

the State. I assure the Government that I personally will do all I can to help in any direction whatsoever.

**MR. TRIAT** (Mt. Magnet) [7.42]: I congratulate the member for Pilbara (Mr. W. Hegney) on his address last week. Knowing him as I do I was not surprised at the manner in which he handled his subject. There is no doubt the Speech of the Lieut.-Governor contains very little that one can deal with. In a time of war that is perhaps excusable. Everyone seems to be in a fog. I am in a fog myself. The decisions and announced intentions of the Commonwealth Government are causing people to become more befogged than they were in the past. Let me refer to the petrol rationing proposals. No one seems to know what is going to be done. We are told that the rationing is to consist of sufficient petrol to take a vehicle 40 miles in a week. In my electorate it is common for people to have to travel long distances. At Sandstone for instance, there is only one train a week and residents in the district come long distances to meet the train and obtain their supplies. People are forced to get their supplies at the railhead, and many of them travel from 80 to 120 miles with that object in view. Those who come long distances sometimes subscribe for the cost of a motor truck. There is one place 86 miles away from the railhead where 40 people are living. If the proposals are carried into effect and only sufficient petrol is available to take a car 40 miles in a week, those persons will be unable to secure their supplies. At another place 120 miles away from the railhead there are 200 residents all of whom will be greatly inconvenienced. Everything in the district has been done by motor transport, and those people will be unable to exist if they are restricted to enough petrol to carry them 40 miles per week. It is all very well to say that motorists can instal a gas producer plant on the vehicles, but such devices cost money. Many of the people to whom I have referred are prospectors, and they could not afford £60 or £70 for the purchase of a gas producer. If petrol is rationed as is proposed, the State Government will have to stand behind many of the taxpayers to enable them to purchase gas producers. In my opinion it is not beyond the capacity of the authorities at the Midland Junction Workshops or at some other foundry in

Western Australia, to turn out a gas producer plant at a cost less than £60 or £70. The patent rights may be held by some concern, but I do not know that that covers every form of gas producer. I believe patent rights are held by people who make their profits on the sales.

Hon. C. G. Latham: At any rate, the plant could be improved.

Mr. TRIAT: Yes, and I believe the Government could encourage investigations along those lines and perhaps have a gas producer put on the market at a cost of £30. Possibly terms could be arranged so that a farmer who had not much money available, could secure the plant to enable him to work his property. Such a move would be of importance and in the interests of the State. In the meantime the people in the outer areas are confronted with the prospect of serious difficulty in regard to petrol supplies. They have to travel over long distances to the rail head in order to secure their requirements. In addition to the other centres I have mentioned, there is Field's Find and again Payne's Find, which is 98 miles from the rail-head. The people there depend on motor traction for supplies. There are 70 people at Field's Find, including 25 who are married. They secure their supplies from Wubin, but I admit that in that instance a gas producer is available, so that these people are not so seriously affected. Station properties in my electorate are in many instances situated 110 miles from the rail-head and that necessitates a journey every two weeks or so to secure supplies. Further than that, motor bicycles are used to travel over the station properties. There is no feed available in the country for stock, so that if horses were to be used for that work, the necessity would arise to provide feed for the animals. In those circumstances, obviously the use of motor bicycles is much the cheaper proposition. I trust the Premier will make representations to the Commonwealth Government when the next conference is held, so that special consideration will be given to the fuel requirements of those residing in the outer parts of Western Australia. I regard the manufacture of gas producers by the Government as a good suggestion, and I hope the Government will investigate the possibilities. I heard the Leader of the Opposition or the Leader of the National Party disagree to the manufacture being undertaken by the State. I did not think



anyone would object to that course being followed. If no private individual is prepared to supply gas producers at a reasonable price, the Government should step in and supply the need. I trust the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the National Party will not dispute the right of the Government to assume that responsibility.

During the present period it is most regrettable to learn that many of our men are out of work and, according to the Lieut. Governor's Speech, 6,000 are dependent upon the Government for part-time employment. I believe that is quite correct. The member for Irwin-Moore (Mr. Berry) said that many of them would probably be absorbed in the manufacture of munitions, but I am given to understand that that is not likely. I have been told that very few unskilled men will be required for munition work. On the other hand, those employed will have to be skilled tradesmen, such as fitters, turners, and so on.

The Minister for Mines: They have to be highly skilled.

Mr. TRIAT: I understand that is so, particularly for the manufacture of fuse caps. The operation is most delicate; if the fuse cap is not made perfectly, the shell will not explode. One regrettable feature is that most of the lads who leave school today are not skilled in any trade. From time to time we hear discussions regarding our system of education. Whatever may be said for it, the fact remains that little opportunity is available for our youth to be trained in any skilled trade until after he has left school. In my opinion no boy should leave school until he has practically one skilled trade at his finger tips. Every boy who passes his junior examination should be able to claim to have at least a good grip of one such trade. He should be able to acquire a knowledge of a trade such as carpentry, fitting, turning, electrical engineering, and so on. What do we find regarding the Junior Examination to-day? The syllabus shows that 14 subjects are available for the student and if he passes in five subjects, he is able to secure his Junior certificate. That means that he can take English, history, geography and a language together with, say, drawing, and he is able to secure his Junior certificate, although he has not even a smattering of one skilled trade. That is quite all right from one standpoint. With the possession of his certificate the lad can

secure a position, but, in my opinion, the holding of a Junior Examination certificate should not entitle a lad to any consideration beyond that accorded a boy who has passed out of the sixth standard. It would be far better if the Junior Examination included a compulsory subject that would give the lad some knowledge of a skilled trade that, with a little technical education after leaving school, would enable him to attain a proficiency sufficient to secure for him a place in industry. I suggest that the authorities of the Education Department should consider the advisability of including some such compulsory subject in the curriculum so that a lad after leaving school would be able to enter some useful occupation if required. Everyone should desire to possess some such qualification. I feel sure that nearly every member of this House would have been glad if, when he left school, he had had some knowledge of a skilled trade. I know that many of them went into public life and endeavoured to make good promptly through the avenues available to them. However, the bugbear from which we suffer to-day is the lack of skilled tradesmen. We have been told that most of our skilled men are leaving Western Australia for the Eastern States where they can take part in the manufacture of munitions.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You are quite right. We must have vocational training here.

Mr. TRIAT: I trust that matter will be taken into consideration by the authorities. Something along those lines is essential in order that our young people may be in a better position. I trust, and believe, the problem will be tackled. From our reading, we know perfectly well that every youth who leaves school in Germany has a trade at his finger tips. Moreover, service in the Army is compulsory and the youth continues further with his trade. The result is that most foreigners who arrive here are not unskilled workers. I am not speaking of Italians but of Germans, Danes, Swedes, and so on. The foreigners who are finding positions on the mines are all skilled. They are fitters, turners, riggers, electricians and so on. They are qualified men, and when they come to Australia they are able to secure the good jobs that are offering, jobs that require skill and expert knowledge. The unfortunate part of it is that we find the Australians doing the pick and shovel



work under the direction of men more or less recently arrived from foreign countries. That is definitely traceable to the deficiencies of our system of education. Improvements can be effected in that direction, and I certainly hope steps will be taken along the lines I suggest. The question may be asked how it will be possible to secure such advantages to the boy in the back country. The suggestion is made that it would be impossible to provide such a lad with tuition in the ordinary skilled trades. I do not hold that opinion, because if his instructor had previously had the benefit of education along the lines I have indicated, he would be able to impart his knowledge to the pupils under his guidance in the back country, and thus give them at least some knowledge of a trade. I certainly trust that the Government will go into that matter and endeavour to effect some reforms. It cannot be doubted that we will require skilled men in the future. I regard the fact that we have 6,000 men still dependent on the Government for part-time employment as most regrettable. I recollect that when Parliament adjourned last year there were about that number on part-time work.

Mr. Thorn: They depended on the Government for employment.

Mr. TRIAT: That is so, and there may be some truth in the remark made by a member on the Opposition side of the House to the effect that some of those people do not desire to leave the employment they now enjoy. That may be quite correct, but nevertheless the fact that so many men are even now dependent upon the State for employment is indeed regrettable. With the resources as its disposal, the Government has not sufficient means enabling it to place those men in a form of employment that will recoup the State for the money expended. Notwithstanding that fact, the State essentially must find work for the unemployed. How can it be done? I am of the opinion that we should receive assistance from the Commonwealth Government to enable the State to make effective use of the unemployed. I feel that the Commonwealth Government is so far removed from Western Australia that it has little thought for our people here. If we could secure some financial assistance, little difficulty would be experienced in finding work for the 6,000 men, and that would be an advantage to the State in general.

Take the position regarding the Yampi Sound iron ore deposits. There we have over 97,000,000 tons of iron ore above sea level that can be mined without the necessity to sink a shaft. It is so situated that ships can be brought alongside in 30 feet of water right up against the ore deposit itself. Germany has lost thousands of lives in an endeavour to secure the right to operate the same class of iron ore deposit that we have lying idle at Yampi Sound. In Western Australia, apparently, we do not want to do anything with it, and so it can lie idle year after year. Western Australia does not produce a single ounce of pig iron in a year. What is wrong with the country? Why cannot we produce pig iron seeing that we have the best class of iron ore that can be obtained in any part of the world. I have put that question to others, and I have been told that the explanation is that we have no furnaces. Great heavens! Other countries have been in that position but they have secured furnaces and are now smelting iron ore. Why cannot we do that? Why cannot we convert our iron ore into pig iron and then acquire still further furnaces and convert the pig iron into steel? The task is accomplished in other parts of the world. In the Eastern States pig iron is being manufactured, and I heard the Premier state that a million tons had been exported to England from Broken Hill. Yet we in Western Australia have upwards of 97,000,000 tons of iron ore lying idle, and no attempt is made to use it! The Japanese would work the deposits if allowed to do so, and we can thank God now that they were not permitted to operate there. The fact remains that 97,000,000 tons of iron ore are available in the North, and the deposit should be worked. We should be turning out a million tons or so of pig iron with the right to export the product overseas or to make use of it in our own country for the manufacture of munitions, especially as we are told a commencement is to be made locally with that industry.

I have been informed that it is possible to smelt iron ore with the use of charcoal. Thousands of growing trees are destroyed annually in Western Australia, and we could make use of the charcoal that is now going to waste. Why cannot we carry out experiments with that charcoal, if Collie coal is not available for that purpose? That task ought to be undertaken; and it will be, if



we have but the will so to do. Then again in Western Australia we have the greatest alunite deposits known in the Commonwealth. We have over 300 acres of alunite ore situated within seven miles of a railway line. That deposit contains over 13,000,000 tons of ore that will yield 50 per cent. aluminium. The deposit extends to a depth of 20 feet, and I have been told by a qualified chemist that it contains sufficient potash to pay for the cost of the excavation of the whole of the alunite. I understand that potash has to be imported into Western Australia.

Hon. C. G. Latham: And it is extremely difficult to secure at present.

Mr. TRIAT: And here we have in Western Australia that extensive valuable deposit of alunite and are willing to allow it to lie idle, awaiting exploitation. I do not know whether the country there is held. If it is, it is in the possession of people who have no possible chance of securing the aluminium from the deposit. I am aware that the country was held some time ago, but I do not know what the position is now. I know it is lying idle, and, if held, is in the possession of people who cannot work the deposit. If we could work the alunite deposit and produce aluminium, we would have an asset of extreme value to the country. We would have a commodity at our disposal that is essential to our progress, and we could certainly absorb a proportion of the 6,000 men who are now dependent on the Government for employment. If we could carry the development to the stage I have indicated, we could go one step further and undertake the manufacture of aeroplanes.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That would provide employment for others.

Mr. TRIAT: That is so.

The Minister for Labour: At the present time 30 tons of the ore is being tested at the University.

Mr. TRIAT: I know the University authorities are testing the ore, but the important point is to know who owns the ore. Once the information gains currency that the alunite ore is being tested, we will find people rushing the leases, although they will not be able to work the deposit. I have been informed that it will take at least £500,000 to accomplish that end. I do not know that even the State Government could handle the proposition, and that Government has every right to expect financial as-

sistance from the Commonwealth to enable the deposit to be opened up. I think the Commonwealth Government in duty bound would have to furnish that assistance.

The Minister for Labour: If the University test proves successful, no difficulty will be experienced in securing the necessary capital.

Mr. TRIAT: I hope that is correct. If that should prove to be the position, I trust that a fair proportion of the 6,000 men who are now dependent on the Government for employment will be absorbed in the undertaking. We may find the establishment of an industry that will turn out aluminium and lead to the manufacture of aeroplanes. So far the manufacture of munitions in Western Australia has been limited to a degree. A start is being made. I have had discussions with people connected with the matter and am informed that much difficulty is being experienced in obtaining finance. The matter is still in the experimental stage. We have now been at war nine months, and after nine months of war have not produced a bow and arrow in Western Australia. I say without fear of contradiction that we have not produced sufficient munitions in Western Australia to shoot a flock of birds. No blame for that is attachable to our Government, because the responsibility for the defence of Australia rests upon the Commonwealth Government. I sincerely trust the Premier will place the Bill for civil defence first on the Notice Paper, and not fifth. All our people are anxious to do something towards the war effort. Men too old to enlist have said they are quite prepared to do what they can. So is everybody in Australia, but what is the use of trying to do something when the Commonwealth Government, which controls defence, is not prepared to move in the matter as far as this State is concerned? I have been told there is no fear of an invasion of this country; but tonight's paper shows there is grave danger of invasion. Japan has been talking in an exceedingly cheeky way for some time past, and according to to-night's paper the British Government has informed Japan that unless it releases the British subjects who have been arrested there, drastic action will be taken. When nations talk in that way, it means but one thing—war. Japan is not too far away from Australia to attempt an invasion, and her expressed intention for the past five or six years has been to occupy our



country. I do not say that of my own knowledge, but from what I have read. Quite recently I have read a work by a Japanese naval commander who is an authority on warfare. With the permission of the House, I shall quote some short extracts from his book. The writer is Lt.-Commander Tota Ishimaru and his book was published in 1936. The title is "Japan must fight Britain." He asserts that the Japanese could easily defeat the British Navy.

The Minister for Mines: Japan would have a tough job in front of her to do that.

Mr. TRIAT: But that is Japan's intention.

Mr. Cross: Has Japan got Italian naval commanders?

Mr. TRIAT: I cannot say, but whether or not Japan has competent or incompetent commanders makes little difference. The Commonwealth Government should see that we are amply protected. We were never less prepared for an invasion than we are at present.

Member: Read the extract.

Mr. TRIAT: At page 240 the following appears:—

With the outbreak of war Japan would, we may suppose, descend on Hong Kong and Singapore like a thunderbolt and capture them. But there are other British possessions within range of attack by the Japanese fleet; British Borneo and Australia, for instance, would be dealt with.

The writer proceeds to show how Japan would capture those possessions, but I shall not read what he says about that. At page 242 he continues—

What ships, then, have the Australians got?

The writer deals with the vessels we had at that particular time, and continues—

If only they had taken Admiral Henderson's advice and built those 52! But that is all past history, and now they have but two 10,000-ton cruisers, two light cruisers, six destroyers and two submarines. England, with her present shortage of light cruisers, cannot send more than four, with, perhaps, from 12 to 18 destroyers. And the more she depletes her battle fleet, the more she jeopardises her chances of success in the decisive action in the South China Sea. Further, 34 or 35 ships at least would be required adequately to defend both the east and west coasts of Australia.

Mr. Doney: What is the date of the publication of the book?

Mr. TRIAT: 1936, four years ago.

Mr. Doney: Before the China war.

Mr. TRIAT: It is written before Britain had her hands so full.

The Minister for Mines: And before Japan had heard of the "Sydney."

Mr. TRIAT: That is so. I have read what is in the mind of Japan. I do not say that Japan can achieve that objective; what I am trying to point out is the apathy of those in authority. Apparently, the Commonwealth Government is not taking any notice and has not given us even provisional protection. As I said, this State has done nothing, while the Commonwealth Government has done very little. That is what I am trying to stress. I do not for a moment say that Japan can defeat us, but she should not be treated as lightly as we treated the Germans, who recently defeated a nation which thought it could hold Germany at bay for 12 months. At page 278, Commander Ishimaru states—

If Japan should win, what then? In a word, the collapse of the British Empire. Let us take India first. If England went to war with Japan, she would try her time-worn trick of promising the Indians independence if they sided with her. But now they have learned far too much to be taken in. They would ignore her offer and seize the opportunity to take for themselves the independence they so greatly desire. If England were defeated, India would break away from her, nothing is more certain. England would then lose her vital treasure house. Next, England would lose her markets in China, which have figured so largely in her fortunes, she may be sure of that. She would have to cede Hong Kong to Japan, and that would undermine the very foundations of her China trade. But more serious than all else, Australia and New Zealand would pass into Japanese hands.

That is a quotation from a work written by a Japanese, a man in authority, who says that his country is prepared to invade Australia should the opportunity present itself.

Mr. Thorn: He likes himself a lot.

Mr. TRIAT: Although the Japanese are a cheeky race, they are foemen worthy of consideration who will not be defeated by merely blowing off gas. It is a wrong policy for a country at war not to prepare itself for the worst, while hoping for the best. We have collected a few pounds to assist patriotic funds—a fine effort. We have collected some money to put in the Commonwealth coffers to prosecute the war; that must be done. But what have we done to build up the internal defence of Australia, or to manufacture munitions of war? What have we done to produce a gun or a



rifle for the purpose of destroying the enemy? We have done nothing at all in that way in Western Australia.

Member: But munitions are being manufactured in the Eastern States.

Mr. TRIAT: Very little, from what I can gather. I was at Sandstone a fortnight ago. Some 40 people there had formed a rifle club and among their number were some keen rifle shots. However, they received instructions through the police that every round of ammunition had to be seized and delivered to the Commonwealth for defence purposes. Most of that ammunition was made in 1926 and should be discarded as far as war purposes are concerned, as it would be of no use. The members were permitted to use eight rounds for the final cup and then 147 rounds were sent to Perth. That is wrong. The ammunition might be of use up to 500 or 600 yards, but not further. As the distance increases the velocity decreases, because the cordite, or whatever it may be called, has lost some of its virtue. The Commonwealth Government must be very short of ammunition to fight the enemy should he arrive. Everyone knows that 1,000,000 rounds of ammunition do not go far in war time.

Mr. Seward: It is better to have the ammunition under one control than scattered all over the country.

Mr. TRIAT: That may be so, I am not skilled in war matters. But why confiscate 147 rounds of ammunition from a place like Sandstone, when the modern machine gun fires 1,200 rounds a minute? According to what is published in the paper to-night, that is twice as many rounds as the old-type of machine gun fired. At the rate of 1,200 round a minute, it would not take long to use the few rounds of ammunition that we could manufacture in Australia. There is not much work entailed in making a cartridge. I have seen kangaroo hunters refilling cartridges. They put in the cordite and close the cartridge again.

Member: How do they put the cap on?

Mr. TRIAT: It is done quite easily. The cap is put in position with a small instrument. Kangaroo hunters use the cartridge shells over and over again until the shell bursts, when of course it is no longer used and is thrown away. The matters upon which I have touched are essential to the

welfare and defence of Australia. We have an abundance of iron ore which can be manufactured into pig iron and steel which, in turn, can be made into munitions at the Midland Junction Workshops. If locomotives can be built at those shops, surely armoured tanks could be made also. There is merely a difference in the method of traction; the armoured car would have caterpillar wheels. We have skilled tradesmen capable of doing the work, but we must have the iron and steel. For that reason, we should at once proceed to develop the Yampi iron deposits. We have an ample supply of aluminium also. I am glad to learn that experts at the University are making tests of our alunite; if these prove successful I hope the Government will take immediate steps to work our deposits of this material. I hope that within the next nine months, at all events, Western Australia will be able to undertake its share in the manufacture of munitions for the defence of the Commonwealth. The member for Irwin-Moore said that if our country were invaded our returned soldiers would meet the enemy and give him a crack. I have no doubt they would, but they must be adequately armed. It is no use serving them with the old type of rifle; they should be supplied with Bren and Tommy guns, which are capable of firing 600 or 700 rounds a minute. The time has gone by when soldiers should be asked to use rifles which, after firing five cartridges, necessitate the pressing of a bolt to ensure a further supply.

Member: Bren guns are now being made in the Eastern States.

Mr. TRIAT: Why make them only in the Eastern States? Why should Western Australia always be passed over in favour of the Eastern States? The time is long overdue when that attitude should no longer be adopted. The people of the Eastern States are well off; they have large secondary industries, they get all the cream, while we in the West get nothing. It is time the people of Western Australia woke up and demanded their rights. Western Australia is just as much a part of the Commonwealth as are New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland.

The Premier: The Director of Munitions is coming to Western Australia next week



and we will see him about the matter. He is coming with an open cheque book.

Mr. TRIAT: I hope the Premier will be able to persuade the Federal Treasurer to give us some money when the director arrives. I do not propose to delay the House much longer, but I honestly believe—and I am not joking when I say this—that we have been lacking in our duty to the country. I am not especially attacking the Labour Government, for I realise the Government cannot do anything without money. I do not blame it as much as I blame the Federal Government. I am a member of the Labour Party and am very proud of the fact. Nevertheless, I would not be beyond castigating my own people if I had reason to believe they were in the wrong. I have the courage of my convictions and am prepared to condemn anybody I believe to be at fault. I do not altogether blame the Government, but the people responsible for the manufacture of armaments, who are not giving us an opportunity to show our worth. I hope that the Premier's statement about the Chief Director of Munitions coming here with an open cheque book will be justified, but I am afraid that it will not be. The Chief Director of Munitions may come here, but unless pressure is brought to bear, there will be no cheque except for a very small amount.

The Premier: You are pessimistic.

Mr. TRIAT: Yes, I am, after nine months' experience of actual facts.

The Premier interjected.

Mr. TRIAT: I beg your pardon?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member will address the Chair. He is under no obligation to reply to interjections.

Mr. TRIAT: I do not intend to delay the House by discussing the matter further, but I feel keenly about it. I and all other members of this House were returned by the people on the understanding that something would be done for our constituents. True, we were not returned in time of war. Peaceful conditions prevailed when we were elected, but when war broke out, the people did not recall us, saying, "We would like you to stand for election because we think we have somebody better." They left everything in our hands. They said, in effect, that they could depend for protection, if war occurred, on the men they had returned to Parliament. They felt sure that

the security of the State would be safe in our hands, just as they felt that the security of the Commonwealth would be safe in the hands of the Federal Government. But I do not feel secure; not a bit. We have nothing with which to defend ourselves if we are invaded by the hordes of the North. We cannot count on the British Fleet to be here at the psychological moment. Before the vessels could arrive, serious damage could be done to our cities. I hope that adequate protection will be demanded from the Federal Government. I do not know what measures the Premier intends to introduce, but let us hope that he will suggest something vitally necessary for the defence of this State. Only the Federal Government has power to take military precautions, but let us do something here in the way of civil defence. Increased population is urgently needed in this State, but how this increased population can be secured is a difficult problem, especially when our numbers are being depleted by the departure of so many people. I trust that when we meet this time next year the State will be alive with secondary industries and particularly munition works, that we shall be manufacturing iron ore and steel plates, and making aeroplanes and armoured cars. We can do all that. We have the opportunity and the men, and all we need is the will. That is what we are waiting for. I trust that something will be done in the near future.

On motion by Mr. North, debate adjourned.

#### COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

##### *Council's Message.*

Message from the Council received and read notifying the personnel of sessional Committees appointed by that House.

#### BILL—SUPPLY (No. 1), £2,500,000.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

*House adjourned at 8.20 p.m.*