

Question put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	16
Noes	..	..	..	4
Majority for				.. 12
				—

ballot. I ask members who vote for either Mr. E. H. H. Hall or Mr. W. R. Hall to prefix the initials of those members. Fresh ballot papers must be distributed.

Further ballot resulted as follows:—Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch, Hon. C. R. Cornish, Hon. E. H. H. Hall, Hon. C. B. Williams, and Hon. G. B. Wood.

On motion by Hon. E. H. H. Hall resolved: That the Select Committee have power to call for persons, papers and records, and to adjourn from place to place, that three members form a quorum, and that the Committee sit on days over which the House stands adjourned; to report on Tuesday, the 13th April.

**ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.**

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY:** I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 2.15 p.m. on Tuesday, the 30th March.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 4.50 p.m.*

**Legislative Council.**

*Tuesday, 30th March, 1943.*

	PAGE
Assent to Bill	2975
Questions: Income tax, as to lag in collection	2975
Fruit and vegetable shops, as to alien competition	2976
Bills: Coal Mine Workers (Pensions), 3R.	2976
Commonwealth Powers, 2R.	2976
Point of order	2982
Adjournment, special	2987

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

**ASSENT TO BILL.**

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to the Business Names Bill.

**QUESTIONS (2).**

**INCOME TAX.**

*As to Lag in Collection.*

Hon. G. W. MILES asked the Chief Secretary: In the interests of the taxpayers of Western Australia, can the Government ascertain whether the statement published in the Sydney "Bulletin" on the 24th Febru-

**AYES.**

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. V. Hamersley
Hon. L. B. Bolton	Hon. J. G. Hislop
Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. C. K. Cornish	Hon. H. S. V. Parker
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. F. E. Gibson	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. H. Seddon

*(Teller.)*

**NOES.**

Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. C. D. Williams

*(Teller.)*

**PAIRS.**

<b>AYES.</b>	<b>NOES.</b>
Hon. H. L. Roche	Hon. W. R. Hall
Hon. H. Tuckey	Hon. E. M. Heenan

Question thus passed; the motion, as amended, agreed to.

*Select Committee Appointed.*

**HON. E. H. H. HALL** (Central): I move—

That a Select Committee be appointed consisting of five members, Sir Hal Colebatch—

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: On a point of order! I ask for a ballot without any names being mentioned previously.

The PRESIDENT: Perhaps it is better to have the ballot first, and then the motion.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I submit that the mover was perfectly right, under the Standing Orders, in first naming the members of the Select Committee. Then if any member raises objection, a ballot must be taken. Standing Order 270 reads—

Members to serve on a Select Committee shall be nominated by the mover; but if one member so demand, they shall be selected by ballot.

Hon. C. B. Williams: It is understood that I have asked for a ballot.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I move—

That a Select Committee be appointed consisting of five members.

Question put and passed; ballot taken.

The PRESIDENT: A ballot has been taken, and there have been six informal votes in consequence of the name "Hall" being mentioned without the initials. There are two "Halls" who are members of the Council, Mr. E. H. H. Hall and Mr. W. R. Hall. In the circumstances, the fairest course to adopt would be to have a fresh

ary, 1943, is correct? The statement is as follows:—

It was reported last week that the Crown Law Office had advised the Commonwealth that there had never been any lag year in the collection of income tax; levies based on the previous year's income are in respect of the current year, subject to adjustment only. Later on in the House, Treasurer Chifley said that he did not want to enter into "any disputation at present" on the question. Acceptance of the Crown Law Office's ruling will clarify the position agreeably from the taxpayer's viewpoint, but, in addition to the fact that money on a large scale has still to be raised for war purposes, there remains another departmental problem. It has been the practice in the past to assume that there has been a lag year, and, though this may now be straightened out automatically in the case of living people, all taxpayers who died over a considerable period of years appear to have paid one year's tax too much through their executors. This also applies to persons who have left the country. The Statute of Limitations would bar the recovery of overpayments made more than six years ago.

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: If the statement of which the hon. member wishes to ascertain the accuracy is that relating to the legal opinion that there had never been a lag year in the collection of income tax, then the answer is that the determination of this question is one solely for the consideration of the Commonwealth Government.

#### FRUIT AND VEGETABLE SHOPS.

##### *As to Alien Competition.*

Hon. A. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary: 1, How many fruit, vegetable and soft drink businesses are conducted in the metropolitan area by—(a) Britishers; (b) naturalised aliens; (c) unnaturalised aliens? 2, Is it correct that an association exists which finances and helps aliens to set up in these businesses? 3, Is it correct that the association mentioned buys in quantities to supply these aliens to the detriment of Britishers engaged in similar businesses?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, (a) Information is unavailable at present. A comprehensive survey of departmental records would provide the required information in approximately a week's time; (b) and (c) this information should be obtainable direct from the Commonwealth department concerned. 2 and 3, Wide investigations have been made, and, as far as could be ascertained, no organisation is in existence for the purposes mentioned.

#### BILL—COAL MINE WORKERS (PENSIONS).

Bill read a third time and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

#### BILL—COMMONWEALTH POWERS.

##### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 25th March.

HON. G. B. WOOD (East) [2.24]: This is a very small Bill, but in spite of its smallness I do not think there has ever been a Bill considered by this House that has been so full of dynamite and poison as this one is in so far as Western Australia is concerned. I also venture to say that the Council, in its long life, has never had a greater responsibility thrust upon it than it has at present in the matter of the consideration, rejection or amendment of this Bill. Notwithstanding what might be said by people in the Eastern States, I believe that the whole future of Western Australia is dependent upon the manner in which this House deals with the Bill.

I was amazed and disappointed at the proceedings in another place when the Bill was under consideration there. Many amendments were moved by anti-Government members, and in practically every instance those amendments were defeated, generally by one or two votes or even on the casting vote of the Chairman. Surely some of those amendments must have been desirable in the interests of this State! Some of them must have been desirable even if only in a small way, and yet the Government adopted the attitude that it would have the Bill in toto or not at all. In approaching consideration of this measure, I thought of voting for the second reading but, in view of what has happened in another place, what is the use of our voting for it? Seeing that the Government has adopted such an uncompromising attitude in another place, what is the use of our passing the second reading and amending the Bill in any way that we think is desirable? There is little doubt that the Government will refuse to accept such amendments.

Hon. A. Thomson: Then the responsibility will rest on the Government.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: There is something in that. We could agree to the second reading and amend the Bill in a way we think fit, and throw the onus of rejecting the

measure on the Government. In the course of my remarks I shall show that I approve of some of the paragraphs contained in Clause 2, though not many.

I regard the Bill with the greatest suspicion. Not since I have been a member of this House have I approached any Bill with a greater amount of suspicion. I am sincere in the belief that the sponsors of the measure do not want us to realise that there is behind it much more than appears on the surface. We have been told that the measure is necessary in order to allow of the implementing of a new order. From what I can judge of this proposed new order, it is one for unification and for the socialisation of industry throughout Australia. I feel sure that many people have been hoodwinked into believing that the passing of this legislation is necessary for the new order which, they have been told, is to bring about some great utopian scheme after the war when we are all to be happy. We hear people talking over the air of the marvels of the Soviet system and of various other systems. Because Russia happens to be doing well in the war against Germany, we are told that the Russian system is the one we ought to adopt. What the new order is to be is all very vague, and I can see nothing behind the Bill but a desire to introduce unification and socialisation throughout Australia.

We have been told that if we do not pass the Bill in the form desired by unificationists, a referendum will be taken. I can well imagine the propaganda that will be broadcast to the people that all these powers are very necessary before the Commonwealth can introduce the new social or economic order, or whatever it is to be. To my mind this is merely a subterfuge to implement a policy desired by people in the Eastern States. In saying this, I am not referring solely to the Labour Party; there are members of the Country Party and the United Australia Party also who are prepared to use this measure as a catch to get something they know they would have no chance of getting otherwise for many years to come. Again I declare that all Parties in eastern Australia are responsible. They say, "We will use the exigencies of war to get what we want. We will tell the people what we consider to be necessary, and so we will secure our

policy, which we could never have done before." I consider the Bill to be premature. I agree with Mr. Seddon, and with many others, that we have years of war in front of us—though naturally I hope I am wrong in that forecast. We have been told that Germany must be vanquished first, and then will come the turn of Japan. Surely this is not the time for formulating a policy to be implemented after the war! How can we know when the war will be over? And then the aspect of things may be utterly different from what it is to-day. Let us await the end of the war, and then may be the time to pass legislation handing over powers to the Commonwealth—not now.

Hon. C. F. Baxter; Then it will not be possible to play on sentiment as is now being done.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: Yes. The war is used to do many things that should not have been done, but there has been nothing so disgraceful as the proposals in this Bill. Now I wish to have a little to say about the Commonwealth Constitution. I hold it to be a very fine Constitution. It took fully 50 years to formulate, and that task required the best brains of Australia, including Sir Henry Parkes, who I believe fathered the Federation movement. The Conventions of those days had the background of America and the American Constitution, which had stood the test of 150 years' operation. Yet we have Dr. Evatt, the Johnny-come-lately of Federal politics, exhibiting the audacity to declare our Commonwealth Constitution to be a horse and buggy Constitution! Our Constitution has never really been tried. After all, what are 40 years in the lifetime of a nation. Dr. Evatt plays on the feelings of the people, and thus gets something brought about which he desires greatly. During the past 50 or 60 years of Australian history many Federal Conventions were held for the purpose of formulating the most appropriate system of government for the Australian people. Those were proper Conventions, utterly unlike the recent Convention. They were Conventions fully representative of the people of Australia.

I am indeed sorry that our State Government has fallen for this Bill—very sorry indeed. I regret, too, that the rank and file of Government supporters have fallen for it, that they should have listened

to some outside authority—the Labour Conference held in the Eastern States, I have been told. Whether that is right or wrong I do not know. I regret exceedingly that Government supporters in another place have fallen for the Bill. What a change of front! We all remember how in 1937 there was a referendum asking the Australian people to give the Commonwealth power over marketing and aviation. We know what stand the members of the Western Australian Government, or most of them, took on that occasion. At a meeting in the Town Hall I saw the member for Nedlands and the member for Boulder—metaphorically speaking—with their arms round each other's necks, telling the people, "We have been strong political opponents for many years, but here we are together on this platform for the purpose of preventing Western Australia from throwing away powers to the Commonwealth." Again I say, "What a change of front!" Now we find the members of our State Government and all its supporters ready to give away not only powers relating to marketing and aviation, but powers relating to many other things as well. What an extraordinary somersault! What about the somersault over the basic wage?

In 1933 the Mitchell-Latham Government lost the general election on account of some indiscreet reference the then Leader of the Opposition had made to the basic wage, saying that Western Australian industries could not compete with Eastern States industries because of the difference between the respective basic wages. At that time the Eastern States basic wage was a little lower than the Western Australian. And what a song was made about that! And what a change of front there is now! Here again Eastern States Parliamentarians are saying, "We shall get what we want, while the war is on." Mr. Ward, of the Commonwealth Government, who wants to socialise everything, has been described by the Prime Minister as necessary to his Government, which cannot do without him. What did Mr. Dedman say only last Sunday? Speaking to members of the Labour Party in Melbourne, and not getting much of an ovation, Mr. Dedman declared—

I am a Socialist, and the whole of my experience as head of the Department of War Organisation of Industry has been to get nearer to the socialisation of industry. All the things the department is doing are not actuated

by political notions but are done with the idea of doing what is best in the interests of the country.

That is the sentiment of the Commonwealth Government in power today. We know now exactly what Western Australia will get if we pass the Bill as it appears before us.

The Chief Secretary: Why not quote all that Mr. Dedman said?

Hon. G. B. WOOD: Very well; I shall read the whole of the report in the newspaper—

Vested Interests. Attack by Mr. Dedman. Students' Hostile Reception.

As an overture to an address by the Minister for War Organisation of Industry (Mr. Dedman) today members of the Labour Club in the Philosophy Theatre at Melbourne University provided a medley of hoots, cat-calls, chinking of catapulted pennies and "raspberries" amplified by megaphones.

"I am so used to the slings and arrows of capitalists that I can put up with any demonstration you make," Mr. Dedman said.

In his address Mr. Dedman said: "I am a Socialist and the whole of my experience as head of the Department of War Organisation of Industry has been to get nearer to the socialisation of industry. All the things the department is doing are not actuated by political notions but are done with the idea of doing what is best in the interests of the country."

It was always the vested interests that had opposed him, Mr. Dedman said. In Western Australia the goldminers did not mind whether he closed up the whole goldmining industry, so long as they helped to hold Australia . . .

What a statement to make! The Minister laughs! The report continues—

. . . but the people who made huge profits out of the industry had opposed him. That was typical of what he had met everywhere. It was found, for instance, that 60,000 domestics were employed, some of them assisting families directly engaged in the war effort. But in some cases small families were employing 16 or 17 servants.

It is very hard to believe a statement like that, notwithstanding that it comes from a Minister.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: It is a ridiculous statement.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: The Minister might find one such family in Australia, but not two.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Such a statement could only come from a warped mind.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: The article concludes—

At the end of the address members of the Labour Club were called on to stand. One member did so.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: I think the Chief Secretary made a mistake in asking you to quote the whole of that report. He would have been better advised to leave it alone.

The Chief Secretary: Not at all!

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I am glad this Bill has to pass through this House, as I feel sure members will do their duty when it reaches the Committee stage—if it does. I believe that in years to come—to quote an old saying—the people of Australia will be able to say, "Thank God for the Legislative Council!" I feel that the hand of this House has been considerably strengthened by the way in which the Bill was dealt with in another place. On many occasions we have had Bills sent here which were carried in another place on the voices or by a big majority; but, as regards this Bill, practically every division in another place was carried by only one or two votes. I venture to say that if the representation of the members who opposed the measure in another place was reckoned up, it would be found that the majority of Western Australians were opposed to this Bill. Because of the way in which the votes were cast in another place on various amendments moved by the National and Country Parties, I believe this House has a definite duty imposed upon it. We also have the evidence tendered to the Select Committee. I have not had an opportunity to peruse all the evidence, but only one witness approved of the Bill as drawn.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: You have stated a fact.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: Of course, we all know why. I am sorry Mr. Craig is absent, although it is not his fault. But it is not my fault that I have to comment on what he said. Last week he took members to task and asked, "Why all this distrust of the Commonwealth Government? Why are we so suspicious of it?" Have we Western Australians not every reason to be suspicious of the Commonwealth Government? I am not referring now only to the present Commonwealth Government. Ever since the inauguration of Federation, Western Australians have been dissatisfied with it. I am not going into all the details of what has been done by Commonwealth Governments to the detriment of Western Australia; but I well remember, although I was not very old at the time, what a howl there was about Federation. People said, "We did not know that they would do these things to us." So we go on to the year of the great gold steal. Every-

one remembers that. Dissatisfaction, suspicion and distrust led to the secession campaign. The people of this State did not for nothing work themselves into a frenzy over secession. They had cause for their action on that occasion; and, as we all know, there was a majority of two to one in favour of secession.

Hon. J. Cornell: They voted out of office the Government that gave them the opportunity to vote on secession!

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I admit that many people voted for secession who did not want it, but they were dissatisfied with the treatment meted out to this State by the Commonwealth Government. I am very proud of the part I took in that campaign; I spent a lot of time on it and have not been sorry I did so.

I am coming now to the present day and shall give members one or two incidents—atrocities, I should call them—which have occurred in relation to the primary producing industries of this State. I shall relate what was done by this central power by legislation passed at Canberra. There was a wheat board and on it were two members from Western Australia, Messrs. Teasdale and Diver. I believe Mr. Teasdale is one of the greatest authorities, if not the greatest, in Australia on wheat.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Some of us believe the same thing.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I believe Mr. Teasdale is. Mr. Diver is the president of the Wheatgrowers' Federation of Australia—not only of the Primary Producers' Association. The Wheatgrowers' Federation takes in all the organised wheatgrowers of Australia. Mr. Diver was a member of the board, but Mr. Scully, in his wisdom, backed by the Commonwealth Government, threw both those gentlemen off the board and put in their stead two supporters of the Labour Party—Mr. Steele for Western Australia, and Mr. Maycock for South Australia. Here is an extraordinary thing! Naturally, we wheatgrowers, through our organisation, protested, so Mr. Scully said, "You can in future elect your own representatives." We thought that quite satisfactory; but we found that, on the 2nd March, a regulation had been promulgated by the Commonwealth Government. It is most interesting and reads as follows:—

(1) For the purpose of appointing the members of the board representing the wheatgrowers of Australia, the Minister may arrange

for nominees to be selected by persons licensed as growers under the National Security Regulations.

(2) The selection of nominees shall be carried out in such manner as the Minister, by order published in the Gazette, provides.

(3) The Minister shall not be bound to appoint as a representative of the wheatgrowers any person selected as a nominee in accordance with the preceding provisions of this regulation, but whether nominees have been selected or not, the Minister may appoint as such a representative such person as he thinks fit.

Is not that a marvellous thing? The wheat-growers may go to the trouble and expense of electing representatives but, if Mr. Scully does not like them, if they are not members of his party, he can say, "I will not have them." There is no argument about it.

Hon. A. Thomson: That is what is called democracy!

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I do not know what it is—it sounds Russian to me! Yet Mr. Craig says we have nothing to be distrustful of. I shall tell members a little more. We had in Australia a Meat Board which functioned very well. On it were two representatives of Western Australia, one representing the producers and the other the wholesale butchers. That board was scrapped. Another board, which was called a commission, was appointed and every single member on it came from New South Wales. That is how we are treated. That is another reason for distrusting the Commonwealth Government. The regulations in regard to that Commission were disallowed, and I do not think the authorities quite know where they are at the moment. It is only fair to state that in conjunction with the Commission there was an advisory board for Western Australia which, however, had no executive power. That was a bit of a sop to Western Australia.

Then we had the great harvesting wages scheme under which the Arbitration Courts were side-stepped. What a sorry thing that was! What a terrible move it was so far as the interests of this State and even of other States were concerned—though I believe that other States could better support it than could Western Australia. A board was formed. Certainly it comprised two representatives of the producers and two representatives of the workers, but the chairman was the deciding factor and he was not on our side at all. The board set out a schedule of wages without any consideration as to whether the industry

could stand it or not. If we give the Commonwealth Government these powers it will do worse things than that.

Hon. A. Thomson: Of course you do not oppose higher wages being paid?

Hon. G. B. WOOD: No, but I knew that our industry could not stand higher wages. If the representatives of the farming industry of Western Australia had gone to the Arbitration Court and said, "We get so much for our products and we can afford to pay so much," and everything was worked out on its merits, we would not have so much cause to complain, but the Arbitration Courts of Australia were side-stepped by regulation. The day before the regulation was to be debated, and perhaps disallowed, the board was abolished.

Hon. V. Hamersley: The regulation was withdrawn.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: Yes.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Are you sure?

Hon. G. B. WOOD: Yes, I am pretty sure. Whatever was done it was not necessary for Mr. Prowse to move a motion for the disallowance of the regulation.

Hon. C. B. Williams: That is a definite correction. You said the regulation was withdrawn.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: Then we have the disparity in the fixed prices for eggs and honey. I know that the disparity in the price of eggs cost the egg industry of Western Australian between £2,000 and £3,000 before that price was brought into line with what obtained in the Eastern States. There is another atrocity due to control from Canberra. What does the Price-Fixing Commissioner know about the industry here? The same thing happened with regard to honey. Many producers went out of production because they could not carry on. Again we had an importation of meat into Western Australia when it was not required. Two shipments were imported that were not necessary at the time. Then we have the fiasco about the wheat hospital at North Fremantle. The Commonwealth Government went over the heads of the State Government and said, "We are going to have a wheat hospital and do certain things in spite of what you say," although Western Australian members of the board voted against the proposal. As members know, a Select Committee was appointed in another place to look into this matter. The following ap-

peared in "The Primary Producer" of last week:—

Evidence accumulates daily of the contempt which the Federal Government has for the wishes of the people of Australia—or, the people on this side of the continent in particular. Perhaps the worst example of the over-riding of Western Australian State authority has been provided in the findings of the Select Committee appointed to inquire into the operations of the Australian Wheat Board at Fremantle, where wheat storage bins were erected. Although work undertaken there was opposed by the State Government, and although this State's representatives on the Wheat Board considered the erection of what has become known as the "wheat hospital" was unnecessary, and voted against the proposal, the Federal Minister proceeded to carry on. Said the Select Committee in its report:

In the absence of direct evidence it must be assumed that the board when it commenced building without a title or permit to enter the land, did so with the authority and sanction of Commonwealth Ministers.

So the evidence is conclusive that the Federal Government not only acted without right or title to the land on which the building was erected, but ignored entirely the State Government and this State's Wheat Board representatives who were opposed to the plan. And in the end, not only were the State Government and board representatives right, but the people adjacent to the storage bins have had to endure an intolerable nuisance—the Select Committee, in mild terms, said that "these receptacles had caused and would continue to cause great discomfort and inconvenience to the inhabitants of the locality."

In view of this example of Federal disregard for even common decency, not to mention the flouting of the law and the representations made to the Federal Minister by men on the spot who knew the position better than anybody at Canberra could possibly know it, what justification is there for believing that the Federal Government would have any greater regard for conditions embodied in an Act of Parliament which proposes to transfer certain powers from the States to the Commonwealth for a limited period of years only?

Hon. G. W. Miles: They created a range-finder for our enemies in the heart of Fremantle.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: The extract from "The Primary Producer" continues—

Ministers at Canberra have shown on many occasions that they intend to get what they want, no matter how the "getting" is done.

As a further instance of this, we print in this issue three clauses from amendments to the National Security (Wheat Acquisition) Regulations issued by Mr. Scully dealing with nominees for appointment to the Australian Wheat Board. The Minister proposes selection of nominees by licensed growers, but says he shall not be bound to accept such nominees and reserves to himself the right to appoint such other person, or persons, as he thinks fit.

That is making nonsense of the alleged Labour policy of grower control, for what sense is there in going to the expense of taking a poll of growers, and selecting nominees, if the Minister, having objection to any one of the men selected, promptly ignores the selection and makes his own appointments?

Mr. Scully was equally autocratic in his dealings with the Select Committee which dealt with the erection of the Fremantle "wheat hospital." He told the Committee he could not make files available as he could not give his approval to an inquiry not constituted by the Commonwealth Parliament. In other words, this upstart Minister took it into his own hands to try and nullify the inquiry. He presumed to dictate to the State Parliament by declaring that it had no right to appoint the Committee. He refused to offer the slightest assistance in any way at all, and arrogantly stood on the ground that the Commonwealth authority must not be questioned by the State Parliament or the people of Western Australia.

It is this kind of unreasoning behaviour that antagonises the States against the Federation, and particularly against the Ministers who for the moment constitute the Government at Canberra. As taxpayers, Western Australians have a right to know how and why their money is being spent, especially when they know that their own representatives, constitutionally appointed, object to what they regard as unnecessary waste.

I have one or two more of these matters to deal with. Take the question of gas-producers! Most members know that the gas-producer industry was practically born in this State, particularly so far as gas-producers for motor cars are concerned. Yet a few months ago we heard that gas-producers made up all ready to fit on trucks were being brought from the Eastern States by steamer. A protest was made, and some of us were told that it would not occur again. The next we hear is that they are being brought over by train much to the detriment of people in this State.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: The same applies to beer, you know.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I do not object to competition—we know that there is a shortage of transport—but I do not object to the central authority sending gas-producers across to Western Australia.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: That is not true.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I am prepared to admit that perhaps Mr. Dimmitt knows more about it than I. I have here a telephone directory for Western Australia dated February of this year, and it has an advertisement for Nasco gas-producers. It is quite a nice advertisement—an excellent advertisement. It says that Sydney Atkinson Motors, Ltd. have gas-producers to sell.

That advertisement must have cost a lot of money, and I find it very hard to believe that the firm would insert that advertisement if the gas-producers were not still coming here, or if it had not accumulated quite a supply before February. Whether it did or not, I do not know.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: They are not coming here.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I am prepared to believe what the hon. member says, but the fact remains that a lot did come here. Hence the advertisement!

Hon. J. Cornell: They were no good when they did come here.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I know that Pedricks, Ashworths and Mathers turned out good gas-producers. I have one myself. I have had it for a long time. They made splendid gas-producers and there was no need for shipping space to be taken up with gas-producers brought from the Eastern States.

#### *Point of Order.*

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Mr. President—

The President: Is the hon. member going to make a personal explanation?

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: I rise to a point of order. Mr. Cornell has made a statement to which I object. He said that Nasco gas-producers are no good. I demand a withdrawal. Nasco gas-producers are authorised by every Government, every licensing authority in Australia. It is not right that he should be allowed to make an incorrect statement like that.

Hon. J. Cornell: I said, by way of interjection, that a lot of them were no good when they came here. I have not made an accusation against the hon. member. I made a statement, that I can substantiate, that some of them were no good. It was advertised in the paper that they were called in and relined. I know men at Southern Cross who had experience of that.

The President: I think it is merely a difference of opinion between two hon. members concerning the value, or otherwise, of certain gas-producers.

#### *Debate Resumed.*

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I did not say anything against the Nasco gas-producer. I do not run down another person's article, but there is no need to have brought them to Western Australia when we have such wonderful gas-producers made by local labour

in this State. Our own gas-producer manufacturers have suffered through being unable to get the necessary raw material. I do not object to any decent competition providing the bugbear of transport does not enter into it.

Cement slabs were brought here for the postal people, and wheat was sent to Western Australia. Fancy bringing wheat into this State! It shows that the people running the show in the Eastern States do not care a hang about Western Australia. There was also a ramp perpetrated by the people in the east, when they endeavoured to control the bulk handling facilities in Western Australia. I believe that was inspired by the bag merchants of Victoria. It was only through the protests made by the Primary Producers' Association, and others, that we stopped the Commonwealth taking charge of our bulk handling. The Eastern States are very jealous of our bulk handling. New South Wales put in a system which cost an enormous amount of money—I forget how many millions—and we showed them the way to a cheap and good scheme. They definitely tried to get control of our bulk handling and make us use bags.

The Chief Secretary: Was not there an explanation in regard to the wheat imported here?

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I do not know. It was supposed to be dry wheat for biscuit making. But anyone who knows anything about our wheat knows that Western Australia produces some of the best biscuit making wheat in the world. In fact the Chinese biscuit manufacturers in Singapore have, for many years, come to Western Australia for their biscuit wheat. Last but not least I want to mention the barley ramp. For many years the two-row barley growers in Western Australia had a market for their barley—the Union Malting Works and the Swan Brewery—without any importation of barley into the State or export of barley from it. There were 130 specialist growers of barley. When the Commonwealth barley pool was formulated Western Australia was included to bolster up the surplus in the Eastern States, just because the maltsters in Western Australia were paying our producers something like 4s. a bushel. I was associated with the executive of the organisation that fought hard against that state of affairs, and, after two years, we have got out of the Commonwealth barley pool but it is nearly too late.



Most of our producers went out of production because they would not grow barley for the Commonwealth pool. Today, because of that foolish and absurd interference, Western Australia is faced with a shortage of barley for the coming year, and a consequent loss of income.

I am reminded by Mr. Hamersley that we were robbed of £75,000. We have got a little of that back, but much of it is still owing. I am going to a meeting tomorrow, and, as a result, we hope to get the lot. These things make us distrust the Federal authorities. Why are they necessary? It is hard to understand. I believe that these atrocities or disabilities would be ten times worse if we passed over to the Commonwealth Government powers additional to what it has today. It has been doing these things by regulation, but it is not game to do by regulation what it would do by these powers. I ask members to look at the whole Bill, line by line, and clause by clause, with the greatest suspicion. They should examine every line and not pass a single clause unless satisfied that it is in the interests of this State—not in the interests of the Commonwealth Government but of Western Australia.

Whatever is in our interests is in the interests of Australia as a whole. I believe that the sponsor of this Bill does not intend to stop when he gets these powers. We know what is in his mind. We know what his first referendum proposals and first Bill were. He believes that he will get these powers to start with, and that within a year or two of getting them he will attempt to get others. I do not intend to dwell on the five year period. Mr. Parker and Sir Hal Colebatch dealt extensively with that phase. I am not going into the legality of it either, but I do emphasise that that is part of the whole box of tricks to catch us and get these things by degrees. I agree entirely with the remarks made by those two members. What is the good of these powers for five years? That is absolutely absurd, and no one knows that better than does Dr. Evatt. I do not intend to say much on the details of the Bill.

Why does the Commonwealth want powers for repatriation? It had such powers at the end of the first world war when it spent £270,000,000 on the repatriation of soldiers. A lot has been said about the failure of that repatriation scheme. Was that because the Commonwealth Gov-

ernment did not have the power? I do not think it was. Many factors contributed to the failure of some of the soldiers. One of the main factors was the high price of land. The State bought the land and overloaded the cost when dishing it out to the soldiers. Another reason was the sending of soldiers too far out into the Eastern wheat belt; and what settled things for many was the depression. The failure of the scheme was not because the Commonwealth did not have sufficient power. I believe the mistakes which were made—and we admit that mistakes were made—will not occur again.

The State Governments are the proper authorities to handle the repatriation of soldiers in the respective States. Of course we must have Commonwealth assistance as that Government has taken all our money. The central power would be the wrong authority to handle the repatriation of soldiers in the States, in the interests of the soldiers themselves. Surely Western Australian legislators know more about the game than does the Commonwealth Parliament. We know where the mistakes were made, and are familiar with the country from one end to the other. I think the paragraph dealing with the reference of powers regarding employment is one of the worst phases of the Bill. If the Commonwealth were to have charge of employment throughout Australia, I believe it would be possible by that means for every industry, primary and secondary, in Western Australia to be hamstrung, and that would also apply to industries elsewhere.

If we pass over the control of employment to the Commonwealth it could do almost everything it desired. It could say to me or to Mr. Baxter that I or he, as wheat farmers, would not be allowed to employ anyone and that work on our farms had to be done by ourselves or not at all. I do not say for one moment that the Commonwealth would adopt that attitude, but I shall not agree to giving it power that would place it in such a position. The Commonwealth could say to us, "You shall not work the iron-ore deposits at Yampi Sound because there is better iron-ore in the Eastern States." It could say that we should not conduct a factory in Perth because bigger factories exist in the East. I hope at any rate that the paragraph dealing with the employment will be deleted from the Bill. As to marketing, I believe powers

are required by the central authority to enable it to deal with our principal primary export commodities—butter, wheat, meat and wool. I think I have said enough to give the House a rough idea of what I think about the Bill—which is not very much. I believe that if the measure is defeated ample time will be forthcoming to pass legislation from time to time when great problems crop up.

The State has co-operated with the Commonwealth Government on every occasion when requested so to do in connection with the war effort. I have no reason to believe that position will not continue with regard to problems of post-war reconstruction. I cannot think that the Commonwealth Government in the future will suit Western Australia any better than it has in the past. Nothing will make me believe that the State will receive better treatment in the future, and certainly we have no guarantee in that respect whatsoever. Although I am not speaking in a personal sense, I feel that the Bill is one of the most diabolical pieces of political chicanery ever attempted to be foisted on the people of Australia. I believe that if the Bill is passed in toto it will relegate Western Australia to a state of ignominious subservience to an arrogant and ambitious central Government functioning over 2,000 miles distant. Nothing will make me alter my opinion in that regard. I am sorry indeed that the State Government of Western Australia has adopted the attitude it displayed regarding the Bill. It wants the lot. I desired to vote for the second reading in order to give it a fair go in Committee. As a promise and not as a threat, I say that if the Chief Secretary will adopt a more compromising attitude in his reply than was apparent throughout the discussion of this Bill in another place, I may vote for the second reading.

**HON. J. G. HISLOP** (Metropolitan): I, too, with Mr. Wood, regard the Bill as being by far the most important upon which this House has been asked to reach a decision for many years past, and probably as important as any matter likely to come before us for years to come.

**Hon. C. F. Baxter:** Not many years to come—if the Bill is passed.

**Hon. J. G. HISLOP:** Probably not! The decision that we reach regarding this Bill cannot be arrived at by easy methods be-

cause of the contentious nature of the clauses and also because of the widely open character, if I may put it that way, of those clauses. Mainly, too, is that so because of the tremendous influence the passage or rejection of the Bill will have on the future of this State and on the whole Commonwealth. We have heard in recent times quite a lot—far too much, it seems to me—of new orders. I was very impressed when reading a line in a poem by Laurence Binyon which he dedicated to the ruins of the air raids in England. He entitled his poems "The Ruins." The line that impressed me was the one in which he said—

The world that was ours is a world that is ours no longer.

We must realise that we are at the cross roads, and any decision we may make will have an enormous influence on the future life of the whole Commonwealth. I have not been helped in arriving at my decision by the large volume of correspondence which has been sent to me, because those who would be my advisers in this matter have suggested to me that I agree either to reject the Bill entirely or to pass it as a whole. No one has by letter suggested to me a middle course nor through that medium indicated a reasonable amendment to any clause of the Bill. It is amazing to find how many advisers are strictly divided into advocates of "yes" or "no" on a matter of such vital importance.

I feel that to reject the Bill entirely would be unwise, but that it would be equally unwise to pass the measure as it stands. After much thought I have decided that I shall vote for the second reading, trusting that I and other members will be able to modify very considerably the various clauses during the Committee stage. Personally I regret exceedingly that an alteration of the Commonwealth Constitution should have been attempted in this manner at all, because I feel that the Bill may be used in very much the same way as does a lawyer when he puts to a witness a question which cannot be answered by "yes" or "no," and yet demands a "yes" or "no" reply knowing full well that either answer will incriminate him who answers. I feel that whether or not we pass the Bill there must be repercussions of a type the exact nature of which we are not at the moment aware. I would prefer to see a new convention held to review and discuss the Commonwealth Constitution in the light of

our 43 years of experience. I regard it as unwise to deal with the Bill in the manner in which we are being asked to do so. I consider we should have had an opportunity to discuss those powers which we consider should, in the light of our years of experience and of our present experience as well, belong to the Commonwealth Government with a view to surrendering those powers permanently.

In my opinion there are matters that we could quite well discuss but which we have not been asked to consider, and powers that we should transfer to the Commonwealth but which are not mentioned in the Bill. I have always voiced the opinion in this House, and I trust I shall always do so, that we should think and act nationally, and I still maintain that attitude. As a result, I am prepared to give to the Commonwealth that which I think should be common to all Australians. I maintain that there are certain things to which every Australian is entitled and that there are certain things which we should demand in standard form for all Australians. In order to give these powers, however, one might have to break down all the prejudices that exist today because of the lack of faith which each State—and Western Australia in particular—has in the Federal administration. I admit that I have not been long enough in the House to witness some of the events to which my senior colleagues refer so frequently, but I have seen enough to make me chary of giving much power to a Federal authority if we desire to maintain the sovereign rights of the State.

I consider that there should be Commonwealth standards in certain defined matters. I believe that we should live under the same divorce laws throughout Australia, and I agree that a uniform company law is desirable throughout Australia, but I do not think that uniformity should remain confined to this piece of legislation. Is it not wise and is it not even just that the laws of divorce should be the same throughout Australia, no matter in what State we live? Should it not be that we have the same criminal law all over Australia? Should not we all live under the same police code? I agree with the Select Committee that it is impracticable to hand over to the Commonwealth the power to pass uniform company legislation for a limited number of years, and it would be

equally unwise to limit these other legal matters to which I have referred, for a similar period.

In forming the conclusions at which I have arrived, I have entirely neglected any idea that we are handing over powers for five years only. I agree with every speaker who has stated that no matter how tightly we may tie up this temporary reference of powers, practice will prove that the reference will be for all time; and thus I am disappointed that this review of the Constitution is being made in this form. If I believe that a power should be given to the Commonwealth and that it is unwise to give this power for five years only, I will vote to give it to the Commonwealth permanently. If I believe that a power might be useful to the Commonwealth for five years but that it would be against the interests of the States and Australia as a whole to give that power permanently, I shall vote against its reference by this Bill.

There is a number of matters that I regard as being essential for permanent reference. At the expense of being judged a unificationist, I feel inclined to vote for a Commonwealth Arbitration Act, provided it contains provisions allowing for State variations dependent upon climatic and other conditions which a State may regard as necessary in its interests. If we are to prosper alongside our more heavily populated States, our basic wage must be founded on this conformity with them, though keeping in mind our State's peculiar conditions. I am firmly of the opinion that there should be throughout Australia one educational standard made possible for all Australians, and equally I believe that there should be uniform standards of health. In the former case we are not asked to discuss transference, and again I say that there are matters not included in the Bill that we could usefully discuss. I am giving serious consideration to moving in the Committee stage some provision dealing with the transference to the Commonwealth of educational standards.

In regard to health, to pass the paragraph as it stands in the Bill would empower the Commonwealth Government to impose nationalisation on the medical and nursing professions and ancillary professions throughout Australia and, while there are many who believe this to be the correct method for the future, there is an almost

equal number who would strenuously oppose the introduction of such a radical change. I believe that such changes will come more naturally than by the simple transference to the Commonwealth of the power to nationalise these services, but that public health, preventive medicine and hospital administration should have Commonwealth standards and Commonwealth supervision. I do not intend, however, to deal at any great length on the second reading with any of these individual items, but just more or less to record my views in general so that members may have an indication of the direction in which I am thinking.

At heart I believe that, in a world of idealism, I would be a unificationist, but in a world of hard, practical politics, I doubt whether I would go so far. Having this in mind, and in order to give myself some lean towards general opinion, I have, in the weeks since this Bill has been before Parliament, discussed the transference of powers with him with whom I came in contact, no matter what his station in life. I am here to record my vote individually as a thinking citizen, but when I realise that those with whom I have discussed this matter, almost without exception have expressed grave concern at the transference of State powers to the Commonwealth Government, I feel that my vote must be recorded not so much as an individualist but as one who represents the citizens of this State. Thus any tendency I might have had, in an idealistic world, towards unification has been considerably modified by the practical and realistic views of my fellow men.

Yet, through it all, I believe there must be a middle course, and I think that there are matters, as I have indicated, which should be referred to the Commonwealth in perpetuity. One of the greatest difficulties I have encountered in making up my mind and in assessing the value of the remarks of my colleagues is the fact that there is first of all distrust by the State of any Commonwealth Parliament and, secondly, that there is a degree of distrust in the minds not only of members of this House but also of members of the public in regard to the actions of the present Commonwealth Parliament. Time and time again I have pondered whether, if there were a party of my own choosing in power at Canberra at the moment, I would feel disposed to grant the powers in the Bill as it stands. I have

come to the conclusion that there are some things I might be tempted to transfer to the Commonwealth. I remind myself, however, that Governments come and Governments go, and that with this transference of power, so would occur various methods of use of those powers. Therefore I have had to mould my opinions on not so much as to which body is in power or which body is likely to be in power, but on what would be the greatest benefit to Australia and to the States, irrespective of what body was in power in the Commonwealth Parliament.

Again, my views have been moulded by the fact that I really believe we destroyed the entity of the States when we accepted as a body the Loan Council. It has always been recognised that control of the purse gave the control of power, and that finance is government. I believe that had we been able to give rights to chartered companies to open up Western Australia, we might, in post-war days, have progressed at a very rapid rate. I believe that had we been able to borrow on the open market we might, after this war, have been able as a State to open up new avenues of trade and industry which, prior to this war, had never been thought of. But since all our borrowing and all our loan funds are controlled, I feel that we have lost the opportunity of carrying out these measures apart from central control. And now that uniform taxation has come upon us, I feel that we are tied closer to Canberra than we have ever been previously. Had we been able to borrow on the world's financial markets, and had we been able to grant our own chartered companies, I would have refused all power to the Commonwealth Government; but now that we are tied financially, and in my opinion very securely tied, we have little alternative but to look to the Commonwealth Government for any funds for post-war reconstruction. Thus, my views again have to a large extent been governed as to whether it is wise to reject some portions of the Bill lest we might, by so doing, empower the Commonwealth Government to spend large amounts of money in States other than this.

Further observations on the Bill arise from the fact that whilst it was primarily regarded as a non-party measure, discussion on it and on proposed amendments became strictly party in another place. This does not give one any feeling of security as to what a Commonwealth Parliament would do with such powers, but makes one feel that

the request for these powers has been made not so much in the interests of Australia as in the interests of party. I have stated in this House previously that the time is fast coming when Australia cannot afford to continue its party politics with the intensity in which it is being carried on today; and the time is fast arriving when we as Australians must not think of party but of Australia. The menace to our shores is so near and so vast that any consideration given to legislation today must surely be in the interests of all Australians, and not just for some of them.

When the Bill comes to the Committee stage, there will be ample time to deal with its clauses, which I have as yet not touched. But, in concluding my remarks on the second reading, I would once more emphasise that my desires will be to give to all Australians those things which I think each Australian should have, and to transfer to the Commonwealth Parliament the powers needed to carry this out, but to reserve to the State all those powers which are necessary for the proper conduct of our domestic affairs.

On motion by Hon. E. M. Heenan, debate adjourned.

#### ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY:** I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 2.15 p.m. tomorrow.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 3.35 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

*Wednesday, 31st March, 1943.*

	PAGE
Questions: Carting contracts, as to condition of tenders .....	2987
Argentine ant .....	2988
Perth Hospital, as to appointment of matron .....	2988
Leave of absence .....	2988
Bill: Commonwealth Powers, 2R. ....	2989
Adjournment, Special .....	3003

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

## QUESTIONS (3).

### CARTING CONTRACTS.

#### *As to Condition of Tenders.*

Hon. J. CORNELL asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Is one Lambert, carting contractor, who is operating in the Lakes localities east of Newdegate, allowed by the Liquid Fuel Board to drive his trucks solely on petrol? If so, why? 2, When tendering for carting contracts, are all intending contractors, other than Lambert, advised by the Transport Board that the fitting of gas-producers to their trucks is a condition precedent to their tenders being considered? If so, why? 3, Is Lambert allowed to carry petrol necessary for propelling his trucks in a petrol-driven truck from Perth or elsewhere to the Lakes localities? If so, why is he not forced to use the railway system for this purpose as far as Newdegate?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Upon representations being made by the W.A. Transport Board in the interests of the primary producers, the Liquid Fuel Board permitted vehicles in this isolated area to operate on petrol, during the "peak" season for wheat and superphosphate carting. Representations made by the Phillips River Road Board to the W.A. Transport Board influenced it in securing the services of one Chas. Gibson to operate a petrol-driven truck in conjunction with Mr. W. R. Barron of Ravensthorpe, for the transport of wheat from the Ravensthorpe area. Consideration given to Lambert's transport was only an extension of the facilities provided to Barron and Gibson; that is, all operators were permitted to use petrol during wheat-carting season, this being in accordance with a State-wide policy whereby wheat-carters were granted sufficient petrol to enable them to transport wheat expeditiously. Mr. Lambert operated semi-trailer units specially equipped with bulk wheat tanks of a 10-ton capacity to conform to Government requirements. Due to the heavy loads and poor road conditions greater economy is effected by the use of petrol. Powered by producer-gas the vehicles concerned would be compelled to take lighter loading resulting in an extension of the carting season, which even now does not terminate before the end of April. The excessive corrugations and long gradients on the roads used in this isolated area make this cartage difficult even with the use of petrol. 3, All regular and continuous services in-