given local authority's area a vote should be taken amongst the ratepayers to determine their wishes with regard to S.P. shops. If it was desired that S.P. shops should be carried on in their district they should be allowed under the supervision of the local authority, and any profits that accrued should be devoted to local improvements for the good of the ratepayers.

Hon. A. Thomson: You would not get much out of Fremantle compared with what is obtained in Perth.

Hon. F. E. GIBSON: No doubt the hon. member is referring to the fines imposed in Fremantle compared with those inflicted in Perth. I do not think the magistrates here are doing any better than are the Fremantle magistrates, because certainly there is no decrease in S.P. betting in Perth.

Hon. J. Cornell: The magistrates are not imposing the fines.

Hon. F. E. GIBSON: The magistrates referred to by Mr. Cornell are personal friends of mine. I have no doubt about their

honesty of purpose in the fines they have inflicted. If Mr. Cornell knew as much about the matter as I do, he would probably, if placed on the Bench, not inflict a fine at all in a number of instances, because he would know that the persons concerned were not getting any profit out of the business.

Hon. A. Thomson: Those men do not pay the fines.

Hon. F. E. GIBSON: Neither do the Justices of the Peace who are on the Bench. If a tote could be run in a district under efficient control by the local authority, people who wished to make their bets could do so under favourable conditions, and the profits could be used to provide amenities for the residents of the district. I strongly object to private individuals being allowed to make profits out of those who think they can get rich quickly by that means.

Hon. T. Moore: Your idea should be given a trial.

Hon. F. E. GIBSON: The firewood problem is acute, and the conditions in the metropolitan area have demonstrated that fact. Thanks to the assistance given by the Government the situation has lately been relieved and in my district steps have been taken to improve the position. We hope that the plans we have before us now will very largely remove the difficulties for next winter. I thank the chairman of the Liquid Fuel Control Board (Mr. Millen) for the assistance he has rendered in making available supplies of petrol for the transport of firewood.

Reference has been made to the new order. At a reception given to the present Prime Minister at Fremantle, shortly after his being appointed to that position, I heard him discuss that very question. He said he had no blue prints or specifications for anything that might happen after the war, and that his particular job was the winning of the war. When we win the war is the time to discuss the new order. I believe that all the foundations of such a new order are embodied in the Atlantic Charter and the Lease-Lend legislation. So far as Australia itself is concerned, there will be countless numbers of people in the Northern Hemisphere who have been brought intimately into touch with the conflict. I hope that our doors will be opened as widely as possible so that those people may be allowed to enter. No country in the world will, in my view, repay people for any

effort they may make for its development more than will Australia. I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

**HON. J. A. DIMMITT** (Metropolitan-Suburban): I add my congratulations to those that have been extended to the new members of this House. I am pleased to see Mr. Gibson in our midst. He is a colleague of mine and a fellow representative of the Metropolitan-Suburban Province. His speech this afternoon shows how well informed he is, and his long service in an honorary capacity in local government circles will surely give him a background of experience that must prove useful in our debates. I am also glad to see Mr. Cornish amongst us. He also has had a wide and long experience of local government, and his opening speech was an indication that his contributions to the debates will be valuable. The Speech proved to be the usual uninformative document, and failed to disclose the legislative programme of the Government for the current session. I have commented in the House upon that phase on previous occasions. It is a great pity the Government does not, through the Speech, give some indication to members of Parliament as to its proposed legislative programme.

The Speech contains one or two items that are worthy of comment. Particularly do I refer to the surplus, and I congratulate the Government on being successful in meeting its expenditure and having a little to spare for the second successive year. The reduction of the public debt is also something to be proud of, and in this direction, too, the Government is deserving of commendation. Further on in the Speech reference is made to secondary industries. It says, "The production of munitions continues to expand." That statement is perfectly true, but the rate of expansion is what worries me. A few weeks ago I inspected the munitions plant at Welshpool. The set-up is excellent. There is a wonderful group of buildings, all sorts of amenities for the work people engaged there—to which they are fully entitled—fine workshops and beautiful machinery, but practically the whole of the machinery is idle. It is inoperative because some of the important items that are required for production have not yet arrived. I found a mere handful of people turning out a capful of material which was relatively unimportant. Although the works

were supposed to be put in operation in February, we discovered in July that practically nothing had been done there.

Then we have the experience of Mr. Bolton's firm. In January, 1941, that hon. member invited me to see his annexe, which he had prepared to the specifications laid down by a certain Commonwealth department in anticipation of commencing the manufacture of munitions in March. His instructions were to have the annexe built by the end of January. He kept his part of the contract. The machinery was supposed to be installed in February, and work commenced in March. Early in July last I saw the commencement of operations at Mr. Bolton's factory. From March, 1941, to July, 1942, not one wheel had been turned and not one article had been manufactured in the annexe. A few weeks ago small engineering shops in the metropolitan area were, if not idle, at least not working to anything like their full capacity, due to the shortage of material in most cases, and the absence of contracts in others. The position has lately improved, but what distresses me is that whilst the production of munitions is stated in the Speech to be expanding, it is expanding at such a slow pace that if the safety of Australia were dependent upon secondary industries in Western Australia, this country would be lost.

Many references have been made to the vice squad. I think it is doing a great deal of good. I cannot help referring to the recent meeting of Premiers in eastern Australia. The Commonwealth Government suggested the closing of hotels for two hours in the afternoon. Within a few hours of that decision being made, a meeting of State Premiers seemed to indicate that the very effective method of the Commonwealth would not be implemented when the heads of the Governments returned to their respective States. The closing for two hours would guard against the steady drinking in hotel lounges and would have the effect of protecting the inebriate against himself. There has been evidence of young girls drinking steadily in hotel lounges and thus weakening their moral fibre. As the result of an afternoon's drinking they lose their sense of responsibility and, I am afraid, give alcoholic acquiescence to the advances made by their gentlemen friends who frequent the lounges with them. I hope that this Government will

take a serious view of the hours of liquor trading and make some rational alteration.

Attention was drawn by Mr. E. H. H. Hall to an article in "The West Australian" which stated that there was no evidence, outside of Parliament, of any pronounced feeling against unified taxation. That statement may, or may not, be true but I suggest that there will be a very pronounced feeling against unified taxation when the taxpayer finds that a number of the allowable deductions which he previously enjoyed are no longer available. The taxpayer, although in receipt of the same income or salary as he enjoyed in the previous taxing year, will find himself with a much higher assessable income. Deductions such as medical expenses, travelling allowances, and other deductions previously enjoyed on the amount paid as State taxation have disappeared in connection with Federal assessments. In future tax will have to be paid on income tax already paid. That is, people will have to pay tax on income which they have not seen and which they have not had the opportunity to use because it has been deducted at the source week by week or month by month. This Parliament was right in contesting the measures which the Commonwealth Government has imposed in regard to the unified tax, and I say again that if public opinion was not against uniform taxation when it was being discussed in this House, the time is not far distant when it will be, because the taxpayer will come to a full realisation of the implications of unified taxation.

The necessity for altering the railway gauge between Kalgoorlie and Fremantle from 3ft. 6in. to 4ft. 8½in. was referred to by, I think, Mr. Wood. Later Mr. Thomson asked the Chief Secretary a question in regard to the cost of such a conversion. Every effort should be made to bring about the standardisation of the gauge of the railways of Australia. I do not depreciate in any way the value to Western Australia of the alteration of gauge between Kalgoorlie and Fremantle. But a more important and imperative alteration in gauge is that of the railway line between Port Pirie in South Australia and Broken Hill in New South Wales. The task of standardising all the railway gauges in Australia would probably not be faced today owing to the shortage of materials and manpower. An alteration of the gauge of the line between Port

Pirie and Broken Hill from 3ft. 6in. to 4ft. 8½in. would remove some of the difficulties under which Western Australia labours today, arising from the lack of rolling stock on the trans-Australian railway. Great inconvenience has already been experienced, and delays in the transport of troops have occurred. I consider we would be right in assuming that Western Australia was nearly abandoned to its fate in the case of invasion largely due to the difficulties of transportation both of men and materials from eastern Australia. The opinion of high military authorities has, for a number of years, been expressed in favour of standardising railway gauges in Australia. As far back as 1921—

Hon. G. W. Miles: In 1910 Lord Kitchener advised us on the matter.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: That is further back still. In 1921 the Inspector General of the Military Forces said—

The link up of our capital cities by railways beyond striking distance from the coast, and the establishment of a uniform gauge throughout the Commonwealth, are matters of paramount importance.

They were matters of paramount importance in 1921, and they would be a great deal more necessary today. Later in 1923 the same high ranking authority said—

It is beyond question that a uniform gauge would avoid many of the disadvantages of possible troop movements caused by the break of gauge with the necessary transfer from one system to another. Apart from the delay, inconvenience and wastage of manpower at transfer stations, the disorganisation of units due to the varying capacity of trains of different gauges is serious and may mean considerable delay at a critical time.

The need for standardisation of railway gauges was apparent 20 years ago, and it has been constantly advocated by military authorities during the years of peace. Although the present war has been in progress for three years we have done little else than talk about this project. Nothing practical has been done. If an alteration of gauge were made on the section between Port Pirie and Broken Hill the New South Wales rolling stock could be made available as a pool for the trans-Australian railway.

When reading the report of the Commonwealth Railway Commissioner, dated the 30th June of this year, I noted that the Commonwealth line—that is the trans-Australian line between Port Pirie and Kalgoorlie—had 76

locomotives with an appropriate number of trucks and passenger coaches, whilst in New South Wales there are 1,224 locomotives and a corresponding number of other forms of rolling stock. If that comparatively short link between Port Pirie and Broken Hill were dealt with as I suggest the rolling stock to meet the exigencies of troop movements across Australia could be greatly augmented; and we all realise that at any moment land and air transport may be the only means of communication between the Eastern States and Western Australia. A fortnight ago the Press reported the presence of a submarine to the south of Australia. It only needs an attack by submarines or the presence of an enemy raider off the southern coast to immobilise completely our shipping between east and west. Estimates have from time to time been prepared. Plans are actually in existence for the alteration to the section of line between Port Pirie and Broken Hill. Finance has always been the stumbling block. Today we can not consider finance as an important factor in the scheme of things. The safety of Australia regardless of cost is the only factor that can be taken into consideration. The building of this section of railway was considered a sound peace-time project, so it is surely a matter of the utmost importance and urgency in this third year of war.

Hon. H. V. Piessé: What is the distance

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: Approximately 300 miles. If this important section of railway line were reconstructed troops could be moved in sufficient time to save Western Australia from becoming an enemy base from which the rest of Australia could be attacked. This Parliament and the State Government should endeavour to focus public opinion on this subject, and influence Federal policy in the direction of immediately putting this project into effect. It is necessary to influence Adelaide and Melbourne. The Victorian Legislature has opposed the scheme, but we have the support of New South Wales and South Australia.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Not South Australia.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: This Parliament has a task in front of it to influence Federal policy and public opinion so as to achieve this necessary and urgent matter. The Lieut.-Governor's Speech contains little else that calls for comment.

On motion by Hon. A. Thomson, debate adjourned.



**ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.**

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** [3.13]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, the 25th August, 1942.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 3.14 p.m.*

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## Legislative Assembly.

*Tuesday, 18th August, 1942.*

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

### QUESTIONS (2).

#### RUBBER SHORTAGE, SUBSTITUTE TYRES.

Mr. **SAMPSON** asked the Minister for Industrial Development: 1, Is he aware that, due to the rubber shortage, U.S.A. army tanks and other military vehicles are being equipped with steel treads instead of rubber, and that "tiptoe wheels" for use on farm tractors, instead of rubber-tyred wheels, are becoming widely popular? 2, That the cost of the iron-shod wheels is less than half the cost of rubber-tyred wheels? 3, As all available rubber is urgently required for other purposes, will he give consideration to the encouragement of local manufacture of "tiptoe" type of wheel as a substitute for rubber-tyred wheels, now commonly used on farm tractors?

The **MINISTER** replied: 1, and 2, No. 3, Yes.

#### CHARCOAL AND IRON SMELTING.

Mr. **KELLY** asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Is an experimental blast furnace to produce charcoal pig-iron being established in Western Australia? 2, Is it the Government's intention thoroughly to test the possibility of Koolanobbin iron deposits? 3, Is it also intended to test the timber adjacent to Koolanobbin for its hard charcoal content and chemical purity?

The **MINISTER** replied: 1, No. A project to establish a commercial charcoal iron blast furnace is receiving attention. 2, The possibility of using the Koolanobbin iron deposits has received consideration. 3, Information covering these timbers is already available.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Seventh Day.*

Debate resumed from the 13th August.

**MRS. CARDELL-OLIVER** (Subiaco) [2.20]: When I entered the House, about seven years ago, I thought in my innocence that we framed Bills to be passed by a majority; that they were then sent on to another place which was considered a House of review, and when reviewed in that House, if passed by a majority, the Bill after certain formalities had been complied with, became law. I am sadly disillusioned! I found that the House of review was not necessarily a House of review and that it was able to throw out a Bill without even knowing what was in it. I further found that it was able to initiate legislation, and practically duplicate the legislation commenced in this House, and that very similar Bills might be discussed in both places which would be a great waste of time. I began to wonder what was the use of the other place. I then found that it had a great use as a bulwark for the Government of the day. It was not a stronghold in the interests of the St. George's-terrace financier or the middle-class person or the rentier, but it was a bulwark for any irresponsible legislation. The Government, or a member—I am not simply speaking of the Government—may bring down any extraordinary and extravagant type of Bill, promising everything for nothing and wasting time in debate, knowing full well that when the Bill reaches another place, that aristocratic stalwart of democracy will throw it out.

This enables the Government, or the members of the House, to go to the people at election time and say, "I told you so. I would give you Utopia, but these people in this particular place—a place which by the by we would abolish, although we fight like Kilkenny cats to get a seat there—have thrown out our Bill." The voters say, "Miserable sinners! Do not worry. We will send you back and you can abolish that place." So one party at least has the abolition of