

human reconstruction more glorious than anything in her long past."

On motion by the Deputy Premier, 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 6.10 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Thursday, 7th August, 1941.*

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

## QUESTION—CIVIL DEFENCE (EMERGENCY POWERS) ACT.

### *Government Expenditure.*

Hon. N. KEENAN asked the Minister for Health: 1, What moneys have been spent under the Civil Defence (Emergency Powers) Act, 1940? 2, If any, how much of such expenditure has been incurred in respect of machinery or plant, and how much in salaries or allowances?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH replied:

1, Prior to commencement of Act, £840, since commencement of Act, £2,306 10s.; 2,

(a) Equipment, £2,458 10s., (b) Salaries and allowances, £684. The Government has also made available the services of professional and administrative officers in all departments, provided office accommodation and equipment, the value of which cannot be assessed. In addition the Government has met the following expense:—Special police, £17,298; concessions to Government employees on active service, £4,915; concessions on soldiers' fares, £2,861.

## QUESTION—PETROL RATIONING.

Mr. SEWARD asked the Premier: Will the Government obtain from the Commonwealth Government and lay upon the Table of the House a return showing the name and occupation of every petrol license holder, and the ration allowed to each?

The DEPUTY PREMIER (for the Premier) replied: No. I am informed that there are approximately 90,000 license holders in Western Australia, and preparation of the list from the files would cost a considerable sum.

## QUESTION—DEFENCE, NAVAL MEN'S ALLOWANCES.

Mr. BERRY asked the Premier: Will the Government make strong representation to the Federal Government to bring the allowances to naval men for wife and family into line with the allowances made to air force and army men?

The DEPUTY PREMIER (for the Premier) replied: "I am advised that the allowances for families of men in the navy, army, and air force serving abroad are all equal.

## LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Wilson, leave of absence for the remainder of the session granted to Mr. Holman (Forrest) on the ground of military service.

## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

### *Fourth Day.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. TONKIN (North-East Fremantle) [4.33]: I thank His Excellency for the

Speech he has delivered to Parliament and for making special reference to the fact that the son of a constituent of mine has been awarded the honour of V.C. His Excellency said he felt great pride when he learnt that the honour had been conferred; and as the recipient lived in the North-East Fremantle electorate I am proud that a son of one of our people has brought honour to his district and to the State. I hope that in continuing his daring exploits, he will be able to keep out of harm's way and survive the struggle, and that upon his triumphal return we shall accord him that welcome which he has so well earned.

This brings me to the question of enlistment for service in the forces. I have been wondering whether we are not apt to expect too much from Australia with its relatively small population. There is a vast difference between the circumstances now and those which prevailed during the 1914-18 war. In those days it was not deemed necessary to have a large Home Force, but events have shown that in these days the powers-that-be regard a large Home Force as essential. This is why the Prime Minister had a scheme prepared for the training of a quarter of a million men. The object was to provide a Home Force for the defence of the Commonwealth. The quarter of a million men required to undergo compulsory training are the men to whom we would ordinarily look for recruitment. They are no longer available and, furthermore, we have progressed far along the road since the previous war by developing in the Commonwealth industries which need a large volume of manpower to keep them operating. We have trained over a period men who occupy key positions. I regard it as a maximum contribution on the part of an individual if he is filling a key position in a war industry, just as if he shouldered a rifle and marched off. Possibly his contribution to the war effort is far greater than that of a hundred men who shoulder a rifle. I do not say that we should confer any special distinction upon either, but we have to realise that it is just as essential to have men engaged in war work here as it is to put them in the line.

Many men are anxious to enlist. I saw some this morning at the boot factory of Pearse Bros. They told the boss that they would be annoyed if he endeavoured to frustrate their efforts to enlist, and he

pointed out that they could not be easily replaced and that vacancies caused by their enlistment would hamper the work of the factory, hold up contracts and keep soldiers in the line short of material that they urgently needed. We did not have similar difficulties during the other war, but we have to realise that this fact of itself will reduce the number of men available for enlistment. The Commonwealth has already sent overseas some 90,000 men. If insufficient recruits are offering, I hope we shall not become panicky and talk about compulsion. Such a step should not be taken until a proper survey of the situation has been made to ascertain the size of the pool that might be tapped for enlistment.

I find it hard to reconcile statements made from time to time by men in responsible positions. Recently I read of some highly-placed men having proceeded to Melville to speak to men of the Militia and point out the service they would be rendering to the country if they enlisted. I also read in the local Press that the Commonwealth Government was seriously contemplating an extension of the period of training in the hope of keeping compulsory trainees in camp so long that they would become heartily sick of the monotony and would enlist in the A.I.F. to escape it. I read that the Minister for the Army, Mr. Spender, at a recruiting rally at Manly, had said that the army authorities were looking to the Militia to provide a good supply of men of high quality. Those statements have caused me to wonder whether the army authorities know what is happening. Men in the Militia to-day cannot enlist in the A.I.F. They are not allowed to do so.

Recently I spoke with men who were endeavouring to leave the Militia and join the A.I.F. Those men had been trying to join the A.I.F. before they went into camp, but were not allowed to do so. There are privates, non-commissioned officers and officers—many of them—who are desirous of joining for overseas service; but permission to do so is withheld from them by the commanding officer. I have spoken with a number of officers in a particular battalion with regard to this matter, and they all told me that their commanding officer had laid it down that enlistments were not to be permitted from that battalion, because it had to be maintained at a certain strength. The position should be

made clear. We cannot have men going about the country and declaring at recruiting meetings that members of the Home Defence Force should join the A.I.F. We cannot have such men urging members of the Militia to join the A.I.F., while other men in authority say, "You cannot enlist." The policy should be properly defined. If the commanding officer of a battalion thinks that he cannot spare the men because he is unable to replace them in sufficient time, then that should be made plain higher up, and the country should not be looking to the Militia for recruitment for the A.I.F. On the other hand, if it does not matter how many men are taken from the Home Defence Force, and when they are taken, then let them be permitted to enlist as they desire.

That brings up another question. Do we actually require a large Home Defence Force? It is not for us to say. We may have our opinions, but there are those in authority whose task it is to work the problem out and decide. If they are convinced that a large Home Defence Force is essential, then they should see that that force is as speedily as possible properly trained and equipped and kept at fighting strength. They should also put a stop to any suggestion that there is reluctance on the part of the men in the Militia to play their part overseas. I trust that something will be done to make the position perfectly clear to the country at large, because an injustice is being suffered by many men who think they can give better service elsewhere, while at the same time our general efficiency is being impaired.

As regards recruitment, there is another matter which needs our immediate attention. I acknowledge that generally employers are patriotic and reasonable; but there are some who take the selfish view entirely, with the result that from time to time we see advertisements in the Press stipulating that the applicant must not be eligible for military service. I will read one such advertisement of recent date—

Applications from persons ineligible for military service will be received for the position of clerk. Knowledge of book-keeping and accountancy essential. Age 25 to 35.

If that is permitted to go on, we shall soon reach the stage that a compulsory trainee who is obliged to enter camp for Home Defence will find it impossible to get a job

when he comes out. Thus he will be compelled to do three months in camp and three months on the labour market, and thereupon another three months in camp and another three months on the labour market. What a deplorable condition we shall get to if that goes on! I appeal to employers who are taking the short-sighted view to be more patriotic and to share some of this burden, because the Home Defence Force, which the Government is trying to build up and maintain, is the force which will be utilised to safeguard the assets of the business men who take the short-sighted view to which I have referred.

Mr. Doney: Those men who go into the Militia having a job, will always find that job waiting for them when they come out.

Mr. TONKIN: Yes; but the point is that many young men have no jobs before being called up. A man liable to be called up who applies for employment is likely to be told by employers, "I will lose you in three months. You will be away for a period of three months. I am sorry, but you will dislocate my business, and I cannot have it." That tendency is growing. One can understand why. No employer likes to have his business upset and dislocated because a man who has been trained has to be away from the business for three months. That is not desirable. So, some employers seek to avoid it by employing only men not eligible for military service. Is that a fair view to take? Decidedly not! I make this appeal to employers, that they should be more patriotic and should bear some sacrifice just like the man who is obliged to leave his job and undertake compulsory service—in many instances for less pay than when he is working. If some attention is given to that view, it will help to make the position of trainees much easier and happier than it is now.

His Excellency's Speech, I observe, makes reference to the big expansion which is taking place in the production of war material in Western Australia. That is highly gratifying to us. I must confess that some months ago I felt at times greatly disheartened when I visited the State Implement Works and found that very little was being done there. On one occasion the only war work job being done was a job which the manager had been able

to obtain from Midland Junction. He told the man in charge at Midland Junction that he would be obliged to put off men at North Fremantle if he did not get a job to do. That was the deplorable situation which existed only a few months ago. Try as I would, I could not make any headway in getting the position rectified. Gradually, however, things have altered, and I am glad to say that an altogether different tone prevails now. One can see evidence of continued expansion. The moulding shop has been reorganised and is being re-equipped, and the same remarks apply to the fitting shop. Further, I understand that it is intended to go on with the expansion of the works. The manager has told me that he is satisfied the works will be kept up to the limit of their maximum capacity. That is a big improvement, for which I am most grateful. Still, it goes to show that we have lost months of valuable time in reaching our maximum effort.

Then, too, there is the question of ship-building which has been referred to by another member of this Chamber, and which will be referred to again later. Months ago I spoke to the men at the State Implement Works about the possibility of building ships here. A man employed there named Welch, a tradesman who came out from the Old Country many years ago, had a particularly good record as regards ship-building. He informed me that in this State, at the State Implement Works, had been built the suction dredge "Governor Stirling." He said the general belief outside was that the dredge had merely been put together here, but that that was not so. The plates came out here, were fashioned at the State Implement Works, and the vessel was built in this State. Members will recall the old dredge "Governor," which used to be a side suction dredge. Welch with his army of men turned that vessel into a central suction dredge. I saw a newspaper cutting of that date which spoke of its being a particularly fine feat. Welch and his men also built the launch "Kimberley," and have from time to time completed big jobs with the State steamers. I am satisfied that we can build ships all right here. What is more, though, we must get on and start building them. Unless

we can establish industries in this State during the war, we shall be left hopelessly behind when it is over. In those circumstances we would occupy in relation to the Eastern States much the same position as Hitler intends France to occupy in relation to Germany. A little thought should convince us that tremendous industrial expansion is taking place in the Eastern States, where secondary industries are being established and artisans trained. On the other hand, our skilled men are being taken away from us and the State will be practically denuded of them unless we speed up our industrial development.

Mr. Sampson: They have gone to the Eastern States.

Mr. TONKIN: When the war is over and we are victorious—as I hope we shall be—those secondary industries will turn from war work to the manufacture of requirements for the Commonwealth. They will have such a big start of us that we will never be able to overtake them. Therefore, we must get busy and not let up in our endeavour to get more and more industries established in this State. I am pleased the Government is taking a long-sighted view with regard to the training of skilled artisans.

I notice it is stated in His Excellency's Speech that the Government is convinced that more money must be made available for technical education. If that be so, I hope the Government will see that funds are made available. I have to thank the Government for its decision to build a technical school at Fremantle. This will fill a long-felt want. For years I have pointed out in this House that children at Fremantle who had passed through the primary schools were denied training in metal-work and woodwork to which they had every right. When the school is built—work has already been commenced on it—that training will be available to them. Members will find in me an advocate for the extension of technical training facilities to other parts of the State. It is better that we should go short in other directions than that insufficient funds should be provided for technical training.

Mr. J. Hegney: Midland Junction has been trying for years to get a technical school.

Mr. TONKIN: I hope the hon. member will keep on trying until eventually the

facilities are provided. This morning I had occasion to look at the bulk wheat bins at North Fremantle, where immense quantities of wheat are stored. I found that all the residents in one street have become so affected by the proximity of this wheat that living conditions for them have become intolerable. Something should be done by the Commonwealth Government, which is responsible, to enable those people to remove from the district, because they cannot continue to live there without being driven mad. What I myself saw convinced me that had any member of this Chamber been living in the district, he would have been creating a furore long ago. I spoke to many of the residents this morning. One man has lived there for 40 years. He gradually added to his house, improved it and planted a garden. He is now a pensioner, with an affection for his home, but he has been so affected by the nuisances I have mentioned that he is prepared to walk out of his home and leave it, to drag himself up by the roots, as it were. To indicate what has happened, this old man told me that he has a couple of rainwater tanks. Previously, the rainwater was used for washing and household purposes, but, on account of the fine dust from the wheat blowing from the roof into the tanks, instead of having rainwater in his tanks he has pollard. It is now absolutely impossible to use the water in the tanks.

There has been a tremendous increase in the number of rats in the district. Rats are always plentiful at the waterfronts, but they are in such numbers now in the district that they will soon take charge of it. One good lady told me that as she was sitting at the kitchen table one night, she noticed a procession of rats behind the window-blind crossing a bamboo stick outside the window. They nearly scared her stiff. One man showed me three rat traps which he had set in a back room close to a place where rats had egress; he told me that scarcely a day passes without his catching one or two rats. He added, "You can hear them running about the place practically all night." That complaint is general all the way down the street. Then there are the weevil moths. Not one person in the street failed to mention them. At night time they come out in thousands. So thick are they that it is impossible to have soup with a meal, be-

cause it would be absolutely covered with moths before it could be consumed. In drinking a cup of tea, one must keep one's hand over the cup, even when lifting it to the mouth, to avoid its becoming filled with moths. Members may be inclined to think that I am exaggerating, but I am convinced by the tone of the people that there is no exaggeration whatever; the story never varied in any way.

One man informed me that at night he takes a broom, goes to the back verandah and kills hundreds of moths on the wire door, where they collect. I was informed that the weevils get into everything. One lady told me this morning that when she aired her blankets on the line, they became covered with weevils which were blown through the air with the husks from the elevators. That is an indication of the nuisances which have been caused by the immense quantity of wheat stored in the district. The majority of the people there had no desire to leave their homes; they liked the locality and the ocean view, and were perfectly satisfied to end their days there. But after 30 or 40 years' occupancy, during which time they have gathered their little things together, improved their homes for their old age, and acquired an affection for their surroundings, they say that because of the nuisances that have been created they cannot continue to live there. I can well imagine what the conditions are like in the hot summer months. The Government should not waste any more time but should immediately compensate those people by buying up their properties. Obviously that will be an industrial area and can no longer be regarded as suitable for residential purposes. Let the Government buy up the land and it will certainly get the money back later by disposing of it for factory purposes.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Actually some of the land in that area has been bought.

Mr. TONKIN: Yes. There are only about 23 or 24 houses in the street, which is a short one. Not a large sum of money would be required to purchase all the property. The houses are not expensive and if they were purchased the people would be able to leave and establish homes elsewhere. Of this I am certain: not one of us would be satisfied to stay there under such conditions and we should not expect

anybody else to do so. Those people went there at a time when there was no suggestion of anything like this occurring. Now the Government has dumped these storage bins in their backyards, as it were, and has created nuisances that no private person would be permitted to create. The Government should do the proper and only thing by buying those people out and allowing them to escape from nuisances that are absolutely intolerable; and that is no exaggeration.

Mr. Doney: How far from the street are the bins?

Mr. TONKIN: This street is within 40 or 50 yards of the bins. There is another nuisance which escaped my memory and that is the smell from decaying wheat. I suppose it is impossible to prevent a certain amount of wastage, and consequently a quantity of wheat collects on the ground. That wheat becomes wet and decayed and the stench has been terrible. The wheat also creates a breeding ground for flies which are there in millions. Members can imagine the conditions under which those people are expected to live and rear children. A number of them are pensioners and have no families, but some have youngsters. One woman told me that her children had never been free from sickness since the bins were erected.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: What is the Health Department doing?

Mr. TONKIN: The officers of the local municipal council and health board have protested about the conditions and as a result much of the decayed wheat has been swept up and carted away, but that has not removed the nuisance altogether. There is only one remedy, and that is to buy the people out because they are so close to the bins that it would be impossible to do anything to prevent the nuisances to which I have referred, which will recur from time to time, and will become gradually worse.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It is all due to war conditions.

Mr. TONKIN: We should not expect a small section of people to suffer because of war conditions.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I do not mean that. It is because of the large quantity of wheat that is being stored.

Mr. TONKIN: Yes.

Mr. Patrick: There will be a greater amount stored in the future.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I do not think it will go there.

Mr. TONKIN: The other evening I asked the Deputy Premier, without notice, a question relating to a statement made by Sir F. Eggleston, the Australian Minister to China. I took great exception to his statement for several reasons. Sir Frank Eggleston was selected to go to China to represent this country, which prides itself on its democratic way of living. We believe that our system of government will stand comparison with that of any other country in the world. We are not ashamed of it. I understood we were fighting to preserve it. It is true that we have our differences of opinion. At times we say about each other things that possibly are not quite pleasant, but that is all in the hurly-burly. There are not in Australia the graft and baseness that are so reprehensible in the political life of some other countries I could mention. I say without fear of contradiction that our political life compares more than favourably with that of any other country. Sir Frank Eggleston who said he preferred the bombs of Chungking to the stink bombs of Australian politics cast a slur on every man in Australian politics.

Mr. W. Hegney: Or out of it.

Mr. TONKIN: Yes. He cast a slur on our system of government. Whatever he might think himself about it is all right so long as he keeps it to himself, but he has shown himself not a fit and proper person to represent us in the high and responsible position to which he has been appointed. I hope the Commonwealth Government will cancel his appointment as Australian Minister to China.

Mr. Needham: He should never have received it.

Mr. TONKIN: I hope his appointment will be cancelled, not because of the one statement he made but because in making the statement he indicated his unfitness for the position. Let us send to China somebody who is satisfied with our Australian form of government, and who believes that we are not the bad boys Sir F. Eggleston apparently thinks we are.

Mr. Patrick: He is an ex-politician himself, too.

Mr. TONKIN: That makes it all the worse. He should have had better sense. I hope he will not be permitted to get away

with it. I have done what I could to draw attention to the matter, and I hope it will be seen in other quarters that he has proved his unfitness for the office.

The Minister for Labour: He was always a Fascist type.

Mr. TONKIN: I want to make reference to what from time to time we have heard referred to as the "New Order." I have heard in many quarters and over the air on innumerable occasions of this new order that is to obtain after the war. I might be very pessimistic but frankly I am of opinion that we should not expect too much from this new order that is being dangled in front of us like a carrot in front of a donkey. In the "Sunday Times" last week there was an article referring to the post-war period to come. It mentioned that we should expect work and hard work if we were to keep things going, and showed how very necessary hard work would be in order to enable us to change over from a war-time to a peace-time economy. Then the Lieut.-Governor, not in his Speech to Parliament, but at some function outside, also told the people that there would have to be very hard work to make it possible for us to continue to enjoy any sort of living standard. I noticed, too, that the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited has now a capital of £12,600,000, which incidentally—

Mr. Raphael: And there was a distribution of 63 free shares for every 100 shares held.

Mr. Abbott: Which were subscribed.

Mr. Raphael: That was watered stock.

Mr. Abbott: It was not; the shareholders paid for it.

Mr. TONKIN: When members have finished I will continue my speech. The company's capital is the largest amount of industrial capital of any concern in Australia. The Broken Hill Proprietary Co. expects a return of about 10 per cent. on its capital. That means that after the war, Australia will have to find more than £1,000,000 a year in dividends for that concern alone. There are many other large undertakings with huge capitalisation and we can estimate how much has to be provided by Australia to satisfy the claims of the shareholders concerned. Very little will be left for the mass of the people who are to enjoy the promised new order. I believe that, with-

out exception, all members of this Chamber desire a vast improvement upon existing conditions. I concede that they are honest in their contentions that a new order should be set up. Most decidedly it will not arise of its own volition. We shall not wake up one morning and find that this much-vaulted new order is here. We must start now to initiate it and show that we are quite genuine in our desire to achieve the promised improvement. Let us plan now, and proceed with the development of a new order, so that we shall have something tangible to show regarding those phases that we know should be altered. That should be the position when present-day hostilities have ceased.

I trust that during this session we shall be able to give our undivided attention to what is essential to bring the war to a successful conclusion, and that we shall not lose sight of this new order, which is so necessary for the well-being of the community.

MR. BERRY (Irwin-Moore) [5.12]: When listening to the Lieut.-Governor's Speech at the opening of this session, I was very pleased to find that members of this Chamber had been provided with chairs in the Upper House, so that they could be seated during the ceremony. Our thanks for that convenience are due to the member for Collie (Mr. Wilson) because we recollect how spiritedly he dealt with the situation that confronted Assembly members at the opening of the previous session when they responded to the summons of His Excellency to attend in the Legislative Council Chamber. The Speech this year was perhaps a little more voluminous than formerly, and that is possibly due to the fact that so much water has passed under the bridge in the interim. Perhaps it is unfortunate that the passing water has been of a type we could well do without. No doubt since we last met, conditions have altered materially, not only for us individually but for the people of Australia as a whole. Therefore I found it pleasing to read the tribute His Excellency saw fit to pay to our men on active service overseas. I cannot conceive of anything more glorious than the achievements of our Australian sailors, soldiers and airmen during the last 12 months. Perhaps they are the sons of those who fought in the 1914-18

war. They are certainly the sons of Gallipoli, and the children of Trafalgar. They are truly representative of the calibre of the men that made great the British Empire of which we are all so proud. As to the award of the Victoria Cross to Acting Wing Commander Edwards, D.F.C., I associate myself with the remarks by the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Tonkin). Pride in that airman's achievement and his decoration we can take to ourselves, because he is an Australian.

The question of recruiting was dealt with at some length by the member for North-East Fremantle, particularly from the standpoint as to whether we should recruit for home defence or for service overseas. With him, I do not feel I can give a direct decision on the issues involved, but whatever we do, and however we may determine to act, we should see to it at all costs that the Royal Australian Air Force is brought to full strength. I happen to know that that particular branch of our armed forces is not only crying out for more men for air crews but for other branches of the service as well. The authorities are experiencing the greatest difficulty in obtaining the recruits required. The anomaly to which the hon. member referred applies to the Air Force as to other branches of the services. If a man has been called up for one or other of the branches of the home defence forces, he cannot, however much he may desire to do so, transfer to the Air Force. In the circumstances, the recruiting campaigns undertaken by the R.A.A.F. are seriously handicapped. Young men who are serving in the Tenth Light Horse or some other unit are prevented from transferring to the Air Force, because the personnel of the unit in which they are already enlisted must be kept up to strength. The Western Australian coastline is very extensive, and we have enemies dangerously close to our shores. The enemy may be here in a matter of hours, and how can we expect any ground force to cope with the problem of invasion? The battles in Crete, Greece and Europe proved that without adequate air support ground forces are unable to resist invasion conducted under present-day methods. The lesson has shown that if we have no Air Force, we are doomed. If we have not the requisite air power, evacuation becomes necessary. It may be a glorious evacuation,

but it is nevertheless evacuation. I maintain that, at all costs, our Royal Air Force squadrons must be built up to full strength so that they may be effective in the defence of Australia as air power has shown itself to be all-important in other theatres of war.

If we glance through the Speech, we find, as the member for North-East Fremantle has already pointed out, that Western Australia is being asked to undertake a certain volume of munition and other war work. But, with that hon. member, I feel it is a long time since the war commenced and it has taken us an inordinate length of time to get as far as we have now with regard to our war effort. I do not consider we have gone far enough by any means. Perhaps in the Eastern States the war effort is excellent, and I believe it is, but Australia can never claim 100 per cent. of war effort whilst this State is left in a backwater and is not pulling its fullest possible weight. I hope we will, as a State, and that the Government will as a State Government not only press, but will insist that we the people of Western Australia shall be allowed to play a bigger part in performing our war effort to the same extent as any other part of Australia or of the British Empire is doing.

I now pass to the question of ship-building. The experience of the last war proved very conclusively that the U-boat submarine took its toll, and will take its toll again, as it is now doing. In the United States overtime has been worked, and is still being worked, in the vain endeavour to catch up the lag brought about by the unfortunate success of the German submarine campaign. I was given a newspaper a few days ago, "The Saturday Evening Post," which dealt with what was being done in the United States with regard to shipping. Because the paper contains extracts of particular interest, and not only shows what can be done but gives an idea of how much these vessels cost, I will read extracts before I deal with the part that I hope Western Australia will play. The paper said—

Hardly had Hitler sent out his submarines against Allied shipping in Europe's war when it became evident to shipping interests that ocean-going bottoms would soon be mighty scarce. Any hopes of being able to buy steel cargo carriers vanished entirely last winter



when, on top of British orders for large numbers of merchant bottoms, the Maritime Commission started placing orders for two hundred 10,000-ton freighters, and announced that the programme would be expanded to several times that many. Builders of steel ships are frantically putting in building slips, but they aren't keeping pace. To-day they can't pause to look at a new order; they're plugged to capacity for years to come. They can't even touch the smaller ships.

In the last war American ship-builders responded to the call and built hundreds of ships. They were, however, late in that war, and many of the ships were burnt on the banks of the Potomac River because they were of no value after the war. The article points out that if these ships were available to-day, they would be worth £40,000 or £50,000 sterling for the purpose of making good the serious lag brought about by the German submarine menace. The profit of a ship in war-time is no more than the profit that it brings as a war effort to save the peoples of the countries that are at war. That is the true war profit of any ship. If we get that profit out of the ships, we have extracted every ounce of profit it is possible to get. If wooden ships were worth only 6d. per hundred after the war, provided they helped out the position, they would have made a wonderful profit in overtaking a lag such as we have never suffered before. The article goes on to say—

Already the Navy is coveting some of the trawlers that the wooden-ship builders are turning out. They're 135-foot vessels that can go anywhere. Many of them are built to specifications of the American Bureau of Shipping, our counterpart of Lloyd's of London, in laying down rules for construction of seaworthy vessels. They carry heavy power plants, three electric generators, radio direction finders, ship-to-shore radiophones and fathometers. Steel, soundproofed cabins are set on the decks; even the foc'sles are finished in cypress and mahogany, with an electric reading lamp at the head of every bunk. Four watertight bulkheads add to their safety.

Every war has put wooden ships back upon the water, and every war for years to come will probably do the same. It is time that we in Western Australia, and in every part of the British Empire where ship-building can be carried out, realised that we must build such vessels. I took an interest in this matter some little time ago. I found before Parliament sat, by establishing a committee in this city and by making inquiries through that committee,

that there was no dearth in this country of skilled technicians. Provided we have a sufficient number of such technicians, I also found that the actual labourers need have no more expert knowledge than is required of a hush carpenter. We have the timber and we have the workmen. Jarrah, as a shipbuilding timber, is of very high class. Its specific gravity is very high, and that may militate slightly against its value. That, however, is only a matter of haulage. I am told that as a resister of the teredo worm jarrah, for hull-building purposes, is as fine a timber as could be obtained. With regard to decking, I know of a 75 ft. vessel—the recently launched new Perth ferry boat—that has its decking made of wandoo. I am told, however, that neither wandoo nor jarrah constitute the best timber for decking purposes. For my purposes, in particular for the relief of the agricultural surpluses of this State and the rest of Australia, it does not matter what the decks of the vessels comprise, provided the hulls are hard enough and big enough to relieve the food situation now confronting various parts of the Empire. At present we are unable to get rid of the surpluses of the primary producers, surpluses that represent overseas credit, without which our national existence would undoubtedly be endangered. I visualise that shortly it will be necessary for a series of moratoria to be declared for the protection of farmers. I am told that the surplus of wheat in this State will become so enormous as to be capable of blocking up St. George's terrace to a depth of 100 ft. or more. We know the position of the fat lamb industry and of all primary products, as well as the difficulty of getting them away from the country. For the last two years the Germans have been sinking our ships. During that period we have sat complacently and placidly, making very little effort until recently to rectify the position. I admit that there is a proposal in the Eastern States to build a number of iron vessels, 60 or 63 of them, 9,000 ton freighters, but point out that a long time will have to elapse before such vessels can be launched. I understand that in the United States a trawler of 124 ft. in length was built in four months by 60 men. We can do that in Western Australia if we want to, and I want to see it done. I shall do all in my power to insist upon this work

being undertaken, and I hope I shall have the support of every member. It is a national effort, the neglect of which will mean that we in Western Australia are not contributing our quota towards the hundred per cent. efficiency demanded and needed.

Being convinced that we can build ships, the question arises, where shall we build them? This State lends itself admirably to the building of wooden ships and even ships of steel up to 2,000 tons. The smaller ships could be built on the river—at Fremantle, the Naval Base, Rockingham, Bunbury and Albany. We built a ship called the "King Bay," and I have been assured that all the timber required was secured within four miles of Fremantle. The twisted, stunted jarrah growing near the coast is suitable for such work. We should demand that the Commonwealth undertake the construction of wooden ships to relieve the shortage that exists. It can be done and must be done. How can we engine these vessels? I can assure members that the Midland Junction workshops can make the engines. Engines are being constructed there now. I have also been assured that England is still exporting Diesel engines, and I believe there is no difficulty in getting them, except that of time.

Mr. Cross: We cannot get the engine for the new Perth ferry boat.

Mr. BERRY: The engine was here before the hull was finished.

Mr. Cross: The engine is not here yet.

Mr. BERRY: In spite of the hon. member's assertion, I have been given to understand that engines can be obtained. Diesel engines are being received for mining purposes and can be obtained for ships. England is fostering its vital export trade.

Trade with the Far East is closely bound up with the question of ship building. If we could hurriedly build three 400-ton ships and use them on the coast in place of the excellent vessels built by Harland and Woolf for the State Shipping Service, the State boats could be used to carry our produce overseas. Let us send them to Singapore. Let us give up advertising such stupid nonsense as we hear broadcast about winning the war in our kitchens by eating more lamb. How can we win the war in that way? When a consumer goes to buy lamb, he has to pay 4s. a leg for it, and the primary producer does not get that price. The State ships, relieved of their work on the coast, could

also be sent to Colombo, which port, we have been informed, cannot supply beer and other requirements for our soldiers because the requisite shipping is unavailable. By using smaller ships on our coast and releasing the State boats for overseas trading, we would be making an immediate contribution to the tonnage that the Empire so badly needs.

Reference has been made to post-war reconstruction. As a step to that end, let us grab the Far Eastern trade while the opportunity exists and build it up for the sake of our boys who later will be returning from the war and needing employment. A friend of mine in Singapore informs me that he has to pay 6d. or 8d. for an apple. The price of apples per case in Singapore is over £2 5s. (Aust.). He tells me that potatoes are unprocurable. Yet in this State we have apples rotting on the ground; we do not know what to do with them. We do not know what to do with our surplus potatoes. I am wearing a black tie in mourning for the lack of intelligence that is being displayed. What is the use of having marketing boards if we have not ships to transport our produce overseas?

I have received an illuminating letter from a Fremantle firm which, being desirous of exporting apples to Singapore, applied to the Apple and Pear Board for a license to export. In this letter, which I am prepared to lay on the Table of the House, I am informed that the firm has been marketing Australian products overseas for many years and has been exporting to Singapore since 1927. When application was made to the Apple and Pear Board for a license to export apples to Singapore, in accordance with an order obtained from an agent there, the firm was refused the permit on the ground that it had not previously shipped apples to that port. Could anything be more pathetic or futile? One of the first cargoes I would send away in a wooden ship would be the board that gave such a decision. I hope the members of the board will read the report of my remarks in "Hansard" and give the true reason for the refusal. The reason offered is certainly the saddest and weakest I have ever heard. If all our boards are of similar mental calibre, I would advocate sending them in our wooden ships to some other country and employing businessmen to do their work here.

I cannot in fairness leave the questions of

shipping and trade with the Far East without mentioning that, when the local committee made investigations, it discovered that inquiries had already been instituted by another committee appointed apparently by the Commonwealth Treasurer, Mr. Fadden, when Acting Prime Minister. The Federal committee had inquired into the general resources of this State and had filed a comprehensive report. The Department of Industry had provided information on many questions which the local committee at the time imagined it was pioneering. I wish to pay a tribute to the department and the Government for the assistance thus rendered. The matter should have been given greater publicity so that the public might understand the position. The Government should have stirred the people to insist upon the adoption of the recommendations of the Federal body, but seemingly it thought fit not to do so. Anyhow, this document was laboriously prepared, and was comprehensive and intelligent. It was handed to the Federal Government on the 6th June of this year. There it seems to have died the death. We got all this information from Mr. Curtin. The committee visited that gentleman, who was gracious enough not only to meet us but to give us much valuable information. But so far the report has, for some reason, gone into the limbo of lost things. That is wrong; it is an insult to the backwater we live in; and by "backwater" I mean Western Australia. On every industrial or civil occasion this State seems to be forced into a backwater. That is not the result, I believe, of deliberate action on the part of the Federal Government. It is the result of our not pushing hard enough from this end. We do not make enough noise about this State of ours and its resources and what it can do and must do. Apart from those matters, the report was held up. Mr. Curtin even accused Mr. Menzies of being an opponent of shipbuilding in Australia—a bottleneck of industry as far as shipping was concerned.

When Mr. Menzies was away in England and Mr. Fadden was in office, a great deal was done. I think Mr. Curtin said Mr. Fadden was responsible for the initiation of the Commonwealth Shipbuilding Board. Mr. Curtin was very indignant indeed about the position: so indeed was my committee. He said he had telephoned Mr. Menzies and Mr. Menzies had replied that he would re-

lease the report at the next meeting of the War Cabinet, but failed to do so. I am not criticising Mr. Menzies. I do suggest, however, that when these little mistakes occur, we should do all we possibly can to get them rectified. After all, mistakes unquestionably are often the raw products of success. I hold that there is no success that has not been built up on mistakes. My committee in the town intends to do everything it possibly can, through the voice of the people, to insist on Western Australia's rising from the muddy waters of backwash, and becoming an industrial State of which we shall be proud and which will go far to overcome some of the post-war problems now being talked about. In that connection we people will ask our Government to get behind us and push this matter to a climax.

I anticipate, perhaps optimistically, that the shipbuilding industry will commence in Western Australia within a month. Two years of war have gone by, and it is high time we made a start to build ships. The report must be released, and that portion of it with which I am dealing, as regards shipbuilding, must be given effect to and inaugurated at once, in order that we may stop the vacuous articles about winning the war in our kitchens. That is no answer to the problem. Ships are the answer. We must be practical. All through the Speech of the Lieut.-Governor one reads of ships, ships, ships; no ships here, no ships there, no ships anywhere. Yet we have the timber and the workmen here. The member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Tonkin) told us about the dredges built by a Mr. Welch. Mr. Welch wrote to me stating the same things; and another man wrote to me stating that the old dredges can be converted into cargo vessels. It appears that these old hulks can be turned into the very things we need. Why go on letting the grass grow under our feet? What is wrong with us?

We had an interview with Mr. McAlpine, a member of the Commonwealth Shipping Board. When visiting Western Australia he told us that the question of wooden ships had never been discussed by the board. In other words, Mr. McAlpine knew nothing whatever about that report which was presented to the Federal Government on the 6th June. He was gracious enough to say that after he had got back over all those miles, he would bring the matter up. He fortunately did not add "if he remembered."

Now as regards fishing! The Leader of the Opposition in his speech remarked that in Western Australia fish were very expensive, and very difficult to obtain. That is a fact. In other countries, such as those I spoke of earlier, Malaya for instance, fish is served three times a day; at every meal fish is on the menu, good clean fresh fish. The reason is that the waters there teem with fish. From observation I say that the southern portion of Western Australia's coast is not well off as regards fish population. I am referring to the estuaries, and near-coast water. At times when spawning takes place, innumerable fish are available. Sometimes garfish sell for  $\frac{3}{4}$ d. a dozen. This state of affairs, however, is sporadic; it cannot be described as general. From that aspect I am of opinion that the southern portion of the coastline of Western Australia does not carry a fish population adequate to supply the needs of even our small population ashore. Therefore it behoves us, if we wish to obtain fish cheaper and in greater numbers, to get on with the business of ascertaining where the fish are. I do not say that the fish do not exist on the southern portion of Western Australia's coastline. Further out at sea, however, I can state, from my own observation that there is an inadequacy of fish immediately near the coast, where we do our fishing to-day. On the Abrolhos Islands there are thousands upon thousands of crayfish. At Shark Bay and on our north coast edible fish exist in myriads, but we have not the means to bring these fish down.

A measure amending the Act relating to fisheries came before the House last session. About that time I was told, as the result of inquiries, that the Commonwealth Government was determined to give Western Australia a fisheries research vessel. That struck me as being a mighty fine thing, and as representing a great stride forward in this problem. We have waited and waited, and no such vessel has turned up. We have heard various kinds of stories, not necessarily true, to the effect that there have been the usual Eastern States' obstructions. At all events, to-day we have no fishing research vessel. I understand that tenders were called and that three tenders were received. Unfortunately, a shipbuilder named Austin, at Albany, did not tender. That is a great pity, because he is well skilled in his trade. The lowest tender, I am informed, is £3,000 more than the sum allo-

cated by the Federal Government for the construction of the vessel. That Government apparently fixed the amount of the grant at £7,000 because 18 months ago a ship of similar type, with a 65-ft. hull, was built for that sum. I do not know whether it included equipment, but it should have done. Costs in the meantime, as we all know, have increased, and our local tenderers find that they cannot construct the vessel for less than £10,000.

Mr. J. Hegney: Where was the other vessel built?

Mr. BERRY: At either Sydney or Melbourne.

Mr. J. Hegney: More equipment is available there and consequently the ship could have been built cheaper.

Mr. BERRY: Yes, that may be so, but surely it should not be impossible to provide the additional £3,000 to construct this vessel. That difficulty must be overcome somehow. I understand the Premier is now taking the matter up with the Federal Government, but could not we, if necessary, find the £3,000 ourselves? For some reason the Premier has gone to the Eastern States to ask for less money from the Federal Government this year. Surely we want more money! Had our Government taken preliminary steps to establish certain industries, the Commonwealth Government would have come to our aid and we perhaps would be in the same position now as are South Australia and Queensland, both of which States have reaped tremendous advantage from the war. The tale of war is not necessarily 100 per cent. a tale of horror: there are some compensations, if one may use such a word in connection with war. War forces small countries unaffected by it to engage in industries which, but for the war, they could never have undertaken. Our country happens to be in that category. Some of the industries that we have built up as a result of the war will remain with us. My opinion for years past has been that Australia can become the economic focal point of the Pacific. Australia will be a nation not in name, but in power, wealth and virile people. Therefore, we must make every effort to establish and maintain industries which are brought about as a result of war.

I shall now leave the sea and do what so many men who have been sailors do, get on to the land; nevertheless, when on land

their desire is to return to the sea. I know that is so because I myself have been to sea and am now on the land. From the Speech, it seems that the Government is alive to the need for phosphate supplies and to the necessity for exploring the State for deposits which can be economically worked. The Government has probably no more important problem to solve than the problem of diminishing phosphate supplies. This State could not have achieved its agricultural progress without the use of super-phosphates. I look forward with a certain amount of dread to the future. I have top-dressed the pastures on my property for many years past, and am now afraid I may be forced to watch them revert to nature and watch my flock of sheep dwindle away. It behoves us to do all we can to find these phosphate deposits. It may even be necessary to send the wooden ships of which I have been speaking to Christmas Island to bring the phosphate to the State. While on this subject I intend to criticise the Federal Government for the lack of foresight which resulted in the blowing to smithereens of the cantilever works at Nauru. I have been in that part of the world and can appreciate the tremendous damage that must have been done. I criticise the Federal Government because it was not far-sighted enough to send five or six aeroplanes to Ocean Island and Nauru to afford those islands necessary protection.

Mr. Abbott: The islands were under a mandate by the League of Nations.

Mr. BERRY: The League of Nations! The League of Nations died before the war. League of Nations! Fiddlesticks!

Mr. Withers: It never grew up!

Mr. BERRY: That is so. Had the mandate been given to Germany, would we have bombarded the island? I do not think so. However, the damage is done and it is useless crying over spilt milk. I trust aeroplanes are now located at the island and other economic nerve centres. The Leader of the Opposition dealt with the subject of producer gas. The only comment I would make is that I was pleased to hear the interjection of the Minister, who said that in three weeks ample supplies of charcoal would be available. I am sure we all very much appreciate that information.

I now propose to touch upon the restric-

tion of the output of wheat—a wheat holiday—and stabilisation during the war. What are we to do with the wheat? We cannot export it because of the lack of ships.

Mr. Patrick: I doubt whether we could sell it if ships were available.

Mr. BERRY: We can sell any quantity of flour. A firm has been negotiating, or trying to negotiate, for the purchase of a small local ship for orders of flour and beer for Colombo, but no ship is available. If one were, I would like to go in it. When the subject of wheat restriction was being dealt with in this Chamber last session, I urged on the Minister to do his best to ensure that the restriction should be on a bushelage, rather than on an acreage, basis. I gave my reasons.

Mr. Patrick: It could be policed more easily.

Mr. BERRY: It is so much more easily handled. A man is given a certain quota of wheat. If he is capable of producing 10,000 bushels and the restriction required is 25 per cent., he knows that he may supply only 7,500 bushels. With the acreage system, who will know the acreage planted and who will check the figure? Besides, the yield from each acre is variable with each season! I know how this kind of thing works, as a result of my experience with rubber. In the Federated Malay States we battled with restrictions and proved the contention I made to-night about mistakes being the raw products of success. In the States every mistake possible was made and it would pay the Federal Government to send somebody there to see what conditions were like and how those mistakes were overcome. The whole of this country is crying out for a bushel quota system and I hope that in his wisdom the Minister will agree to that and persuade the Federal Government. I know his handicaps, but I hope that with the help of members of this House he will be able to overcome them and that the acreage basis will be replaced by the simpler bushel basis. An interesting feature of the bushel basis is that restriction along those lines could quite easily become a form of drought insurance, because at no time in the agricultural history of this State has Australia been free from drought conditions. There seems always to be drought in some portion of the country devoted to the growing of cereals.

Mr. Patrick: It was general last year.

Mr. BERRY: Suppose Western Australia had a quota of 20 million bushels and, as a result of an excellent season, produced 35 million bushels, and that South Australia's production was 10,000,000 bushels less than anticipated! In such circumstances this State could buy the unwanted export rights of its neighbour. That would become a form of drought insurance whereby the failure of one State and the success of another could be balanced on an equitable basis, without any necessity for anybody to dash around cap in hand to Agricultural Banks or ordinary banks, or to the Government and say "Dear Mr., will you be good enough to help me next year?" The begging policy into which those engaged in the agricultural industry have been forced is deplorable and unnecessary. There is nothing that so lowers a man's self-respect than the knowledge that, at the end of a hard working year, he has to come to the city and beg. I hope the Government will endeavour to persuade the powers that be to readjust matters and substitute the bushel basis for the acreage basis, which is full of pitfalls. As the member for Greenough (Mr. Patrick) interjected, such a method would be easier to police.

While I desire to congratulate the members of the "restriction board" in Western Australia, for the admirable work they did—and particularly Mr. Smith of the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Board—for the courtesy extended to everybody in the performance of their duties which were perhaps of an irritating kind, I must confess I am sorry indeed that the Government decided to hand wheat stabilisation over to the Agricultural Bank. That institution is an interested party. Its duty is to obtain its interest and get its money back. Consequently, it should have no more control over the wheat stabilisation scheme than has the Bank of New South Wales—and I think members know how I feel towards that particular bank. It would be a wise move if the control of wheat stabilisation were placed in the hands of the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Board.

When speaking last year on the Address-in-reply I suggested that it might be possible to alleviate the position of those engaged in the wheat industry by the installation of power alcohol distilleries. At that time I had a certain amount of correspondence with

a firm in San Francisco whose name I have forgotten. That correspondence went to show that from every two bushels of wheat could be produced one gallon of power alcohol. There was the further conclusion from the figures that were provided that with the price of petrol at 2s. 10d. a gallon the production of power alcohol would be payable provided the Federal Government did not impose a huge excise duty. I recollect that at the time the member for Greenough (Mr. Patrick) disagreed with my views, and in the course of his speech on the Address-in-reply said—

Not yet have we any plan to secure the stability of the industry. I do not agree to the necessity, as the member for Irwin-Moore (Mr. Berry) suggested, of turning our wheat into power alcohol. This morning I was listening to someone talking over the air, and he referred to substitutes for petrol. He said that all the substitutes that could be adopted would not supply more than 7 per cent. of the quantity imported into Australia. In those circumstances, I do not think the hon. member's suggestion would have any great effect. As a matter of fact, we shall not have an enormous surplus of wheat in Australia.

Mr. Patrick: Nor did we have an enormous surplus.

Mr. BERRY: I do not criticise that claim.

Mr. Patrick: I had the report of the Wheat Board before me when I spoke.

Mr. BERRY: I am indeed pleased to know that apparently a commencement is to be made with the production of power alcohol in this State. I do not know that it will alleviate the position very much, because I understand the quantity of wheat involved will be only between 1,000,000 and 3,000,000 bushels. However, every little helps, and this proposal, in conjunction with my wooden ships scheme, will do quite a lot, and it will extend as success becomes assured. I hope the industry I have been referring to will be established, and that the factories will be erected in localities best suited for the purpose and where the work can best be handled. If that course is adopted, the greatest advantage possible will be derived by all concerned.

Another matter of interest to agriculturists is that, so I understand, the Midland Railway Company has voluntarily discontinued its surcharge on wheat of 1s. 6d. per ton. That is a helpful gesture on the part of the company. Unfortunately, the Minister for Railways is not present at the

moment, otherwise I would have suggested to him that the time is opportune for the State Government to forgo the surcharge which it levies of 9d. a ton on wheat. I hope that matter will be considered by the Government.

Mr. Cross: What does the Midland Railway Company charge for the haulage of super?

Mr. BERRY: I cannot tell the hon. member at the moment. My association with the Education Department has been not only cordial but of great advantage to the Irwin-Moore electorate. That is very satisfactory indeed, and I do not hesitate to make the admission. The same applies to the departments administered by the Deputy Premier, in his capacity as Minister for Works. One matter relating to the educational system that I have been asked to bring forward for consideration is a suggestion that the Minister should discontinue the necessity for correspondence class pupils to pay postage on their papers. If that charge were waived, it would be helpful to the children outback. I ask the Minister to give some consideration to that suggestion. In conclusion, I commend the member for Claremont (Mr. North) for his references to the Parliamentary institution during the course of his speech yesterday, with which I am in agreement.

On motion by Mr. McLarty, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 6.13 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Tuesday, 12th August, 1941.*

Address-in-reply, fourth day

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

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Fourth Day.*

Debate resumed from the 6th August.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East) [4.38]: Mr. President, I suppose never before in the history of the British Empire was there so much anxiety for the future. That is so in the Commonwealth and certainly in Western Australia. I take the opportunity to congratulate Mr. Fraser on the part he is going to take in this conflict; it is fortunate indeed that he is able to do something in our war effort. I am sorry Mr. Parker is not present. There has been some rather unkind criticism of that hon. member; and, were he able to speak for himself, he could probably tell us a great deal of what he has seen and learnt during his travels overseas. I also take the opportunity to congratulate Mr. Nicholson, who occupies the important position in this State of chairman of the Red Cross Society. That doubtless is a full-time job, and I presume that he, like many of us, little thought that after occupying that position during the last war he would be called upon to fill it again on this occasion.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Thank you.

Hon. A. THOMSON: We all appreciate the excellent work that the Red Cross Society is carrying out, particularly the voluntary efforts of our womenfolk. We know that that organisation represents the only means by which our forces overseas are able to receive medical attention and, should men become prisoners of war, it is through the Red Cross that they are able to receive parcels of clothes and food. I congratulate Mr. Nicholson on the work he and his organisation are doing. The Speech delivered by His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor was interesting. I noticed the following paragraph:—

Despite many reverses and great sacrifices, the people of Great Britain continue to display