

and most deplorable at any time. Realising the crisis through which this nation of the Australian Commonwealth is passing, and remembering that four of those men were at the head of very important departments of State, naturally the tragedy becomes all the more serious. I enjoyed the personal friendship of two of the men who met their deaths—in the persons of Sir Brudenell White and Sir Henry Gullett. I recognise the greatness of the work they did for our nation. Sir Brudenell White was a man amongst men, a man whom I always admired and respected. The loss to the nation of such men as these at this time will very greatly be felt. A few nights ago a good many of us had the pleasure of listening to a speech by the late Mr. Fairbairn. The Minister for Air had been engaged upon a flight around Australia, and had come to Perth. He made the fine speech to which I refer from the platform of the Capitol Theatre. On behalf of the State Executive of the Australian Labour Party I tender to the families of all of the deceased our very sincere sympathy for the irreparable loss they have sustained, a loss which is also suffered by the Commonwealth as a whole.

Question passed, members standing.

*House adjourned at 4.47 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Wednesday, 14th August, 1940.*

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

### QUESTION—GOVERNMENT MOTOR VEHICLES.

#### *Petrol Consumption.*

Hon. C. F. BAXTER asked the Chief Secretary: What was the total cost of

petrol used by all Government-owned or subsidised motor vehicles during the years 1932-33 and 1939-40 respectively?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: Investigations show that in regard to some of the major departments the local purchase orders and store requisitions for the years prior to 1934 have been destroyed, and as the cost of petrol is not dissociated from other items of motor running costs in the accountancy records, the desired information is not obtainable for the year ended the 30th June, 1933.

Accurate information for the year ended the 30th June, 1940, could only be obtained by an examination of many thousands of local purchase orders and store requisitions. This would entail the employment of additional clerical assistance, at a probable cost of £40, and it is considered that this expenditure is not justified, as the comparative information for 1933 is not obtainable.

It is not possible to separate the petrol cost in regard to subsidised vehicles as the allowance paid, in practically all instances, covers all charges associated with the employees' vehicles.

### QUESTIONS (2)—STATE FINANCE.

#### *Emergency and Hospital Taxes and Loan Expenditure.*

Hon. J. J. HOLMES (for Hon. H. Seddon) asked the Chief Secretary: 1, What was the total amount received last year from the financial emergency tax? 2, What was the total amount received, during the same period, from the hospital tax? 3, What was the total amount of loan expenditure during the same year?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Financial emergency tax, £1,263,700. 2, Hospital tax, £271,690. 3, Cash expenditure from the Loan Fund on works was £1,939,549.

#### *Special Grants to Hospitals.*

Hon. E. H. H. HALL asked the Chief Secretary: What amounts have been paid as special grants to assisted hospitals for the year ended the 30th June, 1940, giving the names of hospitals concerned and the respective amounts granted?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

Hospital	Total of Subsidy and Special Grants, etc.		
	£	s.	d.
Perth .. ..	66,833	0	0
Fremantle .. ..	23,633	9	7
Children's .. ..	24,467	0	0
Perth Dental .. ..	2,734	10	0
Fremantle Dental .. ..	200	0	0
Home of Peace .. ..	1,420	0	0
Beverley .. ..	846	0	0
Boyup Brook .. ..	485	0	0
Bridgetown .. ..	1,063	2	0
Brookton .. ..	410	0	0
Bruce Rock .. ..	974	0	0
Corrigin .. ..	1,418	0	0
Cue .. ..	1,788	0	0
Cunderdin .. ..	647	0	0
Dalwallinu .. ..	1,909	19	5
Dowerin .. ..	589	4	2
Dumbleyung .. ..	512	6	0
Dwellingup .. ..	908	13	0
Esperance .. ..	300	0	0
Geraldton Maternity Home	150	0	0
Gnowangerup .. ..	478	0	0
Goomalling .. ..	716	4	2
Greenbushes .. ..	424	6	3
Hall's Creek .. ..	159	0	0
Harvey .. ..	1,402	3	11
Jarrahdale .. ..	358	0	0
Kellerberrin .. ..	2,372	0	0
Kojonup .. ..	175	0	0
Kondinin .. ..	750	0	0
Koorda .. ..	165	0	0
Kukerin .. ..	151	0	0
Kununoppin .. ..	1,007	0	0
Lake Grace .. ..	1,317	0	0
Laverton .. ..	1,084	0	0
Leonora .. ..	695	13	5
Warren .. ..	1,335	2	0
Marble Bar .. ..	198	7	0
Meckering .. ..	100	0	0
Meekatharra .. ..	1,041	0	0
Moora .. ..	768	15	2
Morawa .. ..	756	0	0
Mornington .. ..	190	0	0
Mount Barker .. ..	908	6	0
Mount Magnet .. ..	984	0	0
Mullewa .. ..	894	0	0
Nannup .. ..	785	0	0
Narembeen .. ..	637	0	0
Norseman .. ..	763	0	0
Northampton .. ..	941	0	0
Pemberton .. ..	824	2	0
Pingelly .. ..	823	0	0
Pinjarra .. ..	823	8	8

Hospital	Total of Subsidy and Special Grants, etc.		
	£	s.	d.
Quaraiding .. ..	635	15	0
Reedy .. ..	100	0	0
Sandstone .. ..	136	5	2
Southern Cross .. ..	1,733	13	0
Toodyay .. ..	374	0	0
Tambellup .. ..	578	0	0
Three Springs .. ..	642	0	0
Westonia .. ..	304	0	0
Wickepin .. ..	418	5	0
Williams .. ..	203	0	0
Wiluna .. ..	3,497	12	3
Wongan Hills .. ..	1,414	9	2
Wyalkatchem .. ..	642	0	0
Yarloop .. ..	1,855	12	3
Youanmi .. ..	603	0	0

### QUESTION—PERTH HOSPITAL CONSTRUCTION.

*Principal Architect's Department,  
Increased Staff.*

Hon. A. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary: In connection with the construction of the Perth Hospital additions: 1, What increase in the staff of the Principal Architect's Department has been incurred, (a) since the commencement of this work, (b) for this work? 2, How many officers were brought from other parts of Australia or abroad? 3, What expense has been incurred in bringing any extra members of the staff to Western Australia? 4, What are the terms and conditions applying and salaries being paid respecting officers from outside Western Australia? 5, What particular duties and work are the imported officers engaged on? 6, (a) Are any other expert assistants being engaged from outside Western Australia; (b), if so, for what particular duties; and (c) under what terms and conditions? 7, What was the fee charged by Mr. Stephenson, of Melbourne, for his report to the Hospital Board? 8, Will the Government endeavour to use the trained and expert opinion of Western Australian architects for any additional services required?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, (a) The increase in staff since the commencement of the construction of the hospital has varied from time to time, owing to men being taken on, others resigning, and others joining the A.I.F. for service overseas, with the result that to-day five more technical

officers are employed in the branch than was the case before the construction of the hospital commenced. (b) Five. 2, Two; one from Canada and one from South Australia. 3, £337 6s. 2d. 4, Officer obtained from Canada: Two years' engagement at £440 per annum sterling. Officer from South Australia: Two years' engagement at £416 per annum. 5, Officer from Canada: Employed as section leader on one portion of the hospital project. Officer from South Australia: Employed in connection with the Technical School extensions. 6, (a) Yes, the services of Mr. C. A. McVilly, Executive Head of the Charities Board of Victoria, are being made available by the Victorian Government. Mr. McVilly arrives by air on the 17th instant and will remain here for a fortnight. (b) Mr. McVilly has considerable experience in hospital planning and construction and will advise the Hospital Board in connection with the proposed new hospital. (c) This State will pay the out-of-pocket expenses involved. 7, £313 was paid by the Hospital Board to Mr. Stephenson, of Melbourne, for his report. 8, Yes, if required.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

#### *Seventh Day.*

Debate resumed from the 8th August.

**HON. E. M. HEENAN** (North-East) [4.43]: First of all I should like briefly to refer to the tragedy that occurred near Canberra yesterday, and to express my sympathy with the bereaved relatives. The victims were all eminent Australians and it is a dreadful calamity that they should have been lost to their country at a time when their talents were needed so much. Every Australian will revere their memories and I am sure their epitaph will be, "Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori."

I desire to add my congratulations and best wishes to the three new members of this House. They have entered Parliament at a time when the very best is demanded of everyone and I feel confident that the special knowledge and training that each one possesses will be of very real value in the difficult times that lie ahead. I wish also to pay a tribute to the three members whose absence from the House we all regret. Each one served the State well and I sincerely trust that in the case of Messrs. Franklin and Angelo their rest from politics will

mean a restoration to good health. Both of those gentlemen spent themselves in the service of this State and deserved that appreciation which unfortunately is not always accorded to public men.

Only too true is it that we are meeting in most critical times. Never in its sad history has this world been engaged in such a colossal struggle between the forces of good and evil. Everything we hold dear is at stake, and if ever we are to be put to the test, it will be in the days that lie immediately ahead. I am confident that we shall win through because the principles and ideals for which we are fighting are the right ones and I believe that in the end right always prevails. Our watchword in these days must be co-operation and the best service we can render is to keep our own house in order. There are many serious problems confronting us in this State and if we can only deal with them in the right way, we will be accomplishing our duty. Some time—let us hope it will be soon—this dreadful war will end and we must keep before us the problems that will arise when that fortunate time arrives.

The plight of the man on the land is a pitiful one and the job ahead of us is to help him to see it through. It will be a calamity if more men are forced off the land. They must carry on at all costs because the future welfare of this State and possibly of the world is, in my opinion, largely in their hands. If I am any judge, the time is not far distant when the farmer will come into his own. No doubt certain measures will be introduced to assist the farmers and I intend to give them my fullest support. Before leaving this subject, may I offer my congratulations to a member of this Chamber, the Hon. T. Moore, who has been presented to-day with the M. T. Padbury trophy for scientific farming. That is an excellent accomplishment and I am sure we are all very proud of him.

The mining industry is still one of the bright aspects of our economic life. I should like to pay a tribute to the Premier for the fight he put up against the unfair Federal gold tax. Rising costs due to the war have dealt a severe blow to lower-grade mines. The additional burden of the gold tax would have made it almost impossible for many of these undertakings to carry on. The maintenance of the mining industry is vital to Australia, and its future depends

largely upon the ability of the mining companies to treat lower-grade ore. Figures show that the average grade of ore treated during the last ten years has fallen, as follows:—In 1930 the grade was 12.9 dwts., in 1931 it was 10.5, in 1932 it was 9 dwts., in 1933 it was 8 dwts., in 1934 it was 7.2, in 1935 6.9, in 1936 6.8, in 1937 6.6, in 1938 6.2, and last year 5.8 dwts. In normal times a further decrease could be expected, but owing to the increased costs the limit now has almost been reached. The importance of the industry can be gauged from the fact that during the year just ended the State produced 1,214,237 fine ounces of gold, valued at £11,842,964. The number of men employed was approximately 14,000. The Mines Department has done a wonderful job in the past, and I trust that further assistance can be granted to the industry in the future.

Some 600 men are still engaged under the prospecting scheme, but I should like to see that number considerably increased. At present they receive £1 per week, but in my view that amount should be increased to 30s. weekly. I suggest that it is better to employ men in approved schemes such as this than to have them as useless burdens on the State. The Government has been enterprising in granting assistance to some of the larger mines, and excellent results have been achieved by that means. I should like to see more assistance given to small mines, many of which could be opened up but for the expense of equipment. They cannot be re-opened because there are water difficulties, and plant would be required to take the mines to deeper levels. I suggest that if small advances were made available for the purchase of equipment, a number of these shows would be re-opened. Mining equipment represents a great handicap in the case of small mines. If some assistance could be granted to them I am sure a great deal of good would result. Unfortunately the industry recently suffered a major loss through the closing down of the Lancefield mine. About 300 men were employed there, and without any warning they were put out of work. Almost overnight the town of Beria disappeared. This unfortunate result was caused through severe falls of earth, and the mine had to be closed down in the interests of safety. I suggest that a full inquiry into the position is warranted, be-

cause if the working methods were at fault such an inquiry might be the means of preventing a similar fate befalling some of our other producers. In recent months two severe falls of earth have occurred on the Golden Mile.

Prospectors have one particular grievance against the department in connection with the treatment of sands. They maintain that the charges are at present excessive. The present charge is 2 dwts. 8 grns. per ton on the basis of a 75 per cent. extraction.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Is it not 1.18?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: It was altered from 1.18 to a basis that is not now deemed satisfactory.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Some clever juggling.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: The cost to the prospector is still the same. Figures given to me indicate that the charge is now a little over 17s. per ton. That is deemed to be excessive. The prospectors are agitating for the charging of a flat rate. Judging from some of the rates prevailing in the case of big mines in the Eastern States, the prospectors think that the charge should be in the vicinity of 12s. 6d. per ton, that being a fair figure. The rate charged in South Australia is 7s. 6d. per ton, in Victoria 8s., and in Queensland 14s. I realise that these cases may not be analagous, but from information I have received those are the charges in the other States. At present prospectors are receiving a first payment of £4 per oz. on their sands, and they state that a good deal of delay occurs in the payment of the balance of the money. In view of the present high price of gold I think the department could with safety make a first payment of £7 or £8 per oz. Then there is the question of railway passes for turned-down miners. As members know, these are men who have sacrificed their health and strength to the mining industry, and are now simply waiting for the final call. Western Australia owes much to them. The majority have worked on wages all their lives, and are now existing on allowances from the mine workers' relief fund. It would be a fitting gesture if free passes were allowed to these men, so that they might travel to the coast once a year. The cost would be very small compared with the great good that would result. Surely that is something that could be done,

especially by a Labour Government. One of the principal ills from which this state and the other States suffer is centralisation. I often think the problem is not properly handled. People in far-distant centres should receive more consideration. They are still the pioneers and are carrying on the work of the development of this country under most trying conditions. A case in point is the town of Agnew, a mining centre with a population of approximately 600 men. Agnew has no hospital and not even a trained nurse, while the nearest town is Leonora, 86 miles distant. In the event of sickness the patient has to be taken to Leonora or Wiluna, which is 110 miles away. Surely the department concerned should do something to remedy such a state of affairs. There are other matters affecting my constituency such as proposed amendments to the Workers' Compensation Act, but I hope that during the session I shall have the opportunity to speak on that and other subjects. In the meantime, I support the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

**HON. L. B. BOLTON** (Metropolitan)  
[5.3]: Like most speakers, if I may except Mr. E. H. H. Hall, it is my intention to be brief in the remarks I have to make in support of the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply. Firstly I wish to express my profound sympathy for the relatives of the victims of the tragic occurrence at Canberra yesterday. I had personally met the three Ministers whose services have been lost to Australia, and one cannot help feeling that the happening was really more than tragic at a time like the present when the Commonwealth is needing the best brains in the difficult period through which we are passing. I should like to offer my congratulations to the members who were returned to this Chamber at the last elections. At the same time, my sympathies go out to those who are no longer with us. I welcome the three new members and particularly my colleague Sir Hal Colebatch, who has already served the State so faithfully and well, and Mr. Welsh and Mr. Roche. All I am sure, will prove to be very useful members in this House of review.

My remarks on this occasion will not be directed at criticising the Government to the

extent that I might have done under different conditions. Perhaps the Chief Secretary may feel that the Government does not deserve so much criticism at the present time as on former occasions. However, in view of the very difficult times through which we are passing, I hardly think it is the duty of members to over criticise; rather should we help the Government in the difficult task it has before it. The Government will be ill-advised to introduce contentious measures during this session. It certainly should not if it can possibly avoid doing so. The Lieut.-Governor's Speech left us guessing as to what we might expect, but I hope we will not have to fight, as we have had to do on other occasions, against some measures, particularly industrial measures such as those that have been presented to us in previous sessions. If I may be permitted to offer advice to the Government, I suggest that if it feels that there is a particular measure it desires to pass into law, the policy will be followed similar to that adopted in connection with the Dental Bill that came before us last session. On that occasion it will be remembered the parties principally interested were called into conference and an agreement was arrived at before the Bill was submitted to Parliament. Then when the Bill was presented it was regarded as a good one and it went through without much trouble. If similar action were taken in connection with what might be termed contentious legislation, considerable saving in time would be effected. In addition also there would be a saving in the cost of Parliament. Speaking of the cost of Parliament reminds me that from the time I first entered this Chamber I have advocated a reduction in the number of members of both Houses. I know this is not a very popular subject; in fact I was told that I would very soon look at the position in a different light. Although I have advocated this before, and even prior to my entering Parliament, I still view the subject in the same light. To-day my opinion is that there has never been a time when such a move is more necessary. The public looks to Parliament for a lead in a reduction of costs and the curtailment of unnecessary expenditure, and in my opinion if the number of members in this House were reduced from 30 to 20—two to represent each of the ten Provinces—the lower number would be ample.

With regard to another place, I would strongly advocate a reduction in the number from 50 to 35. This would mean approximately a total reduction of one-third.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Petrol consumption is being reduced by the same percentage.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: We are hoping that the petrol reduction will not last for ever. The reduction in the number of members of both Houses could, however, be permanent. Members, I think, will agree with me that many of our constituents say from time to time, "What is the use of so many Parliaments and so many members, particularly under existing conditions?" This is not a new thing, but I do want the Government seriously to consider the question during the current session so that some move may be made in the direction I have indicated. The public asks for a lead and it is due to us to give it.

I believe it is intended to introduce a Bill to amend the Electoral Act. I hope that such a measure will be submitted and that there will be an amendment to the postal voting provisions. I have already brought this question before the House and I suggest now that if an amending Bill is introduced, provision will be made whereby it will be possible for an elector to exercise the franchise at the nearest polling booth on election day, irrespective of where he may be. That would, I consider, effect a big saving in costs and I urge the Government to consider the question.

Speaking on the Address-in-reply last session, I made some critical remarks regarding the Traffic Department. There are several points I wish to stress, and, as a representative of the people, I consider I should offer one or two suggestions. They are not very serious, but they are important enough to demand consideration. Much is being heard to-day of producer gas plants, and I am going to suggest to the department that no fee should be charged when a trailer is used to convey the producer gas plant. I understand that Western Australia is the only State in the Commonwealth where such a charge is made. I should also like to recommend that the department give consideration to the question of angle parking. As we all know, the parking position in the city is serious, although I do not consider it will be quite so bad when the petrol restrictions are enforced. I am certain that a considerable

amount of time would be saved if the Traffic Department permitted angle parking in those thoroughfares and localities where it could be carried out without inconvenience. Another matter that I hope will again be submitted to Parliament this session is that of third-party insurance. Last session, when the Bill dealing with that question was brought before this House, we found it surrounded by a lot of other matters to which members were not able to agree. This is a most necessary piece of legislation and I trust the Government will see to it that a Bill dealing with it is brought forward this session, a Bill without embellishments. If there are embellishments, this Chamber will in all probability again turn it down.

With regard to industrial development, I am afraid that Mr. Hawke is as disappointed as are most of us because of the lack of progress. If we study the records of the industries of Australia over the last 12 months, we find that employment has increased very considerably in the two larger States, and to a lesser degree in the other States. Western Australia is the exception. Indeed, it has gone back considerably in recent periods. That only goes to prove that our general conditions of labour must be amended. On many occasions I have brought to the notice of this House the different conditions under which industries are working in our State as compared with conditions in the other States. Unless we are prepared to alter those conditions, I can see very little hope indeed for our industries making the progress that we hope for. I am sorry also that we in this State are not receiving a greater share of defence work. On this subject and the manufacture of munitions I should like to offer my congratulations to the Midland Junction Workshops and the employees particularly, for the attitude they have adopted, and the work that has been secured from the Defence Department. Our manufacturers generally are aware that high precision tools are only available at our railway workshops. It is unfortunate that our other factories have not the tools necessary to manufacture munitions. Nevertheless, I appeal to the Government to spread this munition work as much as possible. Part of it can be done in other workshops, and I trust that the board in control of munition-making in this State will not lose sight of that fact. Unfortunately the only direction in which we seem to be

making progress is in the Government departments themselves.

Hon. A. Thomson: And they do not pay any taxes.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: That is right. As my friend suggests, they are free of taxation. We do not of course take up the position that we are sorry the Government is manufacturing munitions. There are, however, many directions in which the State is competing with private enterprise, and competing under conditions suggested by Mr. Thomson. The State might well keep out of such work. At the present time private enterprise in this State is suffering severely. I know definitely of many instances where large contracts have been let to the Government without its being called upon to give a quotation. Nor have tenders or quotations been obtained for the work from private firms. I refer to the building of huts. Private enterprise is forced to compete for work under unfair conditions.

The Chief Secretary: What are the unfair conditions?

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: One is that the Government pays no taxation whatever; another is that the Government is allowed to cart most of its material by road, while private enterprise is forced in many instances to send material by rail. The chief one is, "Write your own ticket." It is a big advantage to obtain a job, particularly large jobs such as the State Government gets from the Federal authorities, without tendering a price. Unfortunately many manufacturers are unable to secure jobs at any price.

Member: The Federal authorities are responsible for that.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: There are many instances. One cannot altogether blame the Government; but if it is right for the Government to get work under such conditions, why should not it also be right for private enterprise?

The Chief Secretary: I think there is another side to that question.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Perhaps when the Minister replies he will give us the other side. Speaking of industries generally, I understand the matter upon which I now propose to touch was brought under the notice of the Minister for Industrial Development before he left for the Eastern States. I maintain it is the duty of the Government to keep a close watch on this

matter, because otherwise this State will find itself without the materials required to carry out the contracts it has a chance of securing. There is at present a grave shortage of iron and steel. It is most difficult for this State to obtain supplies from the Eastern States.

The Chief Secretary: That is private enterprise.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I do not quite understand you.

Hon. J. Cornell: It is private enterprise.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Do you mean the supply of materials?

The Chief Secretary: Yes. The shortage is due to private enterprise.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: That may be so, nevertheless it is exceedingly difficult for private enterprise to obtain material. Yet the Government can obtain the materials it requires. I hope the Minister for Industrial Development, who of course is attending to the job as he sees it—and he is doing a good job, too—will take the matter in hand while he is in the Eastern States. I would like to refer briefly to the closing down of the bolt-making factory at Bayswater.

The Chief Secretary: That is private enterprise, too.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Yes. The closing-down may be due to some other cause. Probably the Minister may know more about it. I will give my angle of it. If it had been possible for any firm to manufacture bolts at a satisfactory cost, then the firm that conducted the factory should have been able to carry on the business here.

Hon. J. Cornell: Does not the firm make bolts in the Eastern States?

Hon. C. F. Baxter: With a different class of labour.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: The firm has the same materials here, but I am trying to show the House that it had advantages which probably no other firm conducting a similar business in Australia possessed. The firm is one of the oldest-established in Australia and has been bolt-making for many years. Because of its huge purchases of material, it was probably able to purchase raw material at a price lower than any other firm in Australia could, certainly much lower than the firm from which McPherson's purchased the factory. That proves to me that until we amend our Workers' Compensation Act and alter our labour conditions, there is no

hope of that class of work being carried on in Western Australia. Perhaps no other industry lends itself so much to unskilled labour and junior workers as does bolt-making. The bolts are made by automatic machines which require continuous feeding. Yet McPhersons found it impossible to manufacture bolts in this State in competition with its own factory in Victoria. Was it not only natural that under such conditions this factory had to close? In my opinion it is deplorable that our conditions are preventing us from creating and maintaining industries of this kind.

Hon. J. Cornell: Did the man from whom McPhersons bought the factory make a profit or a loss?

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: He claims to have worked at a profit. I believe he was in his own way making a profit. Why the industry was closed down after McPhersons took it over I am unable to say.

The Chief Secretary: I have a good idea.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Certain suggestions were made in the correspondence that appeared in the Press. I happen to know some of the reasons, but am unable to disclose them. In my opinion, the closing-down had nothing whatever to do with the cost of production in the factory. I would remind members that when speaking last session on the question of industries, I related how, during the visit of the Minister to Melbourne, Mr. Hawke was told at a luncheon tendered to him by the executive of the Victorian Chamber of Manufactures, by no less a person than Mr. Eady himself—the managing director of McPhersons, Ltd.—that it was impossible for Western Australia to compete against the Eastern States so long as our existing labour conditions continued. Until we make the alterations I have suggested we cannot hope to make the progress that not only Mr. Hawke but every member of this Chamber I am certain desires.

That brings me to the question of youth employment. Had it been possible for this factory to employ additional youths, I am quite certain it would not have been closed down. Our present shortage of skilled labour in my opinion is partly due to the years of depression. For a period of from four to five years, while the depression continued, in many trades no apprentices were trained, while the restriction of the

number of junior workers and apprentices since that time has made it impossible to overtake the shortage. The Defence Department to-day is crying out for mechanics and skilled tradesmen. It is offering every possible inducement to get them. But the trouble is that the department is taking them from private industries. It is hardly right to say so, but it is just as well in one respect that the State is short of work for skilled tradesmen, otherwise I do not know what the position would be. The shortage of tradesmen is undoubtedly due to the restrictions on the employment of apprentices and junior workers. I maintain that our laws must be amended in this direction so as to give youths a chance in life. I would make it a condition that every employer must take every apprentice possible in every branch of his industry before he is allowed to employ unrestricted junior workers. That would overcome the difficulty and would enable youths to be placed in work as they leave school.

I desire to touch on another subject; I am sure my Country Party friends will pardon me for referring to the primary industries of the State.

Member: We shall be glad to have your support.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I am heavily involved in the primary industries and that perhaps is my excuse for referring to them. As I have said before, and as I think most members will agree, the success of our primary industries ensures the advancement of our secondary industries, and vice versa. They go hand in hand. At the present time I have a handful of each and I do not know which is causing me the greater worry. I must confess, however, that the secondary industry side is now quite as bad as the primary side may be.

I desire also to refer briefly to the remarks of Mr. Wood, who first mentioned in this Chamber the interference of the Price Fixing Commissioner in the price of sheep. I was sorry that that interference took place, particularly as the growers were not consulted. Had the Prices Commissioner taken the growers of sheep into his confidence, he must have learnt that the advance in price for a week or two was not a false one. Looking at the position fairly and squarely, the increase was only reason-



able, and the price would have found its level again within a week or two. Owing to the very dry season many growers have had to hand-feed their sheep for many weeks.

Hon. G. W. Miles: For many months.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: In some cases for years.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: On Sunday I was discussing this matter with a grower, and he told me that he had used 100 tons of hay to feed a flock of 1,600 sheep.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: And oats as well?

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Not much oats. During the dry period I have hand-fed to my stock 1,000 bags of oats and 75 tons of hay at a cost of anything from 6s. to 8s. per head. This was necessary, not to keep the stock in condition, but to keep them alive. Therefore I say the interference of the Prices Commissioner was not in any way justified.

This State has also been badly treated in the matter of its barley production, particularly in regard to two-row or malting barley. Western Australia grows hardly enough barley for the local market. Every bushel of premium, two-row or malting barley is absorbed by the maltsters and brewers of this State, and it was most unfair that we should have been drawn into the pool and paid the paltry advances that have been paid to date, seeing that the maltsters and brewers have paid to the Barley Board 4s. 3d. for every bushel of two-row barley grown in the State. The growers have received for malting barley two advances, one of 1s. 3d. and the other of 1s., which, less freight of approximately 5d. a bushel, makes a total of 1s. 10d. When in the Eastern States recently, I interviewed Mr. Cameron and Mr. McBride and pointed out the injustice being done to this State. I had hopes that this year we would have been able to market our barley as before. The two-row barley is absorbed by an industry that can afford, and is willing to pay, a reasonable price for it. I have no desire to weary the House by quoting figures, but according to the "Commonwealth Year Book," this State in the 12 months ended June, 1938, produced 454,000 bushels of malting barley, whereas South Australia's production was between 8,000,000 and 9,000,000 bushels. Most of South Australia's production is exported, and why,

when we have a commodity the whole of which is absorbed locally, we are not allowed to handle it ourselves, I do not know.

Hon. T. Moore: What does the local market pay for the barley?

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: It pays 4s 3d. a bushel.

Hon. T. Moore: And how much does the grower get?

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: For premium barley the grower has received 1s. 10d. a bushel. For second quality or ordinary Cape barley, considerably less is paid. I am referring only to the barley taken by the brewers, who are willing to pay a reasonable price for it. I interviewed the chairman of the Barley Board in South Australia, and he informed me that brewers and maltsters had paid 4s. 3d. cash for every bushel of barley they had taken.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: And how much does the grower get?

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Only 1s. 10d. a bushel.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Where does the difference go?

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: To help South Australia out of its difficulty occasioned by having to export such a large quantity.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Is 1s. 10d. the final figure?

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: We might get more, but I doubt whether it will be much.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: This is Government enterprise, not private enterprise.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Yes.

Hon. A. Thomson: I should call it Government interference.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: That is the correct term.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: You must consider the wheat farmer.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: That has nothing to do with the barley grower. As our total output is absorbed locally, growers should receive a fair return for it.

Another matter I wish to deal with is that of road transport. In the Press a few days ago there appeared a statement by the Minister for Railways that the Government intends to extend its transport operations by using buses. This has been the policy of the Government since the report was made some time ago by the Commissioner of Railways, and seemingly the Government intends gradually to push private enterprise out of

the transport business in the metropolitan area. I hope the Government will give private enterprise an opportunity to do some of this work. On a former occasion that was not done, but if the Government intends to pursue this policy, the least it can do is to allow private enterprise a share of the work.

I must make brief reference to petrol restriction. This will result in the loss of employment to hundreds of people in this State. Western Australia is certainly entitled to some additional consideration if any restriction is to be imposed. Already we have petrol restriction to a certain extent here. The Transport Board, in its wisdom, has restricted the use of motor trucks in many districts, and that is tantamount to imposing a petrol restriction. I am glad to know that the Premier has taken the matter up with the Commonwealth Government. The people of this State are certainly entitled to greater consideration if only in view of the huge distances of this State as compared with other States. I hope the Premier will keep hammering at the Commonwealth Government until we get satisfaction. Otherwise the position of the motoring industry generally will become very serious. Many of the allied industries will be affected; in fact, they are feeling the effects already.

Hon. J. Cornell: The trouble is caused by the non-essential motor cars.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: No one objects to some restriction being imposed upon them, but the effect of the restriction on the motor industry is certainly very serious. I support the motion.

**HON. H. V. PIESSE** (South-East) [5.40]: I should like to express my sympathy with the relatives of the unfortunate victims of the Canberra air disaster. We all realise that a very serious loss has been sustained by the Commonwealth Government, and we cannot but be mindful of the sorrow of the families of those who met with such an untimely end. When reading the names of the victims, I was struck with that of a young man named Elford, who married a Katoaning girl. Thus in two respects Western Australia was directly associated with the victims, the other having been Pilot Hitchcock. As a Country Party representative, I naturally watch the utterances of the Prime Minister closely. I listened to his speech in the Sydney Town Hall recently,

a very fine speech, and made a resolution that Mr. Menzies, as Prime Minister of Australia, was the right man. I feel sure that everybody will sympathise with him in the loss of his colleagues through the accident.

Let me add a few words about our former colleagues who were not returned at the recent elections. Mr. Franklin has given excellent service to the State; he endeared himself to all of us and will be greatly missed. We all regret the retirement, through ill-health, of Mr. Angelo. I have always felt that the country people had a very fine representative in Mr. Angelo. He was always prepared to support any legislation for the good of the agricultural districts. I do not forget, either, my colleague Mr. Wittenoom, who gave such excellent service to his province. He was ever at the beck and call of his electors and never missed an opportunity to travel from one end to the other of his province when his services were required. I welcome the return of Sir Hal Colebatch to this Chamber. I knew him when he was on the staff of the old "Morning Herald" and I was a boy of very tender years. I have watched his career and admired the great service he has given to the State and to the Commonwealth, and I feel sure that he will be of great assistance in this House of review. Our friend Mr. Welsh we all know to be a sterling man, and one on whose advice we can always rely. Last, but not least, there is Mr. Roche, for whom I feel a personal responsibility in having made a farmer of him in my district. The farm on which he is now he purchased from me, and I daresay since acquiring it he has often exclaimed, "I wish to goodness I had never seen H. V. Piesse!" Mr. Roche has freely given of his time, gratis, not only to the Returned Soldiers' League but also to local governing bodies. He possesses an undoubted knowledge of the Great Southern district, and I feel sure that his advent to this Chamber will prove most helpful to all our members and to the province of which he is a representative.

I desire to compliment the municipalities, road boards, and local governing bodies generally on the splendid attitude they have adopted in connection with war rallies throughout the country districts. The services of members of those bodies are always given gratis, and undoubtedly have resulted

in marvellous work. These efforts have brought people together by rallies, which speakers were invited to address; and we must all acknowledge that the results have been wonderful. From day to day the Press reports free loans and other evidences of the results of this voluntary work.

I shall not speak at length to-night, but I desire to make a reference to the steamship "Kybra." That vessel has done great service as a connecting link between Albany and Perth. It has proved most helpful in conveying goods and commodities from Fremantle to Albany, and thus saving the need for much import from South Australia and the Eastern States. In this connection a deputation—which I was not well enough to attend—approached the Government, and I trust Ministers will give most careful consideration to the deputation's request that a train be provided for the transport of goods which the "Kybra" has carried in the past. It may be said that the granting of the request would constitute a precedent, on which all other districts would base a similar demand. However, the port of Albany is in a totally different position from, say, the port of Geraldton and goldfields centres.

Hon. J. Cornell: What about the port of Esperance?

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: Esperance is connected with the goldfields.

Hon. J. Cornell: The "Kybra" used to go to Esperance.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: If any injustice is done to the port of Esperance, the Government would certainly deal with that aspect also. The point is that we need to avoid as far as possible importation of goods from the East, especially into the town of Albany and the Great Southern district. I fully realise that when the Federal Government asks for the use of such steamers as the "Kybra," the duty of the Western Australian Government is, at whatever cost, to grant a request made for war purposes.

Now I turn to the deplorable seasonal conditions we are passing through. I can speak from first-hand knowledge of the position around Katanning. I can state that on my farms at the present moment, with the exception of one large dam, there is not a dam on the properties I am working that has more than 2 feet 6 inches of water in it. The winter months are passing by; and unless rain comes within the next five

or six weeks we shall face a highly serious outlook. I know that the Government is mindful of the position. I know the Government can do nothing to bring rain. But I also know that Ministers are most sympathetic and will render every possible aid towards the carrying-on of the districts which are affected. When we realise that safe and sound districts like Wagin, Katanning and Narrogin, which have never known a shortage of water, are experiencing terrible hardships in this particular season, we realise also the extreme seriousness of the situation. Even to-day one cannot do following in Katanning, except on favoured sandy spots; and this is right in the middle of winter, when most of the following is completed. It shows the extreme seriousness of the position which has resulted from the unfortunate seasonal conditions.

I have read in "Hansard" what Mr. Wood said in relation to the fixation of the price of meat. That is a matter which Mr. White, the Commissioner, interfered with by virtue of legislation which was passed by this Chamber as practically a war measure. It includes a section permitting the Commissioner, under the control of the Government, to vary the prices of primary products. Let me say that the meat industry is not the only industry that has suffered through such interference. Take the potato industry. Some little time ago it was rather difficult for merchants to obtain potatoes from growers, who were holding for higher prices. I want members to realise that these potato growers do not always enjoy good seasons or good crops; moreover, prices are not always payable in Western Australia. Occasions have been known when the price of potatoes has been so low that a notice has been posted on the gate saying, "Help yourself to potatoes, but leave the fork."

Hon. A. Thomson: No price was fixed for potatoes then.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: No. On this occasion, I understand, the Commissioner fixed prices for wholesalers and retailers in Perth, without calling on any of the growers for their views before he agreed to the wholesale price. Yesterday I received a letter from Mr. Parsons, who is the president of the Tasmanian Potato Board. I had written to him giving a full statement of what was

taking place in Western Australia. In his reply he informs me that the first thing the Commonwealth Commissioner, Prof. Copland, did was to call the potato-growers into consultation. The Tasmanian society of potato growers expended £100 to allow leading growers to confer with the Price Fixing Commissioner. That is the right procedure. It stands to reason that if prices are to be interfered with, the first people to be consulted are the producers of the commodity. Had that course been followed by Mr. White, he could have obtained much useful information as to the need for fixing prices. Potato merchants here have bought at high figures, in many instances at £9 per ton.

Member: At more than that.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: On the average, I should say, they bought at £9 or £10 per ton. Since the fixing of the price, potatoes have never reached that figure. The price was fixed at £10 per ton wholesale, but potatoes have never gone to that price. They have only brought £9 and £8 in the market. That fact proves that there was no necessity for interference by the Commissioner.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Interference with the ordinary market price.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: That is so. If, on the other hand, 700 or 800 tons of potatoes had been exported from Western Australia, the position here to-day would be that growers would receive more than the average market price of potatoes now being sold.

Turning now to the meat position, I remember that on the 13th July last Mr. Watts and I discussed the matter in Katanning. On the 12th July I had been negotiating with a local butcher for the sale of a line of fat lambs at 24s. and 26s. I have since sold those lambs to the same local butcher at 19s. The Commissioner's action was the cause of my loss. The price was higher than I received last year, but my books prove that it cost me 11s. additional to bring the lambs to maturity this year, as they never had an iota of green feed. The ewes were fed on oats, chaff and bran. Let me remark that this House of review unanimously agreed to the price-fixing measure, because members looked upon it as a war-time measure which would not operate detrimentally either to the primary producer or to anyone else. We all voted for the Bill. I am pleased to see that Mr. Wood has given notice of his in-

tention to introduce a measure amending the existing Act from the standpoint of the primary producer.

Hon. J. Cornell: There would have been no need to amend the Act but for that act of God, the drought.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: In my opinion there would have been no need for amendment if the Commissioner had consulted the meat producers before he intervened.

Hon. L. Craig: Does he know his job?

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: I consider him a highly capable officer, and one who has given very good service in the position he is holding.

Hon. L. Craig: We do not want any State price-fixing.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: Tasmania is the largest producer of potatoes in the Commonwealth. In that State the growers were called to consult with the Price-Fixing Commissioner in camera. They decided to send their potatoes to market without expecting more than an arranged figure. Mr. White has power to fix a figure to-day by private treaty if he so desires.

The Chief Secretary: Why do you say Mr. White did fix prices when you know that he did not fix prices?

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: Prices were arranged with the wholesalers.

Hon. L. Craig: He is a stupid ass.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: During war time, and in view of the difficulties we are encountering, it is pleasant to observe the progress of various companies operating in the country districts. I wish to congratulate the company which owns the Narrogin Butter Factory on having erected such a very fine factory at Denmark. Denmark is coming into its own. That district has had a very bad time indeed. For many years it has had to contend with great and numerous difficulties. Therefore it is most pleasing to know that the factory just erected at Denmark is so up-to-date, and in keeping with the production of that district. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

HON. W. R. HALL (North-East) [6.0]: I intend to be brief in my remarks. At the outset I wish to extend a very hearty welcome to our new colleagues—Sir Hal. Colebatch, Mr. Welsh and Mr. Roche. I am sure their presence in this Chamber will be

of benefit to the State, and I sincerely hope that their term with us will be very pleasant. During the course of the debate we have heard a lot about potatoes, onions, wheat, wool and other commodities of importance to the provinces represented by those who have spoken; and for once I shall make only passing references to the goldmining industry, which has been the backbone of the State for so long. I have a few grievances to ventilate, and in dealing with them I shall keep to the point and not take up time unnecessarily. Firstly I was disappointed in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech, which contained little apart from references to the State's war effort. Naturally I am pleased that the State is doing its share in that direction and helping Great Britain to prosecute the war successfully. I offer my congratulations to Mr. Moore, who has been criticised by some members regarding statements made in moving the adoption of the Address-in-reply. In my opinion he made a wonderful speech and kept strictly to the point. He covered the Lieut.-Governor's Speech very well, considering what it contained.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Yes, considering.

Hon. W. R. HALL: Particularly considering that the war is in progress and that the Speech dealt mainly with our war effort. One matter of importance to the people on the goldfields concerns the railway service from Perth to Kalgoorlie on to Laverton. The railways decidedly require speeding up. The system lags far behind the times. The journey from Perth to Kalgoorlie occupies 17 hours, which means that a speed of a little over 20 miles an hour is maintained. While the railways are losing money, I think the fault lies with the departmental authorities themselves. They have neglected to speed up train journeys, and to provide an adequate service for passengers. The effect is that whenever possible Kalgoorlie people avail themselves of opportunities to travel by motor car to Perth, and back from Perth. As a result, much revenue is lost to the railways. Particularly does this apply during the Christmas period. At times the traffic would warrant one or two extra trains on one or more days, but the railway authorities have not seen fit to provide additional transport facilities. I do not understand why the department does not provide a better service

when required. Several complaints have been voiced regarding the carriages in which people are asked to travel. Recently the old type of carriage was placed on the run, although those coaches are fit only for sheep.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: Have you travelled on the Great Southern line?

Hon. W. R. HALL: I wish the coaches had been placed on the Great Southern line or any other line apart from the goldfields run. Apparently the department discovered that the new coaches required overhauling, and all were taken off at the one time and the old carriages placed in commission. Those carriages are a disgrace to the department. I also wish to comment on the conduct of the dining cars and the meals served, for which the exorbitant prices of 3s. 6d. for tea and 3s. for breakfast are charged. Apart from that, the meals, in my opinion, are not adequate. I am entitled to be regarded as a fair judge of a meal, and I consider those served in the dining car not up to standard. The Government should take over the dining car service and the railway refreshment rooms. If that were done, the public would enjoy a decent service. Private enterprise in that direction, at any rate, could well go by the board. The service between Kalgoorlie and Laverton is extremely slow. The people in the northern districts are largely isolated, and perishable goods have to be railed. Seeing that the train leaves Kalgoorlie at 11 a.m., and reaches its destination, 210 miles distant, at 11.40 p.m.—that is, if it is on time, which is very seldom—members will appreciate the force of the contentions repeatedly advanced by Mr. Seddon and Mr. Heenan that the Government should instal a Diesel coach on that run and so give the people in those distant parts some value for money they have to spend on necessary supplies.

Hon. L. Craig: But 200 miles in 12 hours or so is fast travelling. You do not know what slow railway travel is?

Hon. W. R. HALL: I am glad to hear that.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: You should travel on the Bunbury line.

Hon. W. R. HALL: Irrespective of whether the journey is made in fast time or not, if members consider it fast then I do not wish to travel over other lines. Perhaps the industries in their provinces may be in keeping with the railway service—un-

fortunately on the down grade! I compliment the Government on the work carried out upon the Perth-Kalgoorlie main road, now known as the Great Eastern Highway. Much money has been spent on bitumenising the surface.

Hon. W. J. Mann: And on taking traffic away from the railways.

Hon. W. R. HALL: Excellent work is being carried out. For two or three years past I have travelled over that main road extensively, and I certainly appreciate the wonderful job being done by the Main Roads Board. Most effective roads are being made with the money available. Not many local bodies can say much against the Main Roads Board and its work.

Hon. A. Thomson: The board has become very efficient.

Hon. W. R. HALL: Furthermore, the board has given great help to local authorities throughout the State. The road board with which I am associated is the largest outside the metropolitan area, and enjoys a substantial revenue. That fact did not deter the Main Roads Board from making available to the Kalgoorlie Road Board a substantial grant for bitumenising the road that constitutes the main connection between Kalgoorlie and Lakeside.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Probably due to the influence of the chairman of that board.

Hon. W. R. HALL: I would not say that at all. I know that were it not for the assistance rendered to local governing authorities throughout Western Australia by the Main Roads Board, many road boards would not be able to carry on. Reverting to the Great Eastern Highway, my only criticism is that the Main Roads Board has been a little slow with the actual work that has been undertaken. I would like to see some of the 6,000 unemployed placed on the road at intervals so as to secure the completion of the work much sooner than is possible under the present system. The road is being bitumenised from Merredin to Coolgardie; and it was thought that the first section from Merredin to Southern Cross would take three years to complete. About two years have elapsed, and the work has proceeded for about 25 miles. The part that has been completed is of great benefit to motorists and others who have to make use of that thoroughfare. I trust the Government will place more men on the work, pro-

vided supplies of emulsion can be procured to enable the bitumenising operations to continue. If that is done, the Government will have provided a decent road for the section of the community that has to pay enormously heavy taxation in the form of motor fees.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: That might mean that people will not use the trains at all.

Hon. W. R. HALL: Rather than use the train, I would travel by road, even though it costs a lot.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: That is no compliment to the railway service.

Hon. W. R. HALL: The Government has carried out much work in connection with the re-laying, or replacing, of pipes along the line from Mundaring Weir to Kalgoorlie. That task has provided employment for many people, and the undertaking is a credit to the Water Supply Department, particularly when we consider how the pipe line is being replaced. The service has been of great benefit to those who live outside the metropolitan area. At any rate, the Government and the Water Supply Department are to be complimented on the wonderful work that is being carried out. I trust that its completion will mean a reduction in water charges to goldfields residents. I hope that will be the result, although I know that Governments are always reluctant to reduce their charges for services rendered to the people. However, the Kalgoorlie people expect a reduction in water charges so as to be able to make greater use of the service and enjoy some of the results that are so apparent in the metropolitan area. Mr. Bolton referred to the question of petrol rationing. With him, I believe that such a restriction will seriously affect the motor industry and all other industries in the State, particularly if rationing is along the lines indicated. Not only will industries in the metropolitan area be affected by a 30 per cent. reduction, but also, I believe, the goldmining industry.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Hon. W. R. HALL: I was about to speak of the replacement of petrol units by gas producers when rationing becomes effective. My opinion is that gas producers are not yet efficient substitutes, and that much will have to be done to improve them. Some time will elapse—maybe twelve months or two years—before

they will be brought to a standard that will make them equal to petrol units. For that reason it is a pity that petrol rationing is to take place in the very near future. I hope that a strong protest will be made by the Government to the Federal authorities and that an attempt will be made to have the rationing scheme postponed. The mining industry on the Eastern Goldfields will be materially affected if rationing is introduced; and the plan will have an adverse effect on prospectors who are using small utility trucks, such as Model T Fords, in which they are able to cover much more ground than was the case in years gone by, when they had to make use of horses and carts or travel on foot. When all is said and done, prospectors are the backbone of the State. They are the men who founded the goldfields. But for the prospectors, there would be no Kalgoorlie and outlying districts, and every incentive should be given to men who have blazed the trail to carry on their good work. Numbers of men engaged in the motoring industry will be thrown out of work when rationing takes effect, and that will be a great calamity. Such unemployment is already noticeable in the metropolitan area and on the Eastern Goldfields. I cannot imagine the men rendered workless being able to find fresh employment. Even should they desire to seek enlistment, their chances are not very good, because the authorities do not at present seem to want their services. The obvious result of rationing will be to force the State to care for additional unemployed.

Reference has been made by Mr. Heenan to the Government's prospecting scheme. More unemployed could be absorbed under that scheme. An increase in the allowance from £1 to 30s. is, however, necessary. One pound a week is insufficient for a man who is battling his way through the bush in an endeavour to find the elusive weight. Gold now is much harder to discover than in days gone by, and prospectors suffer great hardships in endeavouring to locate it. The Government should increase the allowance to 30s. at least, thereby affording a golden opportunity to unemployed persons desirous of striking out for themselves. Many have already bettered their conditions in this way, and many more will be able to do so. I hope that Mr. Heenan's suggestion will be placed before the Government and that the allowance will be increased at an early date.

I was very pleased to note the Government's decision to grant a substantial sum as a subsidy to Tindals Mine in Coolgardie. That mine was a good producer in days gone by, and most goldfields members will have happy recollections of it. My sincere hope is that Tindals will again come into its own and prove one of the great gold producers of the Eastern Goldfields. Another mine that I think will have a new life is the Mt. Charlotte Mine. That is near the old Hannan-street railway station. From information I have gathered as to results of diamond drilling in the past, this mine should prove a great gold producer in the future. I hope it will do so, for the benefit of those who have fought hard to have the mine thrown open, and also for the good of the whole State.

Another need of the Eastern Goldfields is the erection of more workers' homes. This matter was mentioned by various goldfields members last session. The Workers' Homes Board during the past 12 months has built several more homes on the fields, but the number is insufficient. The demand is greater than the supply, and the board's activities have not solved the housing problem in Kalgoorlie and Boulder. I venture to suggest that the board has several hundred applications from persons desirous of possessing a worker's home. People who have already secured homes of this type look after them creditably, and the buildings are an acquisition to Kalgoorlie and Boulder. I hope the Workers' Homes Board will enlarge its building programme on the Eastern Goldfields in the future.

I understand that legislation will be introduced this session to amend the Workers' Compensation Act and the Mine Workers' Relief Fund Act, so as to provide for deserving men. I hope members of this Chamber will give very favourable consideration to amendments the Government will propose. The pros and cons will be fully discussed and members will be enabled to realise that those amendments are justified. Every effort should be made to help unfortunate men who have been thrown out of the industry through occupational diseases, and the widows and orphans of those who have succumbed.

As regards Mr. Bolton's suggestion that the number of members of this House be reduced by ten and that of the Legislative Assembly by 15, I do not think the hon. mem-

ber would like to see 25 politicians thrown on the scrap-heap. Surely that is not his intention.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: It might be for the good of the country.

Hon. W. R. HALL: I doubt that. However, I do not think my party would be agreeable to that suggestion. If it were a matter of "one go, all go," I would be quite prepared to fall into line with my honourable friend; but I do not wish his present suggestion carried to the Government, though I do not know that Cabinet would attach much weight to it. I certainly do not want to leave here, and I am sure that no other member wants to do so either. Mr. Bolton apparently did not take into consideration the fact that he and other members have outside interests. So far as I am concerned, my position in Parliament constitutes my livelihood. It is my one and only occupation, and the suggestion to reduce the number of representatives in the Legislative Council by ten is, to my way of thinking, a trifle rough.

Hon. L. Craig: You might not be one of the ten.

Hon. W. R. HALL: I am not worrying about that. I merely mentioned the subject because it was introduced by Mr. Bolton. I did not think I should let pass the opportunity to refer to it. I realise Mr. Bolton's patriotism, but I hope his suggestion will not be adopted.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Let Mr. Bolton try it out in the metropolitan area.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: I am willing to be one of the ten.

Hon. W. R. HALL: I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

**HON. A. THOMSON** (South-East)  
[7.45]: At the moment we all feel that we are under the shadow of yesterday's tragic happening at Canberra. Our deepest sympathy goes out to the relatives who have been so suddenly and so sadly afflicted. I also have a great deal of sympathy for those who fell by the wayside at the last Legislative Council election. During our association with each other in this House, we gradually become close friends and entertain a feeling of sympathy and friendship towards each other irrespective of party, and so I regret the loss of those who have not been returned. The

newly-elected members will, I am sure, play their part as well as did the others, if not better. Other members have dealt with the war and I will not go over the ground again. The Government is facing a difficult task in its administration. I would particularly draw attention to the position that confronts our primary producers in this State. As one who was sent to this House to represent primary producers, I feel that all the brains and energy not only of the members of the Government but of others will be required to enable our producers to increase their production without creating such a glut that the commodities produced cannot be sold. Those of us who read the speech of the Minister for Commerce in the Federal House must have felt that he struck a pessimistic note, although circumstances cause some of us to be in sympathy with that pessimism. Very few of the lines of production in any of the States seem to offer hopes of being sold if produced in increased quantities. I wish particularly to deal with the primary-producing section. The Federal Government has asked the State Government to co-operate with it in its desire, by research and other means, to ascertain whether it is possible to bring about stability for the primary producing section. I am going to offer one or two suggestions concerning which we may have some control. In the Federal Arbitration Court unions are applying for an increase in the basic wage. I was amazed to read the remarks of one of those gentlemen in submitting the application. He gave reasons why the basic wage should be increased and made the following statement:—

Declaring that industry could pay a higher basic wage and that workers should share in their own increased productivity, Mr. Mundy quoted official statistics of factory sales in New South Wales showing that the increased productivity per person since 1935 was 13.48 per cent.

The unions submitted that their claim for a higher wage was justified, having regard for increased productivity, the general improvement in manufacturing industries, and the fact that primary industries were not substantially affected by the basic wage.

I have no desire to see the basic wage or living conditions reduced, but we must realise that an increase in the basic wage, based on the cost of living, must have a material effect on the cost of production. I know what Mr. Mundy had in mind when he said that the basic wage did not materially



affect primary industries, because most of them are not in a position to pay the basic wage.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: An increase has been put on the price of everything as a result of increases in the basic wage.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I have no desire to misrepresent Mr. Mundy.

Hon. L. Craig: Many primary industries are paying the basic wage and amounts in excess of it.

Hon. A. THOMSON: The goldmining industry is doing so, but I do not think that can be said of many others.

Hon. L. Craig: Potato diggers are paid higher than the basic wage, and the same can be said of other associated industries.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Let us follow that line of argument. The potato industry can pay the basic wage when potatoes are being sold for £9 or £10 per ton, but should the price drop to £2 10s. per ton, the producer surely could not afford to pay the basic wage.

Hon. L. Craig: Some farmers are paying the basic wage. I am.

Hon. A. THOMSON: All farmers are not so well situated. As a whole the farming community does not pay the basic wage to labourers.

Hon. L. Craig: As a whole that is so, but many farmers do pay it.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Yes.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The dairy farmer might be able to pay it because he has the butter combine behind him.

Member: Some fruitgrowers pay it.

Hon. A. THOMSON: That may be so, but I wonder how long they will be in a position to do so, and when their fruit will be allowed to drop to the ground. I should like to quote from a statement that appeared in the "West Australian" with reference to some of the possibilities arising out of agricultural research:—

The announcement that new fields of agricultural development are to be investigated is of the greatest interest and may prove one of the most important steps taken in this State's development.

A similar policy has been a part of the programme of the United States Government for many years and was attended with such success that in 1938 Congress directed that a laboratory be established in each of the four main farm areas, and that 1,000,000 dollars be appropriated annually to each. The object of these laboratories was defined "to conduct researches into and develop new scientific chemi-

cal and technical uses and new and extended markets and outlets for farm commodities and products and by-products thereof. Such researches and development shall be devoted primarily to those farm commodities of which there are regular or seasonal surpluses and their products and by-products."

This development, called the Farm Chemurgic Movement, followed the realisation that a healthy secondary industry could not exist for any length of time with a depressed primary industry. The United States is probably the most highly industrialised country in the world; therefore this opinion is of much greater significance to Western Australia, with her small and young secondary industries and her lack of hard coal and petroleum.

Authorities in the United States have realised that secondary industries cannot prosper where primary industries are depressed.

Hon. L. Craig: History does not bear that out.

Hon. A. THOMSON: History shows that primary industries in this State are not in a prosperous condition. I do not suppose they have ever been in so depressed a state, or have so gloomy an outlook. It behoves us to see whether we can reduce the cost of production so that our industries may be enabled to carry on. We are told that an increase in the basic wage does not affect primary industries. I propose to show how, when primary industries are in their present position, they are vitally affected. A letter was sent to me by the secretary of the Primary Producers' branch in Orchard Valley, south-west of Kojonup. The epistle contains such important information that I feel it my duty to place it on record. It is as follows:—

I am instructed by the members of the Orchard Valley branch of the P.P.A. to write to our Parliamentary representatives and request that they make emphatic protests on behalf of primary producers regarding the recent rise of £1 per ton in the cost of superphosphate, and the fixation of meat prices. Since war broke out superphosphate has risen by 30s. per ton, and owing to the discontinuance of the subsidy, by £2 per ton on the first ten tons. We have been told that owing to the gravity of the international situation growers should refrain from seeking any increase in the price at which wool is sold, yet this considerable increase in the price of one of our essential aids to production is apparently considered justifiable. Improved pastures throughout the Great Southern are top-dressed regularly, and it is generally conceded that it requires approximately a ton of superphosphate to produce a bale of wool. This means that every pound per ton increase in the price of superphosphate means a rise of a penny per pound in the cost of wool growing.

The price of 13.437d. per lb. for wool does not allow any margin for increased costs, and the natural tendency will be for growers to endeavour to balance their budgets by purchasing less superphosphate next year. This will inevitably lead to a reduction in output at a time when we are told that it is essential to maintain production at the highest possible level. A deterioration of pasture will also result from restricted applications of superphosphate, and there will be an increase in weed growth and unprofitable herbage.

It is understood that before the outbreak of war, the superphosphate companies informed importers that supplies then on hand were sufficient for two complete seasons. If this statement was correct, what justification is there for the present increase?

Regarding the fixation of meat prices, little information was available to members at the time of the meeting, but it was pointed out that many farmers have been fattening stock by expensive artificial feeding because a shortage appeared obvious owing to the exceptional seasonal conditions. These men are now faced with the probability of considerable financial loss. Members hope that you will do all in your power to protest effectively on these two important matters, and hope that your representations on our behalf will bear fruit.

If that statement is correct, what justification is there for the increase?

Hon. L. Craig: An increase in the price of superphosphate was inevitable. It ought to be higher on account of the cost of production.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Let us say that the increase was inevitable. Nevertheless, producers are placed in a very awkward position. Recently there was an increase in the basic wage. The Price Fixing Commissioner in Western Australia, and Professor Copland of the Commonwealth service, can exercise considerable control over prices. If a manufacturer goes to them and proves that the cost of raw material and labour has increased, and asks for an increase in the price of his products, the application is granted. The farmer, on the other hand, has to pay an increased price for the commodities he requires and are essential for his production, but can get no increase in the price of his own products.

Hon. J. Cornell: If there is any logic about increasing the basic wage as the cost of living rises, it must apply with equal force to the farmer.

Hon. A. THOMSON: It should so apply, but does not do so.

Hon. G. B. Wood: What about the increase in the cost of meat production?

Hon. A. THOMSON: That subject has already been dealt with.

Hon. G. B. Wood: I know that, but what about it?

Hon. A. THOMSON: The same argument applies in that case. Though there has been an increase in the price of superphosphate, there is at least a two-years' supply in store. The farming community is in an unfortunate position. In the extraordinary circumstances over which the wool-grower has no control the Federal Government should step in and say there should not be an increase for two years. I am merely quoting what has been published in the Press. I am not blaming the companies for the increase, because their costs may have advanced. The Price Fixing Commissioner granted the increase, but the point I am making is that everybody seems to be able to get an increase for his product except the man on the land. Here is an illustration, and I mention it by quoting this paragraph which appeared in the Press on the 24th July—

The Commonwealth Prices Commissioner (Professor Copland) today permitted a maximum increase of 15 per cent. over pre-war levels in the price of blankets. This increase is considerably below the increase arbitrarily made by many retail houses recently. The order issued today permits the 15 per cent. increase over August 31 levels in manufacturers', wholesalers' and retailers' prices.

Hon. L. Craig: Wool has increased in price since that date. It was higher then than it was this time last year.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Not on the average.

Hon. L. Craig: The price is higher now than it was before the war started.

Hon. A. THOMSON: But it is still below the cost of production. I am not going to be sidetracked by the hon. member; we know that we are paying for everything higher prices than those which existed prior to the war. The people for whom I am speaking are deriving no benefit at all.

Hon. L. Craig: I admit that the price of blankets is subject to the cost of manufacture.

The PRESIDENT: I ask the hon. member to allow Mr. Thomson to proceed with his speech. He can reply to the hon. member, but not by a series of interjections.

Hon. A. THOMSON: It seems that the hon. member is trying to justify the action of the Price Fixing Commissioner. I echo Mr. Baxter's sentiments that there

is a feeling of dissatisfaction amongst the producers in all the country districts. The producers are being saddled with increased costs in every direction and they have no future. They are told that they should reduce their production of wheat, but there is not very much incentive at the present time to increase the production of anything because of the added costs. My object is to show how the primary industries are suffering. There is at present in existence a Council of Agriculture formed by the Federal Government and on which the States have representation. While referring to this body may I be permitted to say—and in this I am sure I shall be supported by every organisation to which I belong—that we regret an unfortunate illness prevented the Minister for Lands from representing Western Australia at the sittings that are now in progress. This State is fortunate indeed in having Mr. Wise to represent it at the Council's meetings, knowing as we do that that gentleman has such a grasp of the producers' position. His illness necessitated the appointment of a substitute in the person of Mr. Hawke, the Minister for Labour.

The Chief Secretary: We will be well represented there.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Yes, but with all due respect to Mr. Hawke, able as he is, he has not the grasp of the position that is held by Mr. Wise. That, however, is by the way. The position of the primary producing section of the community is so serious that those people must be represented at conferences by other than Government officials who become circumscribed in their views. I consider that men actively engaged in industry as well as others engaged in business, should be constituted a consultative council which would go into the question of ways and means of reducing costs. I am going to show one or two methods by which it would be possible to reduce costs in certain directions. Already in this House I have attempted to secure the appointment of a select committee to investigate the working of our Railway Department with a view to determining the possibility of reducing the over-capitalisation of the system. The primary producers are in the unhappy position of having to pay freight on everything they purchase and which is sent to their properties, and the amazing thing is that

from everything they sell freight is deducted. Thus we have the farming community paying both ways. Every Government is sincere in its desire to bring about decentralisation, and yet by administrative acts the unfortunate policy to which I have referred is accentuated. I am not blaming the present Government or any of its predecessors. Remembering that the railways belong to the people as a whole, I consider that the people generally should bear the burden. Let me quote petrol as an example. In the metropolitan area consumers pay 2s. 4d. a gallon, but when they are comparatively a short distance away, the consumers are obliged to pay 2s. 10d. I cannot see why there should not be a flat rate for petrol. If there were a flat rate the cost of conveyance by rail to the country districts could be spread over the whole of the people of the State because, as I have just said, the railways belong to the people. It is unfortunate that those who are carving their way in the bush should be expected to pay so much more for petrol than is paid in the metropolitan area. There is another aspect that might be explored in the hope of reducing costs and encouraging the development of outback districts. We are told that the basic wage does not affect primary industries, but I draw attention to the burden the Arbitration Court is imposing on our country districts. It is the law and we must obey it. I am not blaming the unions for seeing that the conditions of awards are complied with, because that is their job. A man wishes to build a house in the city and he pays the basic wage. If he is out in a country district and takes the men from Perth, the position becomes totally different. Not only does he have to pay the same rate of wages as those that prevail in the metropolis, but he has to pay the travelling time of the workmen to the job and from it. In addition the builder must pay 20s. a week boarding allowance and the man's fare to the job as well. I do not say that we should penalise the worker who has to travel away from the city, but I draw attention to the added costs to be paid by the man in the country who desires to engage in building operations.

Recently a deputation from the Albany municipality waited on the Minister for Railways on the subject of the withdrawal of the s.s. "Kybra" from the south-east

coastal service due to the commandeering of the vessel by the Commonwealth Government. The Albany Municipal Council had been obtaining its fuel oil from Perth and it was carried in bulk on the "Kybra" and its conveyance by rail meant an increase in freight alone of ¼d. per unit. The vessel also took to the southern port monthly about 232 tons of goods which were practically all of local manufacture. On this subject I shall read an extract from a letter written on the 19th July last by the Mayor of Albany to the Premier—

You are no doubt aware that the Albany Municipal Council obtained its fuel oil per "Kybra" carried in bulk, and the withdrawal will seriously affect continuity and cost of this essential commodity. Should it be necessary eventually to bring this oil by train at ordinary rail rates, then the cost of electricity to the consumer must be raised by one farthing per unit to meet the extra costs.

General cargo carried by this vessel from Fremantle to Albany for the 12 months ended the 30th June, 1940, totalled 2,781 tons—a monthly average of 232 tons. This is apart from the fuel oil for the Albany Municipal Council and petrol carried in drums.

You will appreciate that goods from Fremantle to Albany would in the main be of local origin, that is local products, the trade in which your Government is doing so much to foster; and unless the trading in these goods can be maintained by the substitution of a transport service operating at no higher cost than that per "Kybra," then it is feared that the only alternative is to secure similar goods from Eastern States suppliers.

A deputation waited on the Minister, as I have already stated, but so far as I know the Albany municipality has not yet received a reply. The Minister told the deputation that he considered the railways, being common carriers, could not agree to the suggestion made by the deputation that one special train per month should proceed to Albany to carry the necessary supplies at rates comparable to those charged by the "Kybra." The Minister did not actually refuse the request but added he saw great difficulties in carrying out the proposal.

I have extracted from the Railway Freight Charges Book the rates for three items: namely, C. class rate, freight from Fremantle to Albany, £3 13s. 1d.; first-class rate, £5 19s. 4d.; and second-class rate, £7 16s. 4d., or a total of £17 8s. 9d. Dividing the total by three, the average charge for those goods is £5 16s. 3d. per ton. If a person is fortunate enough to be living in Geraldton, then we find that, with much-hated private enter-

prise—which is always considered not to do as well as socialistic and Government-owned enterprises, about which we hear so much—the goods I have mentioned (which are classified at page 116 of the Western Australian Government's Railway Rules, Regulations and Charges) are classified as first and second-class at 50s. per ton. Goods classified as "C" class are also classified at 50s. per ton. Taking the three classes of goods to which I have referred and averaging them as in the previous instance, we find Geraldton has an advantage over Albany as far as railway freights are concerned of £2 6s. 3d. per ton. I am referring to goods carried by the Midland Railway Co. That is a decided advantage. The boat freight from Adelaide to Albany, including wharfage in and out, averages £4 2s. 6d. per ton. Therefore, taking the basic charges applicable to the goods it is desired to carry once a month, namely, £5 16s. 3d. per ton, we find the same goods can be brought from Adelaide to Albany at £2 4s. 6d. per ton. This shows an average saving in favour of Adelaide of £3 11s. 9d. per ton. What are the people at the Albany end of the State to do? They desire to retain employment in this State and to increase production of goods. Yet, unless the Railway Department is prepared to grant the deputation's request, then 232 tons of goods will be purchased in Adelaide instead of in Western Australia.

Hon. H. L. Roche: That is correct.

Hon. A. THOMSON: The freight by the "Kybra" including wharfage, worked out at £1 12s. 7d. per ton and all that the Albany people ask is that a similar quantity of goods should be loaded into trucks by the people who despatch them, in the same way as circus proprietors load their cages and animals. The Railway Department makes a minimum charge to a circus of £25 per day, provided the proprietors load and unload their cages and animals. Circus proprietors may have a special rate granted to them if, with their circus, they visit the Albany district in order to exploit the people there. The Railway Department should consider the extraordinary position that has arisen. The department would obtain £377 for a load of goods which they would merely have to haul to Albany. The loading and unloading would be done by the consignors and consignees. Yet there seemed to be some hesitation about granting the request.

Hon. J. J. Holmes interjected.

Hon. A. THOMSON: That is the argument used by the Minister for Railways.

The Chief Secretary: What about the towns between Perth and Albany?

Hon. A. THOMSON: What about the towns between Geraldton and Fremantle? I have not heard of any trouble concerning them; yet the Geraldton people have the benefit of the freight charge that exists to-day.

Hon. H. L. Roche: That is for Geraldton alone.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Yes. After all, let us be fair and consider this outside district and give the people there at least an opportunity to build up towns that may become important. The Railway Department has opportunity to carry goods that formerly were shipped by the "Kybra" once a month and returned freight amounting approximately to £377, plus the freight for conveying the fuel used by the Albany Council in its Diesel engines. Besides the freight on the 232 tons of goods, the Government would also have the freight for carrying that fuel. It seems to me that a business-like proposition was submitted to the Government, which now has an opportunity to reduce costs to people in country districts.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Is there a board to co-operate now?

Hon. A. THOMSON: No.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: If a private company, with the approval of the Minister, has the advantage of port-to-port freight from Fremantle to Geraldton, why cannot the Minister institute a port-to-port freight from Fremantle to Albany?

Hon. A. THOMSON: The point is that the Government has appointed a Minister whose duty it is to endeavour to create and build up new industries in the State. A representative deputation, consisting of members of the Perth Chamber of Commerce and business men waited upon the Minister. One of them quite frankly said to the Minister, "Unless we get some concession such as is suggested by the deputation, then I regret to say that I shall be compelled to transfer the orders from the southern portion of the State to my firm's branch in Adelaide, much as I would prefer to supply them from Perth." That is the position with which we are faced. I am outlining reasons to which I think the greatest consideration should be given. I know the

matter is one of Government policy. I am not blaming the Minister. The Government has not yet arrived at a decision as far as I know; but I felt it was due to the people I represent to put this reasonable request before the Government, in the hope that it would appreciate the position. I appeal to the Minister, if the matter has not yet been decided by Cabinet, to endeavour to ensure that the 232 tons of goods to which I have referred will be retained as Western Australian trade and not diverted to South Australia.

I desire to touch briefly on one other phase. I am sorry the Minister is not present. Mr. Bolton dealt with the closing-down of the bolt factory at Bayswater. What makes me feel depressed about it is that there are now 33 additional workers who are out of employment and that the State will lose the benefit of their wages. The goods which the factory manufactured will now be imported from the Eastern States. Enthusiastic as the Minister seems to be, he does not seem to be able to carry out his desires. He said, according to the Press report—

It therefore appears that the local director of the company (Mr. Johnson), has exaggerated the factor of labour costs and has not taken the public fully into his confidence regarding all of the reasons that have been responsible for causing his company to close the factory. In common fairness to all concerned, he should tell the public the whole story and not part of it.

I desire to register my protest against the concluding portion of the Minister's statement at that interview. I am sorry he is absent from the State at present. He said—

In any event, every effort will be made by me to see that some other local firm takes on the manufacture locally of bolts and nuts. So far as Government requirements are concerned, every possible step will be taken to have them manufactured in the workshops of the Government unless some private firm re-starts the industry in Western Australia.

Member: Irrespective of cost.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Yes. The Minister continued—

The Government always gave solid support to the products of the Bayswater factory. Now that the West Australian branch of McPhersons Proprietary, Ltd., has become almost entirely a distributing agency for the products of the company's Eastern States factories, it can not expect to receive any such support in the future.

Here we have a Minister threatening a company which closed down portion of its business that proved to be unprofitable. I could not conceive of a company closing a portion of its business that was profitable.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: A new dictator has arisen!

Hon. A. THOMSON: If the Minister puts his threat into effect and commences the manufacture of bolts at the Midland Junction workshops, I do not think the same number of men will be employed as was employed by McPhersons. The Government might be able to employ as many.

Hon. G. Fraser: The shops might absorb more.

Hon. A. THOMSON: They might. There will be a considerable reduction in income tax, however, which a firm like McPhersons would pay.

The Chief Secretary: Firms do not pay income tax on losses.

Hon. A. THOMSON: How could they? If the policy which the Minister is anxious to put into effect is adopted we shall find our taxation returns will be of a vanishing nature.

Member: McPhersons' employees paid income tax.

Hon. A. THOMSON: They would pay income tax whether they were employed by McPhersons or at the Government workshops. The point is that instead of discouraging secondary industries we should endeavour to encourage them.

The Chief Secretary interjected.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Apparently McPhersons found it unprofitable to carry on the factory; otherwise I cannot understand why they closed it down. I have no wish to labour the point. The acting-secretary of the State Executive of the A.L.P., Mr. Nash, also had a little to say. According to the newspaper report, he said—

The closing-down was due not so much to labour costs as to a desire to have the work performed by cheap labour.

That is illuminating; and it is the considered statement of the acting-secretary of the State Executive of the A.L.P. He goes on to say—

It would be interesting to know the comparative overhead costs for the periods when the business was conducted by Mr. Fowler, and when it was subsequently taken over by McPhersons. It is significant that no effort has apparently been made to dispose of the business locally, probably to obviate potential

competition. Such an inference is strongly suggested in Mr. Johnson's statement that plans are under way for the machinery at the factory to be dismantled forthwith and shipped to the Eastern States.

Dealing with junior labour, Mr. Nash proceeds—

The question of extending the proportion of junior to adult labour in the engineering industry has been considered by the State Arbitration Court, but the Court has seen no reason to depart from existing standards.

I know the Government is sincere in its desire to establish secondary industries; but when an old-established firm like McPhersons finds it unprofitable to carry on business in the State, one feels depressed. The Government can of course carry on the business because the taxpayer will find the money. I cannot understand a private person carrying on any longer than he can help a business that does not pay.

I would have felt greater faith in the Minister's expressed desire to establish secondary industries in Western Australia had he used his utmost endeavours to place the industry on the same footing as it enjoys in the Eastern States. I would be far happier to see young men working in a bolt factory and receiving enough to maintain themselves and assist their parents than have them idly walking the streets as many of them have to do. The statement by Mr. Bolton that, owing to the depression and lack of trade, a great dearth of skilled tradesmen exists, is undoubtedly true. I am sure that costs in many directions would be very much lower if we had more expert tradesmen.

The Chief Secretary interjected.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: But you cannot pay high wages for unskilled work.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Some 18 years ago a constituent of mine in the Katanning district patented an improved milk separator which increased the take-off of cream. It was tried out by the Department of Agriculture and approved. The man thought he had made a discovery that would be of substantial benefit not only to himself but also to the industry. A few people who were interested—I was not one of them—subscribed sufficient money to send him to the East. He went to one of the largest firms and offered it the sole right to manufacture the separators. The manager was not in the least interested. He produced a catalogue showing that the separators in

use were being made in Sweden and America, the American factory being a branch of the Swedish one. He showed that the separators were made by six machines attended by a woman, and that her task was to walk from one end to the other of those machines, by which time the operation was complete. The American plant was similar but was operated by one man. The manager said, "We would need one fully qualified engineer for each of those machines. I am sorry, but under Australian conditions we could not compete." Though the Minister is anxious to get secondary industries established in Western Australia, the Government will have to exert its efforts to bring our conditions more into line with those of the Eastern States. Not until that is done shall we be able to get factories established here. In saying that I have no desire to cast any aspersions on the workers of Western Australia. I believe they are fully as competent as are the workers in any other part of Australia.

I have freely criticised the present and previous Governments regarding the expenditure of public money. Nine or ten days ago I was amazed to read a statement by the Minister for Health that the services of a Victorian specialist in hospital planning and designing had been obtained to assist with the work of establishing a new hospital for Perth. The Minister was reported as follows—

While the public is interested to see the steel framework of the new Perth Hospital gradually going up, at the same time a great deal of work is being done in regard to the innumerable details of planning and arranging the wards and clinics. For a considerable time a committee composed mainly of members of the hospital's honorary staff, and including the medical superintendent (Dr. R. Muecke) and the Principal Government Architect (Mr. A. E. Clare), has been working out details. A set of plans was prepared and these are now being overhauled by a sub-committee, on which the board of management of the hospital is represented and which includes a representative of the honorary staff, the medical superintendent, the Principal Government Architect and the manager of the hospital (Mr. W. M. Powell) . . . It has been arranged that Mr. C. L. McVilly, inspector and permanent member of the Charities Board in Victoria, should visit this State, and he will arrive on the 17th August. . . . Mr. Panton said that Mr. McVilly had made a special study of hospitals, and of recent years in that way had been intimately associated with the plans for the new Melbourne Hospital which was being erected at a cost of some £850,000, as

well as with very material extensions to other large hospitals in Melbourne. His services had been made available by the Victorian Government, and it was felt that the Western Australian Government, the management of the hospital and others interested in the new building would be able to gain a great deal of useful advice and information from him.

Here we have the Government embarking upon the construction of a hospital, the first section of which is to cost £90,000 to £100,000. Had that work been entrusted to a private architect, he would have needed to have the whole of his plans in order before calling for tenders, and tenders would have been based upon those plans. Yet after part of the work has been done, further assistance has been found necessary to determine the lay-out and equipment of the hospital. The Minister's statement mentioned the details of planning and arranging the wards and clinics. Such action on the part of the Government cannot be termed good business.

In offering this criticism I have no desire to speak offensively. On many other occasions I have felt it my duty to express my views, and have always criticised the Government's actions as I would criticise my own affairs. The Minister has certainly admitted that the construction of the building had been started before plans were properly prepared. The Commonwealth Government has entrusted a private architect in Perth, Mr. Parry, with the erection of a new hospital. He has submitted a price, and he would have to offer very sound reasons if that price was exceeded. I have no desire to cast any reflections upon the Principal Government Architect, but anyone with a knowledge of affairs is aware that the whole of the plans and specifications should have been complete before the architect was asked to give an estimate. How could he possibly have estimated the cost when additional expert advice has to be called in at this stage? There is something very unbusinesslike in those methods and they are certainly not conducive to obtaining the best results. Ministers have been in office for a good many years and probably they have reached a stage when they think that everything they do is right and should not be criticised. I claim to have a knowledge of the building industry, and I repeat that before the erection of the hospital was begun, complete plans and specifications should have been prepared and the whole of

the details settled. If this is typical of what the Government is doing in carrying out other works departmentally, it is time that we exercised closer supervision.

I hope the Minister will use his influence in Cabinet to ensure that the 232 tons of goods required at Albany and formerly transported by the "Kybra" are still supplied from Perth. Unless the Government is prepared to make concessions, then undoubtedly that trade will go to Adelaide and probably be lost to this State for many years.

I hope the Council for Agriculture will not only make a survey of existing industries but will seek opportunities for the raising of other produce and explore every avenue with a view to reducing local charges wherever possible. Such a step would materially help industry generally.

More stringent regulations are needed under the Traffic Act to govern push cyclists. There has been quite a number of accidents recently in which young children have been killed and injured. My opinion is that in 70 per cent. of the cases the trouble has been due to the negligence of the young people and to the inadequacy of the regulations. Often at main crossings one may see four or five cyclists riding abreast. It is time that stricter conditions were imposed.

I endorse Mr. Bolton's remarks about the use of gas producers. Though the extra charge is made under a strict interpretation of the Act, it is none the less unfair against a man who is endeavouring to meet the position created by the restriction on petrol. After incurring the expense of installing a gas producer, he is charged an extra 10s. or £1 for the additional weight. Yet the owner of a vehicle might instal a couple of extra petrol tanks and thus carry the same additional weight and not be charged for it.

Hon. G. B. Wood: That is only if he puts the gas producer on a trailer.

Hon. A. THOMSON: And it applies to a gas producer installed on a motor car as well. I support the motion. I realise the difficulty of the task confronting the Government, notwithstanding that I have found it necessary to criticise the administration. Much has been said in favour of a national Government, but the Labour Party believes in having a keen Opposition. Were I to offer a little friendly criticism—and, after all, we are entitled to criticise, and to express our opinions—I would say that I hope

some method will be devised whereby we shall be able to improve the outlook for the producing section of the community. I support the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

On motion by the Honorary Minister, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 8.47 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Wednesday, 14th August, 1940.*

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

### QUESTION—FREMANTLE MUNICIPAL TRAMWAYS AND ELECTRIC LIGHTING BOARD.

Mr. TONKIN asked the Minister for Railways: 1, What is the date of expiry of the agreement made on the 28th January, 1916, between the Government, the Commissioner of Railways and the Fremantle Municipal Tramways and Electric Lighting Board? 2, Has the board notified the Government that it intends to exercise the option of renewal of the agreement in accordance with the provision of Clause 23? 3, Has the Government approved of a renewal of the agreement?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, 26th April, 1942, with the option of renewal for another 25 years, which option has been exercised. 2, Yes. 3, Yes.

### QUESTION—AGRICULTURAL BANK.

*Policy as to Stock Liens.*

Mr. PATRICK asked the Minister for Lands: 1, In cases where a farmer has not had assistance from the Agricultural Bank