

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 1st August, 1944.

Chairman of Committees: Election of Hon. J. Cornell	PAGE 15
Address-in-reply, second day	16
Bill: Supply (No. 1), £2,700,000, 1s.	26

The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES.

Election of Hon. J. Cornell.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY [4.55]: I move, without notice—

That Hon. J. Cornell be appointed Chairman of Committees.

HON. C. B. WILLIAMS (South): I wish to ask a question.

The PRESIDENT: The time for asking questions has passed.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I wish to speak against the motion.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member may speak to the motion, but it is very unusual.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I quite understand that everything is unusual, as usual. I am opposed to the motion. Will that suffice? I am no party to the motion. I know all about the honourable understandings and undertakings, but I feel quite put out on this occasion and I am no party to the motion. If Mr. Cornell will assure the House that he will relinquish some of the honorary positions that he holds on committees, I shall support it, but I see no reason why Mr. Cornell should hold four honorary positions in this Council. I do not want any of his jobs, but we have had two or three years of this utter nonsense. Elderly members will never give way to the younger men of the House by allowing them to take up positions that are waiting for them.

I remember that 12 months ago Mr. Cornell spoke against my then opposition to a similar motion. He said that the Standing Orders Committee should do something about it. Well, Mr. Cornell is on the Standing Orders Committee, and so are you, Mr.

President. You have done nothing; you have simply sat back and you again put me in the position of not being able to propose a colleague who, I understand, is quite fitted for the position and should have it. If there were another Labour member present I would nominate Mr. Hall for the position. I cannot ask the Minister to second my nomination, but I would expect the House to support me. I think Mr. Cornell knows that what I say is not personal. In my opinion, positions on committees should be allotted to various members of this House. To put it in the vernacular, we are all mixed up. Are we all fools? With you, Sir, Mr. Mann and Sir Hal Colebatch acting on the Printing Committee, I should be perfectly satisfied. I would give those positions to you and be convinced that the work of the committee would be well done. I have given Mr. Cornell the opportunity to resign or not to be nominated to other committees.

The PRESIDENT: The motion deals with the appointment of Chairman of Committees.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I quite understand that. I believe I am in order in opposing the motion. If I am not, please say so, as I always abide by your ruling. I contend I am quite in order in opposing the motion. As I said, my colleagues are absent and I cannot appeal to the Chief Secretary to second my nomination if I nominated another member, which I shall probably do. I say in all frankness—I am not twisting—that I was not at any of the preliminary meetings, although I have attended such meetings in previous years. I must stand up to my job. I ask Mr. Cornell if he will rise in his place and say that he will get away from these other committees so that the younger members of the House may have an opportunity to play a part themselves. I do not mind if the hon. member becomes Chairman of Committees. Indeed I do not know anyone as capable as he is that I would put in his place, but I do not know why he should have a monopoly of the position. About eight years ago Mr. Cornell said that was his last term in Parliament, but here he is again with another six years of Parliamentary life in front of him. This sort of thing has gone on too long. If members vote in favour of Mr. Cornell being elected Chairman of Committees and also being a member of four

other committees, the public of Western Australia will get what is coming to them. That is all!

HON. J. CORNELL (South): I do not intend to offer any defence against the outburst of my colleague.

Hon. C. B. Williams: You cannot do it.

Hon. J. CORNELL: He will always have his little say, but what he has said this afternoon has nothing to do with the case. The hon. member has chosen the wrong time in which to make his remarks.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Will you excuse me, Mr. President? That was said last time. I would have to interject and so I will leave the Chamber.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I wish, Mr. President, you would discipline my colleague. He tries to run the Legislative Council, and I do not allow anyone to do that when I am in a position to prevent him. The motion is a simple one, namely, that I should be appointed Chairman of Committees. Had Mr. Williams confined his remarks to the motion moved by the Chief Secretary he would have been entirely in order, but throughout his speech he has been out of order. Had he waited until to-morrow I would probably have seen the Chief Secretary and asked to be relieved from membership of the only committee from which I could ask to be relieved, namely, the House Committee, on which I have served for 30 years.

If elected Chairman of Committees I must, by the Standing Orders, serve on the Standing Orders Committee, just as you, Mr. President, serve on all committees. I will leave it to the House tomorrow to say whether or not I am to be elected to the House Committee. I have not been a member of four committees, as stated by Mr. Williams. I have to be a member of the Standing Orders Committee as Chairman of Committees, and by the will of the House I have also served as a member of the House Committee. Those are the only committees I have been on. On four occasions for a period of 18 years the House has seen fit to elect me without opposition as Chairman of Committees. I see that Mr. Williams has now returned to the Chamber. I advise him that if at any time he wishes to explode about any individual member he should stay in the Chamber and take his medicine.

Question put and passed.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Second Day.

Debate resumed from the 27th July.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [5.55]: When moving the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply, Mr. Fraser made use of the word "democracy." In the present circumstances it is rather an unfortunate word to use. Never has this State or the Commonwealth as a whole been so far removed from democracy as it is today. We have had an illustration of that this very afternoon when I think we had a record number of regulations laid on the Table of the House. Those regulations have been promulgated since Parliament rose last year, and now have been laid on the Table at practically the commencement of the new Parliament. That is really the work of bureaucracy, something I have been objecting to for some time. I hope the House will be careful in all future legislation not to give too much power for the framing of regulations. Year after year we are slowly but surely drifting into a state of bureaucracy which is ousting democracy altogether. Parliament itself is not established on democratic lines. Candidates for Parliament are selected from a number of persons who offer themselves to the electors. That is not democratic, because the electors only have a choice amongst those people who become candidates. In the Federal sphere we find further evidence of bureaucracy.

I notice in the Speech that reference is made to a surplus having been obtained for the fourth term in succession. They were only small surpluses. Surely there are times when we should expect surpluses. It is not possible to spend much money in these days, and the Government certainly cannot do so. Public utilities, rollingstock and everything has been falling into a bad condition over the past few years. Because of the manpower position we cannot greatly improve the present state of affairs, but the position does mean that those activities are not costing money and that the Government cannot therefore spend it. The State is receiving a tremendous benefit from the expenditure of Federal funds in the war sphere. Small though the last surplus was, surely we had a right to expect that the revenue would exceed the expenditure. There is nothing for the Government to gloat over in that respect.

The Speech also states that the expansion of our secondary industries has been very gratifying. Where are those secondary industries, and where is there any ground for gratification? The Lake Campion undertaking may be all right. Mr. Seddon has asked some awkward questions concerning it, and we shall be given the answers tomorrow. The industry at Lake Campion may be on the road to becoming successful, but it is not right that the Government should take all the credit. The credit really lies with the Martin Brothers who stuck to the proposition, and night after night and in the early hours of the morning—as I know from my own knowledge—worked hard to cope with problems which the experts at the time were unable to solve. Twice that I know of the Government turned down the proposition as being no good. Now that it has been proved to be good it is said by the Government that it is gratifying to have such an industry within our borders.

Reference is also made in the Speech to charcoal iron and charcoal itself. I hope that industry proves successful, although it is still doubtful whether—owing to the high capitalisation involved—it can be established on a sound commercial basis. I have yet to learn that charcoal iron is in favour today even if it can be produced. No doubt considerable quantities of charcoal will be required until the petrol situation eases, and a supply of charcoal will be of benefit for that reason. The Speech refers to the achievements of the past. To my mind the achievements of the past prove that the present Government is the weakest this State has ever had. It creates nothing. It relies entirely upon the Commonwealth Government, and is submissive to that body in every way. When one travels around the country one finds that many people are saying, "We intend to vote for the referendum although we know we shall be giving away the most important functions of State, because we have such a weak Government in office." I have heard that remark hundreds of times. I agree that it is so, because the Government shows no strength—especially when dealing with the Federal authorities.

After reading the Lieut.-Governor's Speech I can see no prospect for the future. In fact, there is no suggestion of anything for the future. I notice one great fault that has been apparent in the Governor's Speeches for a number of years, namely, the absence of

a forecast of the legislation for the session. Has the Government no ability to enable it to formulate a programme of necessary legislation to be dealt with during the session? For a number of years it has shown lack of ability in that direction.

Hon. A. Thomson: We have only had it in the last stages of the session.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Surely when Parliament is called together the Government should be in a position to say what legislation will be necessary in the immediate future instead of leaving members to learn of it at the eleventh hour. Let me instance the chaos in the meat industry. I doubt if ever there was such a chaotic position. What has the Government done? I maintained 2½ to three years ago that it was the Government's duty to go to the Commonwealth Government and ask for facilities to provide more cold storage in this State. Cold storage accommodation should have been increased fivefold compared with what it is today, and then it would have been possible to store meat and make it available to the public. Serious as the position is today it will be even more so in the future. There is a great deal of wild talk about mutton, that had been bought cheaply and set aside for dehydration, being put on the market. I think we are lucky to have that mutton. After all I understand that only 130 tons have gone into consumption. We are lucky to have that quantity even if it is of poor quality. It is meat. I am afraid, however, that we shall in the future be very much worse off than we are now. The Government should have looked ahead and made provision for more cold storage so that space could have been available when we had the meat to put into it.

The Speech is not eulogistic about what has been achieved in regard to manpower required in various industries. In the case of goldmining I point out that the Government only became active after the men had gone from the Goldfields. After all, however, gold is not wanted today. When we come to the questions of meat, of the dairying industry and wheatgrowing what do we find? During the last few months some men have been liberated to go back into the dairying industry, but how much additional butter can be produced from the dairying industry today? A large number of cows which could not be milked because

of lack of manpower is no longer available. The industry was robbed of labour and as a consequence many of the cows were sent to the butcher. Thousands of cows that have taken years to breed up have been lost to the industry. They have been turned into meat instead of being kept on properties for dairying purposes, and this has been necessary simply because the dairyman could not handle the work entailed. Throughout the dairying districts today many women are doing work that men should be carrying out. Certainly the Army has released some men for work in the industry, but it is altogether too late in the day. The State Government should have stood firm and insisted on an adequate supply of manpower for the industry. Had the Government done that the position would not be so bad as it is today. The same conditions apply to other industries.

Let members consider the shearing problem as it exists today. Many progressive farmers have gone to the expense of erecting shearing sheds and installing plant capable of doing all the shearing work they require as well as that of their neighbours, yet they are not allowed to use those plants. They are told, "No, you must not use your shearing plant but your shearing can be done by a contractor who will come on to your property with his plant." In order to carry out the contract shearing, the contractor's plant has in some instances to travel up to 100 miles. But even if a journey of only 50 or 80 miles were involved it means the moving of two heavy lorries that are required to haul the plant. Of course the farmers can get their shearing done, but it must be done by the contractor who uses his own plant and the farmers are not allowed to use the plants they have installed.

Surely the Government should put a stop to that and see that such a practice is not allowed to continue. It does not stop at that. The farmers are required to pay £1 more per hundred sheep for the shearing operations. Look at the money that costs the farmers, yet all the time their own plants are lying idle! All this is done so that the man who has the contract can make bigger profits. Then again the farmers are restricted regarding their petrol supplies. They are not receiving half of what they require. The same position arises with regard to tyres. Yet

the shearing contractor can work with his two heavy lorries, which will not do more than about 12 miles to the gallon and require tyres that are so much needed for other industrial purposes. This is something to which the Government should have given attention.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Which Government?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The State Government.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Has the State Government any control over the supply of tyres?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Surely the State Government should bring pressure to bear on the Prime Minister who had his political birth in Western Australia. With Mr. Curtin in power in the Federal sphere, surely the State Government should have taken steps to see that Western Australia had a reasonable share of industries established here. What industries have been commenced here? Practically none at all. There is the small establishment at Welshpool.

Hon. W. R. Hall: You were a Minister of the Crown at one time.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The Welshpool factory is hardly turning out any work at all.

Hon. C. B. Williams: What about telling us—

The PRESIDENT: Order! I must ask the hon. member to keep order.

Hon. C. B. Williams: I am a bit deaf.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Then there is the work undertaken at Midland Junction. Little or nothing is being done there. Recently an inspection was made of the annexe and the advice was tendered that it should not operate any longer. No notice was taken of that recommendation and the annexe is being continued, but with little being done. Those are two industries that were started here. Compare that with the position in the Eastern States where 31 textile factories were established—but none in Western Australia.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Yet the people put seven men into the Federal Parliament at the last election.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. C. B. Williams: That was what the people thought at the last election.

The PRESIDENT: Will the hon. member keep order. If he does not keep order I shall have to take other action.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Why does not Mr. Baxter tell the truth?

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. C. B. Williams: I am sorry, Sir, Mr. Baxter does not remember that, but I do. However, I am a bit deaf and I shall leave the Chamber.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Earlier in my remarks I referred to the bureaucratic control that is exercised at present. No better example of the truth of my statement could be obtained than that which is happening before us now. If there is any better example of bureaucratic control, I do not know of it. I refer to the tramway strike. I shall not discuss the rights or wrongs of the matter. This is not the proper time to do so.

Hon. W. R. Hall: Why speak about it?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I wish Mr. Hall would keep quiet and exercise a little commonsense.

Hon. W. R. Hall: I shall do so.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I shall leave that phase to others who are dealing with the matter, but I certainly was astonished to read in "The West Australian" this morning a statement attributed to the Minister for Railways (Mr. Nulsen) who is the responsible Minister in connection with this matter. The report in the paper read—

Mr. Chamberlain stated that he telephoned the Minister for Railways (Mr. Nulsen) yesterday and informed him of the stop-work meeting. He pointed out that the tramway employees were fully aware of the inconvenience that would be caused to the public if the trams and trolley buses failed to run in time to take home the crowds that they had brought to the city in the morning and they (the employees) were very anxious to resume work. He suggested that Mr. Nulsen, as Minister, should intervene. Mr. Nulsen, he said, replied that he had not been officially informed by the department of the position and that whatever information he had was obtained from the newspapers. He said he had been aware that the union had wished him to receive a deputation on the matter but unfortunately he was then "tied up" until Monday (yesterday) at 9.30 a.m. Since then he had been speaking to the department over the telephone.

That indicates the manner in which Government departments are administered in these days. My experience as a Minister of the Crown—

Hon. W. R. Hall: Yes, you were a Minister of the Crown at one time.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: —was that if there was any trouble at all, I, as the Minister concerned, was the first to be informed of it. It was not a case of waiting until a strike occurred or of reaching a serious position

such as we are confronted with now. The Minister for Railways admitted that he had not been in touch with the department about it. He said he knew nothing about the trouble and had not been officially informed of the nature of the dispute. He said he would have to get in touch with the department about it. What sort of a Government is the present Administration? Whither are we drifting? Here we find a civil servant going right ahead in a serious matter of this description, and yet the responsible Minister is not informed about the trouble. If members want any better illustration of bureaucratic control I do not know where they will find it.

With regard to the season and seasonal prospects, there are many people who seem down in the mouth about the situation at present. My experience as a wheatgrower is that when we have good opening rains during the latter part of May, invariably we get good late spring rains and these latter are the most important of the year. I do not consider there is any reason at all to be pessimistic about the season especially now that we have had good falls so that fallowing can be proceeded with for next year's seeding. I told farmers recently that they would be well advised to fallow as much land as they could despite the restricted area allowed for wheat. Already it is being bruited abroad that the restrictions will not apply after this wheat season. If that should be so, then every farmer should place himself in the position of being able to increase his acreage under wheat so as to take advantage of the high price at which his commodity will sell in the post-war period. Members will have noticed a statement made by Mr. Scully recently, that the world is over-supplied with wheat, but I take no notice of him. He is an inexperienced man and does not know what he is talking about. Anyone who had experience of the period following the 1914-18 war will know that the same thing will happen this time, and we shall be able to sell every bushel of wheat we can grow, and sell it at a good price.

Hon. V. Hamersley: But the railways will not be able to haul the wheat.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I was a Minister of the Crown during and after the 1914-18 war, and I know that at that time there was no difficulty whatever in selling wheat; the trouble was to get it loaded on ships. It

behoves farmers to place themselves in a position to take advantage of the situation that will arise after this war just as it did after the earlier hostilities. It behoves us to do everything possible to take advantage of the demand that will arise for our wheat, and if we do it will bring much revenue to the State. Farmers will be well advised to adopt the course I have advocated, more especially seeing that we have been assured lately that there will be an increase of 50 per cent. in the supply of superphosphate. I know there are rumours that we are not to get the increased supply, but I do not know where those rumours have arisen. Within the last few days I have received information that there is to be no alteration respecting the increased supplies. In the circumstances farmers should protect themselves and prepare for the future. Generally speaking, I am not very keen on winter ploughing, which sometimes proves valuable but sometimes is ineffective. If there is to be an increase of 50 per cent. in the superphosphate supplies, which will mean an increase this year to 180,000 tons as compared with last year's deliveries of 120,000 tons, that will give our farmers an opportunity to increase the wheat yield, and certainly they should take advantage of it. Western Australia is the only State that has been restricted to the extent I have indicated, and it is up to farmers now to be prepared to take advantage of the situation that will arise with the extra supplies of super.

With regard to the future and the prospects of rehabilitation, there is much talk about the land position. From the standpoint of repatriation, I have yet to learn that anything has been done by either the Commonwealth Government or the State Government with regard to repatriation. If anything is to be done along those lines, a big reduction in the cost of tractors and of all classes of agricultural machinery, as well as of commodities necessary for farming operations, is essential if agriculture is to be a payable proposition in future. The heavy duties imposed on agricultural requirements should be reduced. Let members consider the cost of a tractor. There is the war-time price to be considered and the heavy cost makes the purchase of a tractor practically prohibitive. Notwithstanding that fact, a farmer must have additional power, without which he must go out of farming operations. There are no horses procurable;

even if there were, the necessary hands cannot be employed so that the teams may be handled. Even farmers' sons are refusing to handle horse teams, seeing the advantages to be derived from the use of tractors, and we cannot blame them for cultivating that feeling.

On top of all this, there is the shortage of rubber tyres. I do not refer to the tyres necessary for the lighter types of vehicles. I speak feelingly on this question because every week since last September I have been almost daily to the departments concerned in order to discuss with officials the troubles of farmers. As a matter of fact, the farmers' position in this respect could not be worse than it is today. My concern is largely for tyres for the heavy lorries and tractors, in which regard the position at present is impossible. I cannot see any daylight beyond this. I wonder how long the Army is to be allowed to have all over Australia hundreds of thousands of vehicles, much of the plant being obsolete but all replete with heavy rubber tyres, and petrol supplies in plenty. Why is the Army permitted to continue along those lines and do nothing with the vehicles at all, merely throwing them on the scrap-heap? Many of the vehicles they possess will never be used.

Hon. W. R. Hall: Why not take a deputation to the Minister.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: What is the good of a deputation? The State Government should be more active in these matters. They should take steps to ascertain if some semblance of wisdom cannot prevail among the Army Chiefs who evidently do not realise the seriousness of the position. They want all manpower and all womanpower, and every commodity. Unquestionably they have hundreds of men and women who are not doing anything like a reasonable day's work; indeed, some of them are doing hardly anything. And yet the military authorities cry out for more! In the past I have refrained from speaking on this subject, but I consider that now is the time for us to voice our opinions so that they may reach the ears of the Army Chiefs, enabling them to realise what is the position. We must have supplies of rubber, and better distribution of manpower.

In our North-West a most serious position exists. I was interested in a station there at one time, and thus have practical experi-

ence of the industry. In present circumstances I cannot see anything but prospects of calamity for the North-West, so bad is the position. For many of the pastoralists of the North-West, all possibilities of recovery are beyond them. How can the pastoralists recover with the present taxation and the small numbers of their sheep? The North-West three years ago carried 5,500,000 sheep, which number in 1942 had dropped to 2,700,000. Cattle there dropped from 850,000 in 1917 to 547,338 in 1941. There was an immense drop in the number of cattle; and in the four years from 1935 to 1939 there was a loss of 4,182,000 in the number of sheep. In consequence the properties in the North-West are utterly overloaded with debt. The liability on stations there increased from £3,800,000 in 1934 to £5,000,000 in 1939, while the value of station assets fell from £8,250,000 to £5,900,000. From these figures it is evident that the parlous condition of the North-West is due to the war only in a small degree, and is mainly due to the drought seasons.

It is recognised that the maximum value to be placed per head on sheep carried by a property in the North-West is £2 per head. With the seasons which the North-West has experienced, however, nothing like that value can be realised. I shall quote the position of two properties to show that without immediate and energetic action serious calamities must ensue. The first property I shall deal with is a partnership. In 1934 the property carried an overdraft of £17,088, and was carrying 15,300 sheep. By 1938 the number of sheep was reduced to under 2,000 and the overdraft increased to £18,500, and in 1942 the overdraft was £22,224 and the sheep numbered 7,900. In addition to the sheep being over-valued, this meant that a large sum of money would have to be found for taxation, especially as, this being a partnership, the five-years averaging of incomes did not apply. Members will realise how hard that property was hit. Now to take another property, held in individual ownership. In 1934 it carried an overdraft of £12,346 on 6,300 sheep. By 1942 the overdraft had increased to £22,263, and the number of sheep had decreased to 5,816. An overdraft of £22,000 with less than 6,000 sheep—or, roughly, £4 per head! I can speak of im-

possibility of revival under existing circumstances in the case of this property.

Now I propose to make some suggestions regarding the pastoral industry of the North-West. There are four ways by which that industry can be re-established. Unfortunately three of those ways are Federal. The Commonwealth Government has to become alive to the fact that this wonderful country, Western Australia's North-West, will languish unless relieved of the burden of income tax placed upon it. The law with regard to income tax must be amended to allow of averaging over ten years. I moved an amendment to that effect on the last occasion when the matter was dealt with in this House. I am firmly of opinion that North-West stations must be allowed a ten-years average. Next, the law should be amended to limit the liabilities of companies, to which no average applies at present. Extension of the period was recommended by Mr. Payne, who investigated the position on behalf of the Commonwealth Government, and by our own Surveyor General, Mr. Fyfe, who, I am indeed sorry to say, is seriously ill at the present time. I am convinced that all members regret such cases of illness, and we regret them especially in the case of a good man like Mr. Fyfe.

It frequently happens that at the end of a good season the natural increase is so heavy that money cannot be found to meet the taxation on the income produced by the property. That is where the bad feature of non-averaging comes in. The natural increase on the property is taken into account as income. It may prove a very poor source of income, because heavy losses occur in connection with natural increase. A station-owner might lose two-thirds of that increase, but he has already been muled in income tax for the whole of the increase. In such circumstances a limited liability company has no redress whatever, in the absence of averaging. That is the ridiculous aspect of the present system of taxation. If I were engaged in the North-West in sheep, I simply would not mark a lamb until early in July. However, the taxation law makes station-owners do those things. One pays taxation one year on natural increase of stock, and in the next year incurs heavy mortality through drought.

Another aspect is the compulsory writing-down of debts. By no other means can recovery be secured. A property can only be

made to produce a certain amount of income, and on that basis can carry only a certain amount of capital. What is the use of overloading debt with interest and compound interest piling up each year? The present system of voluntary reduction of debt has helped a little, but it will never overcome the whole difficulty. Eventually compulsory reduction of secured debts must be brought in. In many cases there has already been severe writing-down in the private ledgers, but not in the open accounts. Nevertheless, many of the station-owners will be walking off their properties unless the law is altered. Before another tenant can be found for a property, there must be heavy writing-down, such writing-down as would have enabled the original tenant to carry on.

Of late years it has been a habit of some public men to abuse Parliament. Indeed, the stage has been reached when it seems as if some of those men have no respect at all for Acts of Parliament. The most astounding feature, however, is the attitude of the present Government. I refer to the action of our Premier in ignoring an Act relating to Federal powers which both Houses of this Parliament passed last year. I recall that the measure was amended in this Chamber. However, the Government accepted the measure as amended. When a legislative proposal has been accepted by Parliament and has been placed on the statute-book, we find that the very Government in charge of the legislation proceeds to ignore it. Why did Ministers approve of the Bill if they did not intend to put it into effect? Apparently the persuasive powers of people in eastern Australia proved too much for our Government. Members know what a strong State-rights man Mr. Willecock was up to November of 1942. His speeches are on record, speeches urging the protection of the rights of this State. But those speeches suddenly ceased.

What happened then? The Premier was firm on the point that there should be no encroachment on State powers by the Federal Parliament; but after the Labour Conference held at Melbourne in December of 1942 he became an ardent supporter of the Federal proposals. At any rate, he put the Bill before the Parliament of this State in its entirety. The members of the Convention were said to be unanimous concerning it, but there was no unanimity. Consider the hybrid way in which the proposal was dealt with by the Convention

and the small amount of time taken to discuss it! The Convention which met to evolve the Commonwealth Constitution under which we are working took years to arrive at a suitable decision. Under that Constitution we have continued to operate fairly satisfactorily for 42 years, notwithstanding the encroachment on the State by the Commonwealth Government during the last war.

I know what happened then and my remarks are not directed to one particular Commonwealth Government, but to all of them. I do not trust any of them so far as this State is concerned, because not one has given us reasonable consideration. All at once this matter of increased powers was sprung on us. It is rather peculiar that the suggestion should have been made with the advent into Parliament of a gentleman from the professional sphere, Dr. Evatt. He is the man who forced this through. He is a little man who wants to become a dictator like Mussolini or Hitler. And the Eastern States agreed to the proposal! Two Bills were prepared by Dr. Evatt and both of them were cast aside as not suitable.

Then a draft Bill was prepared. But under what premises! Who prepared it? There were six State Premiers—four of them Labour—Dr. Evatt, Mr. W. M. Hughes—a confirmed Unificationist who could never look outside the boundaries of New South Wales—and Sir George Knowles, the secretary. Mr. Curtin was not appointed to the committee, but attended and took part in the deliberations. The committee sat for a few hours and drafted the present proposals that are to be placed before the people in the form of a referendum. That is to say, 14 are the original powers decided on; the other three have been added since. It cannot be said there was full unanimity concerning the draft Bill. It took that large Convention only two hours, during the committee stage, to deal with everything contained in the draft Bill. In spite of that, it is said that the delegates were satisfied. The States soon showed that they were not satisfied! What is Australia coming to when men can be allowed in a few hours to ride roughshod and push such proposals on to the people of this country? It is absolutely wrong. Again, this same Dr. Evatt, who everyone knows is one of the

ablest King's Counsel in Australia, was asked on three occasions to explain what some of the provisions meant and how far they would extend. One would expect that Dr. Evatt, as the principal person drafting the amendments and the sponsor of the measure, would have been able to give a satisfactory reply, but he fenced and hedged the whole time and no satisfactory answer was given. Finally he said, "We will leave it to the High Court to decide." We know that there are at least three of the clauses of the measure which, if agreed to by the people of Australia, will have to be submitted to the High Court for a decision as to what they really mean and probably, if we had time to investigate the matter more thoroughly, we would find many more in the same category.

Hon. J. Cornell: The hon. member has forgotten Subsections (2), (3) and (4).

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Three of the proposals were added after the Convention and were never considered by the Convention at all. They were after-thoughts introduced by our little friend, Dr. Evatt. There is no question about that. Let us consider the most important of these proposals—organised marketing. It took the committee seven minutes to consider this proposal. Could we have anything more inadvisable than that? Are we going to give Western Australia away altogether? Should not the members of our State Government make a protest and fight to protect the sovereign rights of Western Australia? They took an oath as administrators of this country, yet they are remaining practically silent on this matter. The electors of this State should remember how they were prepared to give away our sovereign rights, making ours a servile State and conditions a thousand times worse than they have been in the past—and heaven knows they have been bad enough! All this is nothing compared with the malicious and lying screeds put over the air. I never thought that during my lifetime I would find the public life of this State dragged in the mire as it is at present.

The lying is something fearful. Housewives are told that child endowment will be done away with unless they vote yes, and people are informed that old age and invalid pensions will meet a similar fate. These benefits have been in existence for many years and nobody has ever disputed

the right of the Government to confer them. Was anything ever said about these matters before Dr. Evatt entered the arena? To what position is Dr. Evatt endeavouring to climb on the backs of Labour supporters who cannot see what is happening? Consider the way in which the question of repatriation has been handled. We are told that repatriation will cease if the referendum is not carried. One would think, to hear what is said, that there was terrible suffering and privation following the last war. We know there was nothing of the sort. People who refer to this matter are thinking of the period from 1930 to 1932.

Let us analyse what help this State received during that crisis, which was worldwide. No one could have prevented that depression and if there were another like it—which heaven forbid—no Commonwealth Government, with all the powers in the world at its command, could prevent it. After the last war the Commonwealth Government expended £300,000,000 on repatriation. Yet the Government today says it has no power in that direction. That expenditure was approved by the Federal Attorney General and was never challenged. Why bring the matter up now as a bogey? As a matter of fact, more than that was spent because a large amount was expended in conjunction with the States. But the figure I have given is sufficient for my argument. Now, for its own purpose, the Commonwealth Government discovers that the expenditure of all that money was illegal.

What arrant nonsense! And what poisonous stuff is being broadcast over the air. Women are told that if they want their husbands to obtain positions when they return from the war and do not want to see them on the dole, they must vote yes. They are told that if they do not want to face poverty they must support the referendum proposals. Mothers are told, "You want jobs for your boys. In that case you must vote yes or there will be no jobs for them." Let me give an instance of what occurred after the last war. Take the case of soldiers' homes. The Commonwealth authorities made such a wholesale mess of this matter that they had to hand it back to the State department before it could be put on a sound footing.

After coming to an agreement with this State for the Workers' Homes Board to rent soldiers' homes, Senator Millen withdrew and cancelled the agreement at the last moment. I know because I was the Minister with whom he reached the agreement in Melbourne. Following this he established his own department here. What was the result? Mr. Cornell and others who had anything to do with repatriation know what an awful mess the Commonwealth made of it and are aware that the authorities had to come cap-in-hand and ask the State to take over the scheme. The Workers' Homes Board, to their credit, acceded to the request and made a good job of it. The point I want to emphasise, however, is that £300,000,000 was expended by way of repatriation for members of all the services.

Now let us consider the question of the inclusion of the word "employment" in the referendum proposals. This is a matter that will seriously affect Western Australia. I am surprised that the State Government, being a Labour Government, cannot see the nigger in the woodpile and is not objecting to it and fighting it. It should be protecting the wage-earners and salaried employees of this State. This House agreed to give the Commonwealth full control of repatriation and unemployment, but not in respect of employment. That matter was thrashed out here very exhaustively and the danger of including the word "employment" was clearly demonstrated. Yet that is one of the things the Commonwealth authorities are concentrating on with a view to having this referendum passed. Why are they so keen about this word being included? There are two reasons. For a long period of years people in the Eastern States have been endeavouring to bring the whole of Australia under the Federal Arbitration Act and the Federal industrial basic wage awards, but that is not for the good of the workers of this State. It is opposed to their best interests.

The other purpose is to enable the authorities to proceed with the regimentation of the people. The intention of the Federal authorities has been expressed over the air. I myself heard one of the principal speakers say that employers were not going to be allowed to engage or discharge employees when they liked, but that they were going to be directed in these matters. What

does that mean? It means regimentation for the rest of our lives, because if they are going to tie the employer down in that manner they must similarly restrict the employee. It must act both ways. Our State Government, representing the workers, should be protecting them and going all out to save them from being brought under this regimentation which will be achieved if the inclusion of this word "employment" is agreed to by the people of Australia through a referendum. It is a very dangerous word.

Organised marketing is another subject upon which much is being said. If this power is given to the Commonwealth Government, our internal, as well as our external markets will be controlled. This State has already given Canberra authority over everything we produce. That authority has been conferred by Act of Parliament. Why do the authorities not influence the other States to come into line and grant the same power that we have granted, instead of coming to Western Australia and trying to coerce the people into voting in this direction? If this particular power is granted the Commonwealth will do the same as is being done now. It will control our local markets.

In what position have the producers of this State found themselves in past years as a result of that control? The price of eggs has been 2d., 4d. and 6d. a dozen lower than in the Eastern States. Sides of bacon are at present 1¹/₂d. a lb. higher in Sydney than in Western Australia. Lard is 6d. a lb. here and 8d. a lb. there, and with regard to honey there is a difference of 2d. to 4d. a lb. These are only a few of the items which could be quoted. There is a definite danger to this State if the Commonwealth Government secures an affirmative vote at the referendum, with organised marketing, in addition to the other matters. It is surprising to think that our Premier should be so acquiescent in the proposal of the Commonwealth Government. He went away from here to the Convention what might be termed a "State lion" and, to be quite frank, is now a "Federal lamb." He is not standing up for the rights of the State which has elevated him to the position he holds today.

Hon. H. Seddon: He is a shorn lamb!

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: He might be that, too. Regarding industrial matters I would like members to recall the awful years of

1930-1933. Mr. Curtin himself said, "You can trust me, but I do not know what you are going to do with the U.A.P." What a nice admission! He asks to be given power but by the time that power is to be used Mr. Curtin might be anywhere, and he is only speaking for himself. Not only is he not speaking for the U.A.P., but he is also not speaking for the Wards, the Calwells or the party. Who can take an assurance like that from a man who is, after all, only in a temporary position? These matters will be taken over for all time, and not for five years. We, as men of experience, know that such big departments will be built up with so many ramifications that it will be impossible for them to be transferred back to the State.

Hon. A. Thomson: One would be an optimist to think so.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Yes. Mr. Curtin said, "You cannot trust the U.A.P." Is not that enough to make anyone vote no, and say that the Commonwealth should not encroach on the State, but that we should retain our own control? If the Federal authorities want control of repatriation, etc., let them come to the States and do things on an even basis. How can the Commonwealth Government direct this State from Canberra? Everything would have to be referred to Canberra, and we have already had experience here of what Canberra will say and how long they take to arrive at a decision. There is another matter which I think is serious, too. We are advocating Federal loans, and are overburdened with taxation, which we do not mind so long as it is for war purposes, but we do mind when that loan money or taxation is used to bolster the yes vote. If it is a good enough case, why does it need to be bolstered? Those concerned are using money which the Commonwealth Parliament has not authorised them to spend, and the Federal Auditor General should have something to say about it later. It is a pity that the Constitution does not contain power to make Ministers replace money which they have spent illegally. Unfortunately, no Constitution provides for that.

We are at war and Western Australia is Mr. Curtin's own State. I would like to be told one thing that he has done for the benefit of this State! Recently £30,000 was made available to Western Australia. Two

years ago a report was issued that £30,000 was urgently required for the Wundowie charcoal iron industry. It took Mr. Curtin two years to realise that it was wanted, and he realised it right on the verge of a referendum. I think the people of Western Australia can see how thin that is. It is a wretched thing to do at this particular time. There is no doubt that Mr. Curtin and the Commonwealth Ministry will be showering gifts in the way of all sorts of promises and bribes between this and the 19th inst. What is the position with the coalminers? There are hold-ups here as well as in other places. Mr. Curtin on eight occasions took a firm stand. He was going to deal with the coalminers by regulation or otherwise. But eight different times they sent him back with his tail down. Now he is in a new role; a degrading role for any politician, more especially a Prime Minister. He has said to the miners, "Produce so much coal between this and Christmas and I will bring in a Pensions Bill for coalminers."

That is a clear bribe to get these men to work. That is the way Australia is being governed now, and these are the people who are asking for further powers. Surely the people ought to realise just where they are going. Today I am trying to influence this Government to see the light and protect this State and its interests. Only a week or so ago a large number of shopkeepers were to be dealt with under the Commonwealth Price-Fixing Act. A lot is being said about the way the value of properties is going to soar. How will property values soar here? Of course it is all bluff; but many people will swallow it. As I was saying, these small shopkeepers were summoned under the price-fixing legislation for overcharging for goods. The time arrived for them to appear before the court when a telegram came through from no less a person than Dr. Evatt to say, "Hold all summonses over." He might just as well have added, "Until the 19th August." Is it not playing it low down? This is a man who comes from the High Court Bench of Australia.

Another point is this: Why force the referendum on at the present time? It is nothing more than trading on the emotions of the people. It is trading on the emotions of the womenfolk while the men are away. There are two to two and a half years yet before these powers will be needed. They

are not necessary now while the National Security Regulations are in existence, but after the war. Why the urgency now? These people have left nothing undone which they could do and there is nothing of even the lowest order that they have left out. They have resorted to any means in an endeavour to get the referendum through. I do not know what Australia is coming to. The Commonwealth authorities are harping about repatriation and what they will do. I have yet to learn that there is anything done by the Government that talks so much about repatriation. Soldiers are coming back now and are returning to their properties. Some cannot procure the necessary machinery and spare parts to put their farms in proper order. The men are starting to return now and we should have a scheme ready. The Leader of this House should let us know whether this Government drew up any scheme whatever for repatriation. I hope, on this occasion, that the State Government will not depend entirely on the Commonwealth Government as it has done for practically everything since the war started. It is time this Government stiffened its back and stood on its own feet. I support the motion.

On motion by Hon. E. H. H. Hall, debate adjourned.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 1), £2,700,000.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

House adjourned at 6.14 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 1st August, 1944.

	PAGE
Electoral: Swearing-in of Member	20
Motion: Condolence, the late Mr. R. S. Sampson, M.L.A.	26
Questions: Bunbury Harbour	27
Third Party Insurance, as to inclusion in comprehensive policy	27
Traffic Act, as to motor headlights	28
Railway rollingstock, as to transfers to Commonwealth	28
Wheat transport, as to statement by Senator Fraser	28
Henry Wills and Co., as to properties occupied at Albany	29
Commonwealth Powers Referendum, as to appointment of State scrutineers	20
Post-war works, as to Western Australian programme	29
Tramway dispute	30
Motions: Sitting days and hours	30
Government business, precedence	30
Committees for the Session	30
Election of Chairman of Committees	32
Bill: Supply (No. 1), £2,700,000, all stages	32
Address-in-reply, second day, amendment	35

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

ELECTORAL—SWEARING-IN OF MEMBER.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am prepared to swear in the member for North Perth who was returned at the last general election.

Mr. Abbott took and subscribed the oath and signed the roll.

MOTION—CONDOLENCE.

The late Mr. R. S. Sampson, M.L.A.

THE PREMIER [4.34]: I move, without notice—

That this House desires to place upon its records its profound sense of the loss sustained in the passing of the late Richard Stanley Sampson, a member of this House, and that an expression of the sincerest sympathy of members be conveyed to his widow by Mr. Speaker.

It is a sad occasion when we perform the duty of recording a motion of sympathy with a widow of a member of this House, and particularly when it concerns a man who has been with us for many years. The late Mr. Sampson had a long and honourable record of service in this House of which he was a member for, I think, over 23 years. During that time he always fought for what he thought to be right in the interests of the welfare of the State, and he did so very persistently in every way open to him. He won the respect and esteem of all members