

joying herself at a dance. It is quite a common practice in Western Australia, as most members must be aware, for mothers to take their small children to dances. At one time I lived in a goldfields locality where all the married people went to dances at night, and the mothers brought their children to the dance-hall and put them to sleep in an adjoining room. However, it is getting pretty late and I did not intend to speak so long. I hope I have not wearied the House.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Go on!

Mr. FOX: I reserve any further comments I have for a future occasion.

On motion by Mr. McLarty, debate adjourned

House adjourned at 5.7 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 20th August, 1942.

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

QUESTIONS (5).

FISHERIES, SWAN RIVER.

Mr. NORTH asked the Minister for the North-West: 1, Has any action been taken by the Fisheries Department as a result of Mr. Vivian Keane's representations respecting small-mesh nets? 2, Have the local authorities which moved in the direction of having various portions of the Swan River closed to fishing achieved any success as yet? 3, Is the shooting-up of shags favoured by the department as a means of increasing supplies of fish?

The MINISTER replied: 1, The Department at all times considers the need for variation of mesh according to locality, type of fish available, reproduction of species, consumption requirements and the industry as a whole. Due regard is given

to all these factors when size of permissible mesh is being decided for any area as it does to the Swan River, in which Mr. Keane is interested. 2, Closing of any waters to net fishing is considered along with the requirements mentioned in the answer to No. 1. 3, No.

CIVIL DEFENCE.

Precautions at Schools.

Mr. NORTH asked the Minister for Mines: Is money available to the Civil Defence Department for the purpose of—1, Reinforcing and roofing school slit trenches? 2, Providing anti-shatter for school windows?

The MINISTER replied: 1 and 2, Mr. Telfer, Under Secretary for Mines and Civil Defence, returned today from an all-Australia Conference. On receipt of his report, all matters affecting policy and expenditure will be further reviewed and determined.

AGRICULTURE.

Abandoned Farms, Denmark.

Mr. DONEY asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, The number of abandoned farms in what is known as the Denmark district? 2, The most frequent causes of abandonment? 3, How many of these abandoned farms are of a quality that warrants re-selection? 4, Are any applications or inquiries being received for these farms and are sales resulting; if so, the number of re-selections—if any—per year for the last five years? 5, Having regard to the urgent national need for an increased butter and bacon output, are any attempts being made to render these abandoned holdings especially attractive—financially—to inquirers?

The MINISTER replied: 1, One hundred and twenty-five in the Denmark Agricultural Bank District at the 31st July, 1942. 2, Main causes of recent abandonments are enlistments in the Military Services and general war work. 3, All of the properties. 4, Normal number of inquiries were received and sales effected until early in the present year. Sales: 1937-38, 19; 1938-39, 45; 1939-40, 12; 1940-41, 15; 1941-42, 5. 5, Properties have been written down to an attractive figure and sale terms are liberal. Money has been spent in maintaining these properties and efforts are being made to keep them in production by leasing.

RABBIT SKINS, EXCISE DUTY.

Mr. DONEY asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Does the Government share the view of farmers of this State that the imposition of an excise duty of 1s. 6d. per lb. on rabbit skins is (by assisting in depressing the Western Australian price from about 84s. to the present low level and by rendering trapping generally unremunerative) largely responsible for the rapid regrowth of the rabbit menace, the effect of which upon production is likely to cause losses far outweighing excise collections? 2, Has the Government made any representations to the Minister for Customs seeking the abolition of the duty, especially since the decline of export has assured the hat trade of its necessary supplies? 3, If abolition has not been sought, has any other action been taken to make trapping more attractive, or have other means been adopted to protect the State's crops, pastures, etc.?

The MINISTER replied: 1, 2 and 3, As has been previously expressed, there are many other factors besides the excise duty responsible for the regrowth of the rabbit menace. Representations have been made to the Federal authorities for a clear expression of the reasons and the need for this excise. To give the fullest particulars possible to amplify the position, I am furnishing the hon. member direct with complete details, which also will be published.

SHORTAGE OF SHEARERS.

Mr. MARSHALL (without notice) asked the Minister for Agriculture: In view of the extreme shortage of shearers available to shear this year's wool clip, will he state whether successful overtures have been made to the Military authorities with a view to releasing practical and experienced men to make up the shortage?

The MINISTER replied: During the last two days representations have been made to the Military authorities for the release of farmers and shearers; 25 farmers have been released and arrangements have been made for the release of 17 shearers. On application, it was found that many shearers, vouched for by contractors, refused to be released, but representations are still being made and it is expected that many more men will become available.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Wilson, leave of absence for two weeks granted to Hon. P. Collier (Boulder) on the ground of ill-health.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Ninth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. McLARTY (Murray-Wellington) [2.20]: I join with other speakers in expressing regret at the absence of the Premier through ill-health. I hope he will soon be fit and well, and able to resume his seat in this Chamber. I also take the opportunity to express my deep sympathy with a number of my electors who, during the past few days, have received cables informing them that their sons are missing as a result of the battle of Ruin Ridge. Unquestionably, the Western Australian battalion which took part in that battle fought magnificently, but it was overwhelmed by superior forces. When the history of this conflict is written, I am confident that the deeds of our men at Ruin Ridge will rank high among the heroic actions of the war. I hope those of my electors who have received such cables will, at the worst, learn that their missing sons are prisoners of war, although we cannot hope that all of them will return.

Since we met yesterday, we have had bad news. One of our warships, the "Canberra," has gone down. We all know the part played by the "Canberra" and her crew in this war; they acted up to the highest traditions of the British and Australian navies.

I agree with those who have stated that there is nothing in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech to indicate what legislation will be introduced this session. The Speech is merely a recital of past happenings and, during the last few years, that has come to be the practice. I read through some of our early "Hansards," and found that it used to be the custom to give a full account of proposed legislation. I hope that procedure will be adopted in future Speeches. I know the State Government is facing difficult times and that it is hard to plan ahead. Our future depends upon victory and all our efforts should be directed to that end. There has been some constructive criticism in this House concerning our war effort, and such criticism should be encouraged.

It is unlikely that a struggle such as that in which we are engaged can be waged without mistakes being made but, with the member for South Fremantle, I hope that the criticism offered here will reach the proper quarters and will receive attention. I consider that if it is forwarded to the authorities, the war effort will thereby be assisted.

We know that a compromise peace would be of no use to us, and would certainly not allow us to carry out the policy we envisage for the future of this country. Feeling that greater efforts could be made towards securing victory, I make a suggestion that has been submitted many times previously, namely, that there should be closer co-operation between all political parties. The State Government has had an extension of life. In the House we are equally divided. The Government has a majority of one only, and that being so it is reasonable to ask and expect that there should be closer co-operation between it and the Opposition. Some time ago a consultative council was formed, but I have not heard much of its activities of late. It is only fair that the two Opposition parties should be consulted about measures the Government intends introducing, and we should as far as possible get away from contentious legislation and party politics. Even the National Parliament is not free from the influence of party politics, which appear to be just as rife in the Federal sphere as they ever were. Unfortunately, some Ministers cannot get away from the political atmosphere and seem as deeply steeped in party politics as at any previous period.

We have been told that our income is pegged and that we have to live within it. Economy in administration is very necessary. I hope the Government will be able to live within its income and that costs to the general public, and particularly to the farmers, will not be increased. Farmers' costs appear to be rising daily. When speaking yesterday the member for Avon gave us an indication of directions in which there have been increased costs. He mentioned superphosphate, an essential commodity, and told us of the very steep rise in the price of that product. He also mentioned transport and several other important items. There is the labour problem. It is not possible to secure the efficient labour that was

formerly available. Then again there is a general shortage of requirements.

An hon. member speaking in another place asked for greater co-operation between the Military authorities and the farmers, and I support that plea. I know it is necessary for our Forces to carry out their exercises in country areas, and that they should be allowed to go there whenever they think fit. They should also have every facility for proper training. There is no doubt they are doing a considerable amount of damage in country districts. Fences are being smashed, gate-posts knocked down, and trenches dug on properties and not filled in. There is no need for that. They have sufficient time and men to rectify any damage, and should remember that the farmer is now short-handed and that country districts are depleted of men. They should assist the farmer to overcome his difficulties and not make extra work for him. The Minister for Agriculture answered a question today concerning the increase in the number of rabbits. The question is becoming a serious one.

Mr. J. H. Smith: It has become!

Mr. McLARTY: Yes. The rabbits are increasing. I cannot see why there should be an export duty on rabbit skins. It is hard to get trappers to work as it is. Small boys, school boys, are now trapping rabbits, and should be encouraged. It would help the national effort more if they were subsidised instead of an export duty being placed on rabbit skins. I again appeal to the Minister for Agriculture to do all he possibly can to have this export duty rescinded, and to encourage the trapping of rabbits. I know we have his sympathy.

During the last few sessions I have had something to say about fires caused by locomotives. I take the opportunity to say something further and to deal with the fire position generally. The danger from fire will, this coming summer, be greater than we have ever experienced. That may sound pessimistic, but, nevertheless, it is true. The danger during the coming summer may be regarded as one of the enemies within. We know that owing to the acute shipping shortage it is exceedingly difficult to get Newcastle coal, and I understand that most of our engines will, this year, burn Collie coal. Members who represent country areas should be very concerned about that. I am not one to traduce a local article. Wherever possible we should use it. I have nothing

to say against Collie coal. It is good coal, but the experts have not been able to prevent it from sparking, and the danger of fires from railway engines this year will be greater than in the past.

Again, the large number of gas-producers now on the roads will provide an even greater source of danger from fires. Then there is the loss of manpower. We should make efforts now to prepare against this menace. Should a fire break out where troops are quartered they will lend a hand to fight it. Local authorities should, where possible, burn the grass along the main roads. The Commissioner of Railways will burn off on the railway reserves. Farmers adjacent to main roads and railways should take every possible precaution.

Mr. Patrick: There should be plenty of fire breaks this year.

Mr. McLARTY: Yes. A proposal has been put forward by the Commissioner of Railways to establish an insurance scheme against fires from locomotives. He suggests that those farmers in dangerous proximity to railways should contribute towards an insurance fund and says that he will also contribute. I do not know what land he regards as being in dangerous proximity to the railways, but this appears to me to be another tax on the farmer, for which I see no justification.

Mr. Warner: Why does not the Commissioner himself take out the insurance?

Mr. McLARTY: If a farmer is burnt out or damaged by a public utility the public—that is the Government—should compensate him for the damage. Last summer, and also in previous summers, we suffered serious losses in the South-West from fires. I issue this warning. I hope every precaution will be taken. We should, this summer, be prepared to combat the fire menace in every possible way. In dealing with the difficulties of the man on the land, I heard the Minister for Lands when replying to a deputation the other day express sympathy with what he termed, "the pioneer land settlers."

Mr. J. H. Smith: You can get plenty of sympathy, but not much else!

Mr. McLARTY: Yes. There is no doubt that they are deserving of sympathy. We should not only apply that sympathy to settlers who will be going on the land in the future, but also to those at present on the land. Many of them will need some

practical sympathy if they are to remain. When all is said and done, any man who goes on the land and turns the virgin bush into something productive is rendering to the nation a service for all time. Because it is for all time special consideration should be given to him and he should not be unduly penalised during his working years on the land.

I wish to say something about the much debated question of the vice squad. I agree with some members who have already spoken, that the position has been exaggerated. I have visited many of the large cities of Europe, and all in Australia. I would never have said that Perth was an immoral city; in fact, from the experience of my travels, I would say it is one of the most moral cities I have been in. But this advertisement and this talk about the immorality of Perth do us no good. Perth is certainly no worse than are other Australian cities, and it is better than most. I do agree, however, that there is work for the vice squad. Certain of these girls should be kept off the streets. But it is wrong that they should be taken to gaol and their names published to the world. They have not committed a crime in the ordinary sense of the word. They are entitled to sympathy rather than to harshness. I would like to see established a home where they could be well mothered and looked after, and taught to regain their self-respect. I believe that could be brought about.

Mr. Marshall: They are stigmatised as gaoled-birds.

Mr. McLARTY: Many references have been made to the control of the liquor trade. In "The West Australian" this morning there appeared a statement by the Commonwealth Minister for Labour (Mr. Ward) who said there was one way only of effectively dealing with the liquor trade and eliminating the evils associated with it, and that was by nationalising the industry. According to Mr. Ward the cure for all ills is socialisation.

Mr. Fox: And he is not far out in his estimate.

Mr. McLARTY: If there were to be socialisation of the trade, I think it would make a devil of a mess of the position.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McLARTY: We are all aware that Mr. Ward looks at matters from his own

particular political point of view, whether in war-time or in peace-time.

Mr. McDonald: Mr. Ward does not know much about the subject because he does not drink.

Mr. McLARTY: I do not know whether he does, but I know the hon. member is out of order when he interjects from other than his seat on the floor of the House! Licensees have been adversely criticised with reference to girls drinking in hotel lounges.

Mr. J. Hegney: Have you been to the lounges to see for yourself?

Mr. McLARTY: No.

Mr. Fox: I will have to take the hon. member there one of these days.

Mr. McLARTY: I do not think the licensees have been fairly treated with regard to this matter. If they or their employees serve a young girl who is under 21 years of age they can be fined £20, whereas young girls associated with the offence can be fined only £5. I think the incidence of the penalty should be reversed. It is exceedingly difficult for a publican or his employee to know whether a girl is 18 or 21 years of age.

Mr. Warner: Some find it difficult to distinguish between those of 18 and 80 years of age!

Mr. McLARTY: A hotelkeeper told me the other day that the police had visited his premises and pointed out a girl they considered was under 21 years of age. The licensee asked the girl to produce her identity card, from which he ascertained that she was 26 years of age. The penalties imposed on young people who visit a hotel lounge to secure drink should be increased, and the major blame for such offences should not be thrust upon the publican. I fully appreciate that the liquor traffic should be controlled.

Mr. J. Hegney: It is controlled.

Mr. McLARTY: I agree, but I do not want the Government to give way to the importunities of what I might term the extreme element in the community—the prohibitionists. If a State-wide vote were taken on the question whether prohibition or temperance should prevail, I am convinced that in favour of temperance there would be an overwhelming majority. I believe we should give effect to the wishes of those who hold that view.

The Minister for Mines: The question would arise as to what was temperance.

Mr. McLARTY: I should describe the Minister himself as a temperate man.

The Minister for Mines: Not a prohibitionist?

Mr. McLARTY: No. The man who believes in temperance cannot believe in prohibition. In a recent issue of the Sydney "Morning Herald" a leading article appeared on the drink traffic. Among other suggestions advanced was one that coupons should be issued.

The Minister for Mines: A good idea!

Mr. Thorn: A rotten idea!

Mr. McLARTY: Another suggestion was that an anti-shouting law should be passed. If coupons were issued, those who did not drink would hand on their coupons to those who did, and I am afraid that proposal would not achieve satisfactory results. Anti-shouting was instituted during the 1914-18 war. I was in London at the time, and I know that the anti-shouting movement was a failure there.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Anti-shouting laws were never put into force here.

Mr. McLARTY: I know the movement was discussed. We should do all that is possible to encourage temperance in the community, and I would favour legislation with that end in view.

Mr. J. Hegney: Do you think we can legislate to make the people temperate?

Mr. McLARTY: We can make the effort.

Mr. J. H. Smith: The hon. member suggests we should amend the Licensing Act.

Mr. McLARTY: I think there is that need.

Mr. J. H. Smith: In what direction?

Mr. McLARTY: We can take that hurdle when we come to it. The Government has to administer the liquor laws as they stand and we will perhaps have an opportunity to discuss necessary amendments later on. I am sorry the Minister for Railways is not present this afternoon, but the matter I wish to mention concerns also the Minister for Health.

A regulation has been issued prescribing that people travelling by rail must put up the shutters in their compartments when within a certain distance of the city. The result is certainly detrimental to health. Trains are crowded, and under such conditions it is decidedly unhealthy to travel in a railway compartment with the shutters up. The other night I boarded a train and entered a compartment in which there were seven adults and three children. Some were soldiers going on leave and the compartment

generally was packed to its utmost capacity with people and luggage. We had to travel with the shutters up. Members can appreciate what an effect such a practice is likely to have on the health of the travelling public. The Minister for Health should certainly look into this matter, for I regard the move as entirely unnecessary. Even under such unhealthy conditions, some men seem to consider that they must smoke. I was told of an instance of a man lighting an evil-smelling cigar in a crowded compartment. Surely that is not right.

Mr. J. Hegney: As a non-smoker I find that women are as bad as men in that regard.

Mr. McLARTY: That may be so, but I do not think women smoke cigars. Another point relative to railway travelling is that a person is able to ask for a first-class or a second-class ticket and his requirements are met, but the desired accommodation is not provided. To that extent an injustice is being done to many people. I suggest that within the metropolitan area, for the duration of the war at least, the class distinction in regard to railway travelling should be abolished and there should be one class only just as we have it on our trams.

Mr. J. Hegney: The hon. member is becoming a socialist!

Mr. McLARTY: It is not a matter of socialisation, but of expediency. The Railway Department cannot cope with the traffic available at present and, irrespective of whether a passenger buys a first-class or second-class ticket, he travels where he likes on trains traversing the metropolitan area. It would be in the best interests of all if the one-class system were instituted throughout the metropolitan area.

I wish to refer to a question that is causing considerable concern, and I am glad the Minister for Agriculture is in his seat to hear what I have to say. It relates to the milk supply of the city. Some time ago the producers of whole-milk asked for an increase in the price. No decision has been arrived at. The other day I asked a question on the subject, and the Minister for the North-West, replying for the Minister for Agriculture, said it was under consideration. It has been under consideration for weeks and months, and no decision has been reached. We know that milk is urgently needed today. It must be admitted that costs to the whole-milk producer have risen greatly. Consider what has happened since he re-

ceived an increase in price! The basic wage has risen by 4s. 6d. a week; child endowment has been introduced; additional pay has been granted to soldiers, and rightly so; the price of superphosphate has gone up; petrol is dearer; fuel for milking-plants costs more; transport charges are heavier and, in fact, there has been an all-round increase.

Why, therefore, has not the producer of whole-milk been given consideration? Surely it cannot be denied that he is entitled to receive some increase! I am surprised that the Milk Board has been so long in making up its mind. Speaking in another place, Hon. F. E. Gibson, referred to his having been a member of the Metropolitan Milk Board, and said that the producers in the metropolitan area were not even getting the equivalent of the basic wage. Why did not he do something about it when he had the opportunity? The position of the whole-milk producer becomes more difficult each day. Not only does he work seven days a week, but in many instances his wife also works seven days a week. Who would like to be out at 4.30 or 5 a.m. these cold mornings milking cows in order to get the milk to the metropolitan area?

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: What about the retailer?

Mr. McLARTY: I will leave the hon. member to speak for him; I am putting up a case on behalf of the producer.

Mr. Doney: The retailer does not have to get up until the milk arrives.

Mr. McLARTY: The Milk Board has too long delayed giving its decision. It should give a decision one way or the other and, if justice is done, the producers of whole-milk will receive a justly deserved increase.

There are a few other matters affecting the country districts to which I should like to make reference. A regulation has been promulgated prohibiting butchers in country districts from delivering meat. Who was responsible for the regulation, I do not know, and I cannot see how such a regulation is helping the war effort. Is it leading to a saving of manpower? I do not think it is. Further consideration should be given to this matter. The businesses of various butchers have been very seriously affected as a result of the regulation.

Here is another injustice to the men in the country. If they motor to Perth their names

are taken, and they are asked to state their reason for coming to the city. If they are granted a petrol allowance, why should it matter if they come to Perth or stay in their own towns? A motorist in the city does not have his name taken if he goes to the country, and he is allowed to motor about Perth as much as he likes. When a man in the country saves his petrol in order to motor to Perth, it is very rough on him to have his name taken. He is allowed to obtain a certain quantity of petrol; so why not permit him to use it as he desires, provided he does not ask for an additional supply in order to come to Perth?

I appreciate the work being done by the Manpower Office. I have often had occasion to see Mr. Stitfold and officers of the department during the last week or two. I have not succeeded in securing their agreement to my suggestions in all the cases I have brought under notice, but they certainly have been helpful. Manpower is affecting womanpower also. Our country districts are being combed by recruiting committees who are trying to get girls to enlist in various branches of the Forces. We in the country areas, however, are relying upon the services of those girls to make good the shortage of manpower. I pay a tribute to the women and girls who are working on the land. We see and hear a lot about the girls who are volunteering for various branches of the Defence Forces, and they are to be commended for having made their services available, but the girls working on the land today are doing an equally important job. This fact cannot be denied. A girl working on the land is not seen in a nice uniform and a smart hat, but she is certainly doing a man's job. We have to produce food for the visitors to Australia and for our Allies as well and, if it were not for the useful part women on the land are playing, we would be short of a good many of our food requirements.

The member for South Fremantle yesterday spoke about the shortage of firewood. It is hard to believe that there should be a shortage of firewood, seeing that it is available close to the city, and is easy to obtain. I think some of the prisoners of war in this State could be employed on this class of work. I am quite sure that our men who are prisoners in the hands of the enemy are very soon put to work. If any great city in an enemy country was short

of firewood and supplies were obtainable, the services of prisoners would soon be utilised to get it. I know that under international law we cannot compel internees to work, but they could be usefully employed in this way, even though they had to be paid for cutting the firewood. In another place Hon. H. V. Piessie referred to—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must not refer to any debate in another place.

Mr. McLARTY: Very well, Sir. I desire to refer to the position as regards shearing. Recently it was suggested that shearing in the district I represent should take place in December. That has been altered. Such a suggestion is absurd. In future, December shearing should be discarded in every part of the Murray-Wellington district. December shearing has the disadvantages of summer heat, blow-flies, grass-seeds, and is in every respect the very worst time for shearing. The Minister for Agriculture would be wise to consult members of this Chamber in regard to shearing and similar operations in the farming districts.

Post-war problems have been mentioned. I know we should be more concerned at present with the one great problem of winning the war, but we ought to be giving some consideration to post-war problems. On a recent Sunday I was listening to the wireless at my house and heard a well-known clergyman preach. He alluded to "the inevitable depression bound to follow this war."

Mr. Marshall: Do you not think that is true?

Mr. McLARTY: In my opinion the reverend gentleman was creating a wrong impression. If we take it for granted that a depression must follow this war, we are helping to create a depression. The psychology we should endeavour to create is one that will induce people to say, "We will not have a depression, and there is not to be one." That would tend to stave off depression. The world knows that unlimited money can be found for war. Recently Sir Earle Puge, on his return to Australia, said that this war would last another ten years. Other authorities declare that the war will continue for another five years. However, there is no mention of lack of money preventing the war from going on. If money can be found to keep the war going, no matter how long it lasts, no matter whether

thousands of millions of pounds are needed for that purpose, surely some of those millions might be applied to the solution of inevitable post-war problems. If we adopted that attitude and refused to stand for depression, or to regard it as inevitable, we would be helping to create the right atmosphere.

Mention has been made of great public works which could be carried out upon the cessation of the war. I have referred to them on previous occasions, and do not intend to refer to them again. But I suggest that private members' services could be made greater use of in that direction. One after-war problem which we should tackle—and I am not sure that we should wait until the end of the war to tackle it—is that of creating respect for the law. I recall that when I was abroad, in foreign countries, certain of their laws were such as would seem funny to us, laws about which we would have laughed. But I certainly consider that a stranger coming to our land would find cause for laughter here. Is there any other country in the world, I wonder, where a man is fined £75 for committing a first offence in one place and 12 miles away is fined only £5 for the very same offence? That kind of thing brings the law into contempt. At a time such as this, when there is not a great deal of legislating for us to do, we should revise some of our laws to ensure that they will be administered with greater justice and more sense. In this connection I could say something about magistrates. If I had my way, I would ensure that Justices of the Peace did not sit on the Bench with a magistrate except at his request.

Another evil, and one which I believe to be increasing in our community, is vandalism. I suggest to the Minister for Education that in the schools children should be taught to respect not only private property but public property as well. Travelling in railway compartments today one sees where seats have been deliberately slit with knives. I have seen that many times. Those slits have to be neatly sewn up. Also, the tops of the carriages have been pencil-marked. Public conveniences are disfigured, and filthy stuff is written on the walls. In bathing sheds I have seen hat-racks and other fittings deliberately torn down. In King's Park I have seen beautiful little trees knocked down, and one tree was twisted until it was completely useless.

In St. George's-terrace I saw a man take hold of a beautiful gum tree and tear it down. Vandalism has been seen even near Parliament House.

Mr. Thorn: But that vandalism is not committed by children.

Mr. McLARTY: I do not know who commits it, but if it is the work of an adult he should be severely punished. In any case, greater stress should be laid in schools on the need for protecting and respecting public property wherever possible.

In conclusion I would refer to the dairying industry mentioned yesterday by the member for South Fremantle. The hon. member is justifiably proud of the fact that the industry is located in his electorate. The South-Western Dairy Farmers' Co-operative Co. has played a very valuable part in assisting towards the establishment of the industry in Western Australia, and has given the farmers a fair deal. I have no hesitation in saying that, were it not for that company's efforts, dairying would not be nearly so well-established here as it is today. The more co-operation we have between farmers the better it will be for them and the dairying industry, which lends itself more to that sort of thing than does any other of our primary industries. The hon. member said the firm to which he referred paid the highest price for butter-fat. That may be so, but I ask him to bear in mind that the South-Western Dairy Farmers' Co-operative Co. paid out, I think, £19,000 by way of bonus, besides paying their farmer shareholders and other small shareholders a dividend at the rate of five per cent. I want members to know that the dairying industry owes something to the South-Western Dairy Farmers' Co-operative Co.; at the same time, I do not want to belittle the factory in question.

MR. SHEARN (Maylands): Like other members, I desire to express my sincere hope that the Premier will soon be restored to his normal state of health and thus be able to take his customary seat in the House. With equal sincerity, I would say that I hope the recovery made by the Minister for Works will be maintained. At this stage may I be permitted, having regard to the present difficult circumstances of finance and inter-State relationships, to pay a tribute to the work accomplished by the Minister for Lands, as Deputy Premier, at the recent Premiers' Conference? I feel sure that the

members of this, and perhaps of another place, will appreciate—bearing in mind the paramount needs of defence as opposed to State finance—that the Minister's efforts reflect creditably upon him.

An unfortunate incident that happened in my electorate was recently brought under my notice. A person in very poor circumstances will, in the near future, be presenting evidence of defalcations, to the extent of £500, on the part of a certain business person in this city. I understand several thousands of pounds are involved. Members are aware that The Land Agents Act has been in existence for some time past. It provides that persons who desire to set up in business as land agents shall be compelled—and rightly so—to put up a bond securing the sum of £500 in the event of any defalcation. Singularly enough, my own experience has been that defalcations by land agents are small, whereas in another highly-respected profession—the legal profession—the reverse has been the case. My references to this particular subject are naturally not intended to apply to present company. I am aware that the majority of the members of that profession are honourable men. But, after all, such legislation as that to which I have referred is directed against a small section of the community that might abuse its privileges and betray the trust reposed in it.

I cannot, of course, just now refer to proposed legislation, of which notice has been given, but I hope Parliament will, when considering the measure of which the member for East Perth has given notice, take heed of the situation and bring about some form of protection against defalcations which will be made to apply to the legal profession and all other persons who have the control of trust funds. People who suffer from defalcations always appear to be of the poorer class. Those who are accustomed to business transactions can take certain precautions; but, as the members of the legal profession know better than I, it is generally the unsophisticated person who is swindled. I hope, therefore, the Government will give serious consideration to the long overdue protection which should be given to those who have saved up a little money for their declining years and suddenly find themselves, as the result of defalcations by some person, deprived of their life savings.

Reference has already been made to the somewhat unusual composition of the Lieut.-Governor's Speech. It may be that the almost total absence of any legislative proposals in the Speech is an index to the Government's recognition that, in a period like the present, when the Commonwealth Parliament has assumed a larger measure of inevitable over-riding political direction of our affairs, this Government and Parliament have been provided with a unique opportunity to deal more effectively not only with our own administration but with that of the Commonwealth as it affects the vital interests of the State. In the circumstances of our present situation administration represents almost nine-tenths of government. In paying particular attention to the administration of Federal and State matters we shall be discharging our duty to the public, quite apart from the fact that the time is not now opportune to introduce ordinary legislation.

I feel indebted to some extent to the member for Guildford-Midland for his forceful remarks upon the long delays by and grossly indifferent attitude of the Federal authorities in dealing with the establishment of war industries in this State, especially when compared with the results achieved in the other States. I heartily support the hon. member's contention that the time has arrived when the Government should vigorously press our claims in this respect. Parliament should stand behind the Government and protect the State against further delays and injustices. It has become evident in recent years, but more particularly since the outbreak of hostilities, that there is a strong tendency on the part of the Federal authorities to attempt to centralise power and thus render the voice and power of State institutions less effective. As the member for Perth pointed out, State Treasurers for some years past have been compelled to accept "hand-outs" from the Commonwealth Treasurer. Uniform taxation and other inroads upon State revenue have struck a severe blow at State sovereignty, even admitting that those measures are merely for the duration of the war. I am not at all optimistic as to the ultimate restoration of those rights to this and the other States. It therefore seems all the more imperative that this Parliament should devote a greater part of its time and energy to a close survey not only of our own ad-

ministration, but also the administration of the Commonwealth as it affects the vital interests of this State.

We would do well also to galvanise our Federal parliamentary representatives into greater activity and responsiveness to their primary duty to this State, regardless of party alignment, and demand that this State shall receive proper consideration at the hands of the Federal authorities. I do not wish to be understood as being personal in this expression of opinion, but I feel that the time has arrived when the Government and the Parliament of Western Australia should make greater use of their Federal members in the House of Representatives and the Senate, for the purpose of obtaining a greater response from them and a better appreciation generally by them of the urgent needs of this State and their relative importance to the national cause of Australia generally. If we resolved to apply ourselves to this effort during the current session, not only would it tend to stimulate a quicker and better response in Federal circles to the urgent needs of Western Australia, but it might easily be the means of establishing a rallying point for other responsibilities that from the nature of this war may yet be imposed upon us, even as a State Parliament. The State's comparative isolation, and the unmistakable trend in Federal policy for some time past, should induce us to exert every effort to ensure that our resources and civil population are fully utilised in the best interests of the Commonwealth. As other members have already said, such is not the case up to date. Incidentally this would ensure our proper place as a State in whatever plans may be devised for the post-war years.

Other speakers have referred to numerous matters in which this State has received scanty, if any, consideration. Perhaps one of the most serious of the many different matters is the position of interstate railway communications. Merchants and others—indeed I think the Government also—have experienced considerable difficulty in getting supplies of raw and finished materials over the railways as a result of the lack of a standardised gauge and, with other members, I think that should an emergency arise here in connection with the war, as particularly affecting this State, the position would be very critical for us. We should not have to endure this major

disadvantage any longer or the excuse given in the past that this admittedly essential national project could not be undertaken because money could not be found for it. That argument surely cannot be sustained today.

In the days of the depression the inauguration of this work would have provided full-time employment for a considerable number of men and today we would not only have the advantage of being safeguarded against a war emergency, but would also be able to play a better part in connection with the war and overcome a great many of the difficulties that have arisen through the lack of ample railway facilities to and from the State. This situation reflects very seriously upon past Federal administration, and we should not sit back and tolerate the continuance of the position much longer. I submit that for too long have we endured a succession of Federal defaults in relation to this State generally. I, for one, have become tired of the repetition of mere eloquent tributes that fall from time to time from the lips of Federal members and officials regarding the excellent example set by this State in relation to every possible national need, whilst at the same time we are expected to continue to preserve a complacency regarding differential treatment in matters vitally important to the present and future prosperity of Western Australia.

Reverting to the references by the member for Guildford-Midland to our responsibilities as individual members, I consider it unfortunate that Parliament is not able to catch the spirit of local government and make greater use of the varied knowledge and unquestionable experience of members generally. Instead of that, we find that State Governments, and more particularly the Commonwealth Government, have engaged in what I think we may fairly term mass production of boards, often investing them with powers hardly, I should say, ever contemplated by Parliament. These boards then churn out countless regulations which are not only difficult to keep check of, and to which references have often been made by the member for East Perth and others in this Chamber, but which also frequently need expert interpretation. It appears somewhat of a paradox to me that while the Commonwealth Government asks people generally to reduce manpower to a minimum, in order to make men and women

available for direct war needs, it and its boards have deluged business and other people with lists, forms, and other returns, often duplicated two or three times, when staff problems have already become acute to those engaged in private industry. This has made business difficult to carry on. It is ludicrous that people should be called upon to devote hours to endeavouring to interpret what is required by the various departments and, after having appointed a special staff for that purpose, find in a few weeks' time that a fresh lot of returns have been forwarded asking the same questions in another manner. Surely something should be done about that. The delegation of Parliamentary authority has, in many instances, been given too great importance. At a time like this, when tremendous tasks confront the nation, some means should be devised more effectively to utilise the collective energies of members of Parliament in Australia, so that many of the complaints that one receives from day to day might be more readily appreciated and overcome in the interests, not only of our war effort, but of the respect in which Parliament should be held.

In dealing with what we have become accustomed to designate as post-war construction, I feel that there have so far been too many abstract references to this vital subject by those charged with a definite responsibility in this connection and, in consequence, from many personal observations and conversations, I find that there is a growing sense of frustration in the public mind. I submit, therefore, that it is the plain duty of the Government to give a substantial assurance to the dependants of our Fighting Forces, munition workers and others that the State Government, in conjunction with the Commonwealth Government, either has surveyed or is about to survey fully such urgent problems as the reinstatement of returned men and munition workers in civil life, a suitable housing scheme, better vocational training and social conditions; and that it will, without delay, embark upon the task of formulating a definite plan which can be implemented at the close of the war. In this way we would be better prepared for peace than we were for war.

Another important aspect demanding our careful attention in anticipation of the time when we are at peace once more—unless of course, in the meantime our indus-

trial balance has considerably improved—is that this State, having provided a greater proportion of enlistments to the Services on a population basis than most, if not all, of the other States, will have a correspondingly larger number of technically untrained men to repatriate. Unless we can exercise sufficient influence to obtain a commensurate share of the Federal scheme of industrial decentralisation peace-time industrial expansion must continue towards those States where such production is already being intensely developed. In addition, members will readily realise that the drift of both skilled and semi-skilled workers to those States where war work has and still is offering remunerative employment will have, unless corrected, serious repercussions with the change-over from war to peace-time conditions at the cessation of the present hostilities.

While we realise that certain difficulties are being experienced, due to a number of reasons, in getting materials into this State to supply those factories already in existence, we have plenty of evidence of considerable quantities of valuable cargo space being unnecessarily utilised, and thus displacing war materials which we should be getting for other requirements so that we could play our proper part in the industrial development of Australia. I could give a number of instances that would provide clear examples of the ineptitude and inefficiency of some person or persons in the matter of shipping and rail transport of goods to this State, both unmanufactured and partly manufactured. The Minister for Industrial Development, by way of interjection, referred to a particular case in this connection. Whilst I have no desire to belittle the efforts of the Minister for Industrial Development, or those associated with him in his good work—much of which we have heard about in previous sessions, and lately we have had the opportunity of seeing it come to absolute fruition—I have, nevertheless, a strong conviction that some move should be made, even if only as an experiment, to create a much better liaison between this State and the appropriate Federal departments in Melbourne. This seems to me to be the focal point—the centre where decisions in regard to war and other supplies are either made or influenced. I am confident from my observations and inquiries when I was last

in Melbourne—over 12 months ago—that if we were able to establish and maintain a more direct means of representation, and keep in closer touch with what is happening in these matters and perhaps, more importantly, before they do happen, many of the disadvantages and delays due to our distance from this “nerve centre” of direction of supplies could be more expeditiously and effectively adjusted to our advantage.

I saw much evidence, as I have already pointed out, of the fact that representatives of other States maintained close contact in Melbourne with departments dealing with supplies required, and were thus able to wield a much greater influence than we can hope for by pursuing our present methods of periodical contact with the departments in the Eastern States. Our disadvantage has perhaps been all the more unfortunate in that various Federal Ministers and important controlling officials have started away from their respective offices with the best of intentions no doubt, to visit Western Australia and learn from Ministers and other sources exactly what this State requires, what its resources are, and its future capabilities. But we find, unfortunately, that they generally get as far as Adelaide and, for reasons probably good and valid, they return either to their offices or to some portion of the Eastern States. It is, therefore, our duty to establish a closer personal liaison with Melbourne, where the influence of our Parliamentary members might also be used to great advantage.

All I wish to say in regard to the activities of the vice squad is that whilst agreeing that these officials should be required to discharge their authority with the greatest possible care, and to exercise all possible discretion, we should try to appreciate the fact that their task is necessarily a difficult one, and that sensible police administration will achieve better results than those achieved by the unfortunate publicity directed towards the people whose future careers are involved. I also consider that the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe might have more pertinently asked the Government, of which he is a supporter and was once a member, to explain its characteristic tardiness to take earlier action in this and other matters concerning the maintenance of the law; because months ago the public, if not the Government, could see many indications leading up to the present unfortunate situation. Had

earlier action been taken by the Government it appears that the present position would have been considerably lessened, if not entirely obviated. He might even now inquire of the Government why it fell to the lot of magistrates publicly to defend their actions and to rebuke the hon. member whilst the Minister concerned maintained a profound silence on the subject.

Reference was made by the member for Pingelly to the activities of the Manpower Office. Unfortunately for me, on behalf of a great number of my electors, I have been brought into contact with that office. Like the hon. member, all my representations have not been successful, and I too found that at the outset of this department, which is only five or six months old, there were some very annoying delays. But I have been in business for a good many years, and my small amount of business training has taught me that, before setting out to criticise individuals conducting a business, the essential thing is to get a proper perspective of the possible difficulties and problems associated with the particular enterprise. I suggest to the hon. member that, if he were to stop for a moment, he would understand the attitude of the department. This organisation has been called upon to do a job that no other individual or department in Australia has previously been called upon to do. In fact, there has been no precedent for it.

We should also remember that this department is called upon to hold the scales of justice evenly between the civil population of this State—and I understand similar departments operate in a like manner in other States—and the Defence authorities, and at the same time it has to deal with individual problems such as hardship. It also has to pay due regard to the Commonwealth Government which inaugurated the scheme with the idea that full and proper use would be made of the manpower available in Australia. These are only some of the duties to be carried out by this department and its responsible officers. They are charged with the responsibility of seeing that these matters are properly and fairly carried out in the interests, not of the individual, but of the majority of the people and the well-being of the nation. I feel that in all the circumstances, despite even my own disappointments from time to time, remarkably good work has been accomplished. As I have said previously in

this Chamber, it is very unfair for a member, whether a supporter of the Government or a member of the Opposition, to single out any man associated with the administration of a Government department for a personal attack.

If I have any complaint to make I do not bring it forward in Parliament, unless it is a matter of personal importance. If it is one solely affecting policy, obviously the duty of the aggrieved individual is to complain to the person or persons responsible for that policy, and not to select for adverse criticism the individual merely responsible for giving effect to the Government's policy. In selecting Mr. H. T. Stitfold for the position of Deputy-Director General of Manpower, the authorities chose a man I hold in high esteem. Members possibly know that he is associated with a road board of which I also am a member. I state with definite sincerity that I have learnt to respect Mr. Stitfold's ability, sincerity, enthusiasm and impartiality in all circumstances. He has at his disposal a very expert staff, the members of which know their task in its various branches. They are handling competently a large volume of work in the interests of the individual as well as of the State. I trust that the member for Pingelly, should he make allowances for the difficulties that have to be encountered in the initial stages of a work that is so difficult and yet important, will admit the diverse character of the interests affected and appreciate the position.

I associate myself with the hope expressed by others that in the not far distant future Western Australia, and the world generally, may be restored to saner foundations and that out of the morass of the present conflagration some better social order may arise, something more like that visualised by the member for Murchison in speeches he has delivered in this Chamber. If we cannot attain the heights he may desire, I feel sure that a new order will arise from which will definitely be excluded many of the old shibboleths that have ranked as of such importance in the past. I believe they will be cast aside in the interests of society and its prosperity throughout the world. I trust that the work of the session may be productive of beneficial results and that at the end of our deliberations our harmonious relation-

ship may be such that party politics may almost have been excluded from the portals of this Chamber.

On motion by Mr. Doney, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 3.13 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 25th August, 1942.

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

QUESTIONS (2).

BETTING, FINES.

Hon. J. CORNELL asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Are any fines imposed on persons for S.P. betting breaches outstanding? 2, If so, what is the unpaid amount due, and by how many individuals is it owing? 3, What is the longest period that any amount due has been owing? 4, What percentage of fines outstanding is thought to be recoverable? 5, Has there been any attempt to dis-train for fines owing? 6, If so, upon whom? 7, Have any owners of, or tenants who occupied premises where S.P. convictions have been secured been prosecuted within the past year? 8, If so, how many? 9, Are fines imposed upon employees of S.P. bookmakers still an income tax deduction by such book-makers?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes. 2, £740 17s. 6d. as at the end of July, 1942. Owing by 24 individuals. This is being reduced by regular instalments. 3, Since the 1st July, 1940. This man is paying off the fine by regular instalments. 4, Up to date most fines have been recovered and there is no reason to think that the major portion of fines inflicted will not be collected. 5, No. Warrants of commitment against those disobeying the orders made for payment are issued. 6, Answered by 5. 7, No. 8, Nil. 9, Yes.