

manufacture. As soon as we get these articles they will be placed in the schools.

There is no danger that the inclusion of this paragraph will rob the academic side of education of any facility, amenity or provision that it should have. But we should include this provision so that if at any time we have some money available, we will be able to make a grant, no matter how small, and not simply say to the Commonwealth Government, "We regard this as your sphere and will not give you one shilling of our money." That would be a wrong attitude and would be a bad gesture on our part in view of what the Commonwealth is seeking to achieve in the realm of physical development.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 13 to 20, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

House adjourned at 6.5 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 25th September, 1945.

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

MOTION—URGENCY.

Collie Coal Stoppage and Disruption of Industry.

The PRESIDENT: I have received the following letter from Hon. J. A. Dimmitt:—

I desire to inform you that at the commencement of the sitting of the Council to-day, it is my intention to move, under Standing Order 59, the adjournment of the House to discuss a matter of urgency, namely, the failure of the authorities concerned to make provision for the supply of electricity in the metropolitan area during a hold-up in the production of coal at Collie.

It will be necessary for four members to rise in their places to support the proposal.

Four members having risen in their places,

HON. J. A. DIMMITT (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.35]: I desire, Mr. President, to move that the House at its rising adjourn till Friday, the 28th September, at 2.30 p.m. The purpose of moving this motion is to give members of this House an opportunity to express to the Government their views on the present serious situation. I do not think any of us are very gravely concerned with the merits of the dispute, but we do know that there is an appropriate tribunal that has been set up to handle disputes in the coalmining industry, and that tribunal was set up under the Commonwealth Coal Production (Wartime) Act of 1944. If the decision of that tribunal is not viewed favourably by the Collie miners, it does appear that they take the law into their own hands, and cease work. The miners were fully aware that there were no reserve stocks of coal in any industrial establishment or, indeed, any great reserves of coal at the East Perth power-house or in the Railway Department's storage bins. I would say that the coalminers contributed greatly to that situation and it has put them in the position of holding a great bargaining card. They seem determined to take advantage of it.

I admit that during hostilities the miners did a good job. They produced coal, with practically no serious dislocation, during the whole of the war period. They did their duty, as did most citizens, but though they are to be commended for having acted in that manner they are not to be excused—because they did their duty in wartime—for failing to do their duty now. I do not think there is any person in the whole of the metropolitan area who has been unaffected by the present stoppage. We find that industry has been completely disrupted, and it is estimated that some 35,000 people are today temporarily out of employment owing to the action of the miners. One can imagine the dreadful position in which the Department of Industrial Development is placed as a result of this action. What encouragement is there for people to establish industries in the State of Western Australia when, within the short period of four months, we can have the whole of industry completely disrupted by a small group of dissatisfied men in the coal industry? At present we find hospitals working by candle-light, and in homes and industrial

establishments there are foodstuffs rapidly deteriorating and reaching a stage that will compel them to be discarded as unfit for human consumption.

The position is one that the public views seriously, as must every member of this House, and the question we ask ourselves is: What is the Government doing in the matter? The Chief Secretary may be able to tell us, but the Press is silent as to the activities of our own Government. True it is that the coalmining industry is largely the care of the Commonwealth, but surely the State of Western Australia and its Government must be interested in seeing an early cessation of the hold-up that we are now experiencing. A few days ago Mr. Mann asked a question in this House regarding the adaptability of the furnaces at the East Perth Power House to the use of fuel oil in place of coal. My mind goes back to the night when the B. power station was opened. I had the pleasure of being shown round the new undertaking and my guide pointed, with evident pride and satisfaction, to a fitting on the front of the furnaces which, he said, made it possible to introduce fuel oil, instead of pulverised coal, so that in future the power station would be free from any difficulty in the event of a hold-up of coal supplies.

That position was explained to me personally as I was in the power house standing in front of the furnace doors, by an executive officer of the power house. I would imagine that those conditions, of which the officials were so proud some years ago, are probably in existence today. In spite of that, the Chief Secretary told the House—no doubt on information that was supplied to him—that it was not possible quickly to change the fuel system from coal to oil. If the present position continues for any length of time the change-over to oil fuel should be effected. The question I wish to put to the Government is: What, if anything, is the Government of Western Australia doing to remedy the position? The public want to know; members of this House want to know; members of Parliament want to know. I trust that the Chief Secretary will be able to tell us that some activity is being indulged in by the present Administration. I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Friday, the 28th September, at 2.30 p.m.

HON. H. S. W. PARKER (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.42]: I second the motion. In this matter I do not blame the coalminers. I do not blame them at all. They are a lot of irresponsible children misled entirely by their Government. The Commonwealth Government time and time again has had strikes in coalmines and done nothing. The men have been fined, but the fines have been wiped out. The Western Australian Government has done nothing. It has led the coalminers to believe that they can do as they like. In effect, the Government has said, "Certainly, go ahead. We will give you a pension and anything you like." And the men go on and do it! The Government does nothing. I blame the Government. It is the Government's duty to rule. We had the unfortunate happening of a few months ago, and what has the Government done since? Nothing! We even asked questions in this House, giving the Government a hint to put in oil furnaces.

Yet the Government did nothing. Oil burners, if they do not now exist in the power house, were manufactured in Perth for the furnaces, but nothing has been done. Why not fix up the alternative means? Why not do something? No, leave it to the Commonwealth! This Government can do something if it likes. It is rather strange that Senator Tangney is reputed to have settled the last strike; but as soon as the men struck this time she went away. None of the supporters of the Commonwealth Government representing Western Australia appears to take the slightest interest in the matter. What is happening? It is really very serious indeed. Food is going bad. Patients in hospitals cannot be attended to properly. There is no electricity for sterilising instruments, and the unfortunate nurses are being worked off their feet because these men in Collie are getting so much money that they want a holiday.

They do not care two straws about their fellow-workers in other parts of the State; they are a lot of irresponsible children who are not chastised as they should be by the Government. I have not seen any suggestion that the Government will take steps to alter the furnaces so that wood could be burnt in them if oil were not obtainable, but I understand there are ample supplies of oil in the State and that the necessary burners have been manufactured locally be-

fore. Surely we can get them manufactured quickly and put into use. Let the miners go without working if they want to, but not cause all this suffering. I will make some suggestions to the Government as to the way in which it can bring the miners to book very quickly, whether the matter be a Federal one or not. It is for the Premier to give notice at the next sitting of the Assembly for the repeal of the Coal Mine Workers (Pensions) Act.

Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: That will very soon bring them to book. Let the Premier tell the coalminers that he is going to close down straightaway all the hotels in Collie. Let him also tell them that he is going to stop all street betting in Collie.

Hon. G. B. Wood: They will die!

Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Let him go a little further. Let him remove the doctors, chemists and nurses from Collie, and then let us see how the sick in Collie will get on. The coalminers do not care two straws about the sick in the metropolitan area; let them see what it is like at Collie. Let the Government take the coal away from the Collie power house and shift it to Perth, where a far greater number of sick people require attention. But what does the Government do? Nothing at all! The Government does not even attempt in a serious matter of this kind, when it knows that there must be some discussion, to arrange for the lighting of Parliament House; but those in charge of certain warehouses and buildings in Perth made provision to light their premises. Lighting could even be arranged for the Policemen's Ball by borrowing a machine. But that could not be done for Parliament House. As far as I can see, judging from the present situation, notwithstanding that thousands of people are being thrown out of work, the Government is devoid of all ideas of how to govern. The first principle of government is to see that everybody is at work. Yet this Government allows a mere handful of men to throw thousands out of work!

Point of Order.

Hon. C. B. Williams: On a point of order, is the motion to adjourn the House till Friday in order? Is Friday a sitting day of the House?

The President: The motion is perfectly in order. Under the Standing Orders the hour at which the House meets can be fixed by the House.

Debate Resumed.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan) [4.38]: I view this present situation with considerable alarm—alarm from many points of view. First of all, I am astonished at the calm way in which we have come to take strikes. It is almost as if strikes have become part of our Australian national life. That is probably due to the fact that no serious attempt has been made for many years to counteract strikes, and so the public have begun to take it for granted that when a strike does occur nothing can be done about it and that those striking must eventually be given that which they desire. This is a very poor outlook from the Australian national standpoint, and a time must come when we will have to view these strikes from a very different angle and begin to see a change of heart and mind in the Australian, who must believe that he owes to his fellow-citizens something real and that he must not dominate and dictate to the rest of the community in order that his own personal gains may be achieved.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Does not that apply to the British Medical Association? Even the medical men go on strike.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I doubt whether that statement is even worth replying to. At this particular stage it is the medical and nursing professions that are facing some of the greatest difficulties because of this strike, and they are attending to their patients, the sick, with great zeal. It is possible and very likely probable that the number of sick people being admitted into hospitals will have to be diminished within the next few days because the hospitals will be short of food supplies for their patients. I have already asked one or two hospitals what they consider the position will be over the next few days, and they consider that admissions will have to be restricted.

Hon. A. Thomson: That means that suffering people will not be able to receive attention.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: They will not be admitted to the hospitals if this condition continues. This is serious from the point of view of the health of the community. It

is serious because an epidemic could occur. Food cannot be kept at its proper temperature, and cannot be effectively stored under existing conditions. It is possible that the food supply itself may become inadequate for the metropolitan area. It is said that meat will not be available after another 48 hours unless refrigeration can be supplied to the storehouses where meat is held. We are told that further killing will not take place unless refrigerated storage is made available. These considerations will all have a marked effect upon the general health, not so much of the actual community, but of those who are now sick and undergoing special treatment.

An aspect one must emphasise is that if vessels for milk are not kept scrupulously clean the bottle system of distribution cannot be continued. If the system is maintained without thoroughly cleansed bottles it may lead to an epidemic which, I trust, will not be typhoid because, with the present shortage of medical officers and nurses, a typhoid epidemic would be a serious and almost desperate proposition for us to handle. I do not want to labour that point at any great length because everyone realises the difficulties that could arise.

Hon. A. Thomson: It is very important, though.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I point out that it is possible that certain operations will have to be postponed. Already I have heard of one or two instances of that, and they will become much more frequent if this position continues for many more days. Except in the most urgent cases it is impossible to take an x-ray of a patient. The larger hospitals have auxiliary plants that can do a certain amount of work, but not all. I know that already there have been cases that have been refused x-ray examinations.

The Chief Secretary: Where?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: It was reported to me yesterday by a senior surgeon of this city that he had been unable to have two of his cases x-rayed during the day.

The Chief Secretary: Where?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: At private institutions, I take it.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Have they a private x-ray plant there?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: This surgeon, I assume, went to private radiological firms and was not able to get his cases x-rayed.

All the work cannot be put on to the public hospitals—if that is the reason for the interjection—because they are already overloaded and their auxiliary plants are not capable, I understand, of carrying out all our x-ray treatment. They may be sufficient to do the diagnostic work of the hospitals, but not their treatment work. One could labour this point at length, but I doubt whether, in these circumstances, we can applaud any action that has been taken up to date. I sympathise with the Government in that I think it is caught, at the moment, between two stools. It has its own machinery for arbitration, some of which has been taken over by the Commonwealth Government.

But I do think that in the situation existing a real test of strength should be resorted to between our Government and the Commonwealth. The State Government should say, "If you cannot control our industries, then we want that control back in our own hands without delay." During the war, and in peacetime, the control of arbitration in this State ran along lines which did not permit of this sort of occurrence. If we are to have strikes controlled by officers a thousand miles away, this is all that we can look forward to in the future. I sincerely trust that, as a result of this motion, some action will be taken to remedy this state of affairs, which cannot be tolerated for more than a short period.

HON. L. B. BOLTON (Metropolitan) [4.53]: I desire to support the motion. It is quite unnecessary to emphasise the seriousness of the position. Dr. Hislop has pointed out just what it is from a health point of view and how bad it is from the industrial point of view. I am advised that at present probably between 35,000 and 40,000 workers in the metropolitan area are unemployed because of the strike. I disagree entirely with Mr. Parker's remarks that the coalminers are not altogether to blame. I suggest that they have gone from one tribunal to another, and on every occasion they have received something. There is no telling just when they are going to be satisfied. I agree that the State Government is in a very awkward position, but no effort has ever been made to stop the transfer of the control of workers from the State Arbitration Court to the Federal authorities.

I remind members that, first of all, we had our local Arbitration Court to fix working conditions, wages, etc., for the coal-

miners, and those men had a wonderful record of which we were all proud. Every worker in this State was proud of that record. I agree that during the war period the Collie coalminers gave us of their best which, I also agree, is only what they should have done. But it must be remembered that the control passed from the State Arbitration Court, which granted almost everything the miners asked for, to an industrial board under the chairmanship of Mr. Wallwork, R.M., who also gave the miners a considerable number of concessions. Later the miners became dissatisfied, with the result that the Federal authorities sent Mr. Justice Drake-Brockman to this State. He in turn gave the miners further concessions.

Hon. W. J. Mann: No, he dealt with the engineers.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: They were the cause of the strike.

Hon. W. J. Mann: That may be.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: They were the cause of the strike. Later on we had a visit from Mr. Willis, who, I understand, is the central industrial administrator. He gave the Collie miners further concessions. I remind the House that the miners themselves have an industrial reference board of their own. That board is presided over by a nominee of the miners as chairman. Surely they would be able, under all these favourable conditions, to get what they are asking for if it is fair and reasonable.

In my opinion the miners have gone the wrong way about this matter. Had they given the authorities a chance to look into their additional grievances, I have no doubt some favourable decision would have been forthcoming. It is to be deplored that the metropolitan area should be placed in its present situation. It seems to me that this sort of thing is likely to occur again. The loss and inconvenience to the community are so great that I sincerely hope the Government will show a strong hand in this matter and take the necessary measures to bring the situation to an end.

HON. E. M. HEENAN (North-East) [5.2]: The motion is said by Mr. Dimmitt to have for its object the obtaining of an answer from the Government concerning its efforts in solving the present unfortunate dispute. I am sure the Chief Secre-

tary will be able to give the House an adequate reply. Some members have, in my view, taken advantage of the motion to make remarks about the dispute which at this stage will not improve the prospect of an early settlement.

Hon. T. Moore: Hear, hear!

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: If they carry any weight, which I doubt, or if they are given wide publicity I am afraid they might tend to lengthen the dispute. The industrial trouble at Collie is greatly to be regretted, and I sincerely hope that an early solution will be found. The merits of the case can, I think, be said to be sub judice at present. The Commonwealth conciliator is now at Collie. I am sure that he and the Government, with any influence it can bring to bear upon the subject, will use every endeavour to bring about a speedy settlement.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Why did they not start last week?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: In this State, fortunately, we have been very free from strikes. From what I have heard about Collie I am by no means certain that the conditions there are ideal. We, as a Parliament, will have to see that in future they are improved a great deal. That will be the surest and best means of seeing that breakdowns of this nature do not occur again.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: The Government of which you are a supporter has had 17 years in which to do that.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: The mines are privately owned, and vast fortunes have been made by the proprietors. I know from long experience that when we do bring down measures that are designed to improve the lot of miners, we have great difficulty in getting them through this House. We have to face up to our responsibilities to the workers in this industry, more especially as they have not given any trouble in years gone by. We must see to it that their conditions are improved, that when grievances do arise, speedy means are taken to ensure a solution and that arbitration is readily available to deal with the matter.

HON. C. B. WILLIAMS (South) [5.5]: I would not mind a motion for the adjournment of the House for a couple of months. What I do not want is any more of this

sort of thing being inflicted upon us. I have been a miner in the goldmining industry, but not in coalmines. I say that anything that can be given to men who have to work underground and under such conditions should be provided for them.

Hon. W. J. Mann: What is wrong with the conditions?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I understand that the men at Collie did not even have change rooms until the occasion of the last strike.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I must ask members to allow Mr. Williams to proceed.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I was talking about the men who have to work underground, often in less light than the little light we now have in this Chamber. They are entitled to every consideration. I have listened to some of the speeches that have been made this afternoon. I do not know what S.P. betting has to do with the poor old coalminer. S.P. betting has not been stopped in Perth. I do not know what the closing of hotels has to do with the question. There is beer to be had in Perth although perhaps it is getting a little warm under present conditions.

Hon. W. J. Mann: How do you know?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I have tried it. The hotels are not closed and S.P. betting is still going on all over the State. Betting is not carried on by artificial light, but in daylight. The miners at Collie have been a loyal body of men. They have stood by the State. They worked throughout the war without raising any trouble. Only now are they causing trouble. Why? When Western Australia was in a state of emergency, as it was during the six years of war, the whole of the control of the coal-mining industry was taken over by the Commonwealth Government.

Hon. A. Thomson: And since then there has been trouble.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I have just stated that this is the first time the miners of Collie have caused any bother.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: They have made a good job of it this time.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: They are entitled to do so.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: What do their fellow workers think?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: And I hope they will make a good job of it. That will bring home to the people, who are so much dependent on electric power, that the miners have a just grievance and must be given every consideration. The miners are asking for an increase in wages. The State Arbitration Court cannot give this to them, and cannot adjudicate or function in the case. I know that during the war many useless departments have been created. The result of that is that the loyal miners at Collie have had to approach three or four different tribunals. When the miners had to go to the Eastern States they were dealt with by an individual who may have been perfectly honest and reliable but did not know Western Australia. I doubt whether he has ever seen the State.

Under the Commonwealth dictatorial powers that were granted during the war, unless it was possible to prove an anomaly there was no increase in wages. Recently there was a hang-up in Collie on the part of tradesmen. They were able to prove an anomaly, and as a result of that proof they received an extra 2s. 9d. per day although they asked for 4s. 6d. The coalminers were a long way ahead of the tradesmen in wages, and naturally they want to be brought up to the same relative scale they were on before. If that is not an anomaly, I do not know what one is. It is all very well to associate the present dispute with politics. The whole matter could have been fixed up in ten minutes if we had had control in the State, but we have not the control.

Who pays for the Collie coal? Ninety-eight per cent. is paid for by the taxpayers. Before I became a member of this Chamber the price of coal was about 8s. a ton. The present price indicates that it has risen to nearly 200 per cent. more in price, but the wages of the miners have not gone up relatively. Only recently were they permitted to enjoy a fortnight's leave on full pay. The goldminers have had that privilege for 24 years. There is no chance of the cost of that privilege coming out of the price of gold or being passed on to the public; it has to be earned out of the ground.

Hon. A. Thomson: What wages do coalminers get now?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: We had all that last year when we were discussing their pension scheme. This House has not interfered in arbitration matters and has prided itself

on that fact. During all the years that I have been a member, it has not interfered with wages in any way, although in 1932 it did. The miners gave exceptionally loyal service to the State during the long period of war when we were more or less in jeopardy. What right have we to interfere with them now? Have we any right to say they shall not receive an increase of 20 per cent. in their wages? Under the plea of the motion members speak derogatively of them and condemn the Government. It is not the State Government that created this mix-up, but the nitwit authorities who control the coal industry in the Eastern States, and who see 10,000 employees out of work in the Eastern States almost every day, and pander to them and then give them just what they want.

Our fellows have done a wonderful job, but when they come out on strike we slam them. I object to that. The people who are really responsible should be put into the Claremont asylum for a long period. That is how wars start and millions of people are killed, and the wealth of the world is used for the manufacture of weapons of slaughter. Why condemn the Collie miner? Is he not entitled to an increase in his wages? If he had an increase of 15 or 20 per cent., two-thirds of it would be taken from him in taxation, much after the lines of what happened to the nitwit increase that we took for ourselves last year. I realise that this motion savours of politics, but I hope that members will play the game by the Collie miners. I do not care what is said about the State Government or the Commonwealth Government, but we should say nothing derogatory of the Collie miners. They are entitled to an increase in pay. Everybody in this country has since the war had an increase, but when the Collie miners ask for one, what do we find?

I shall not repeat the statements that have appeared in the Press. What I do stress is that, when the case is heard, it should be decided by people here and not by someone in Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne, or elsewhere. The decision should be given immediately after the hearing in our State. Western Australia has a good arbitration system and had a good president in Mr. President Dwyer. I belong to another section of the mining industry which used to strike on the slightest provocation. It is not so easy to

start a strike nowadays, although there was one in Boulder the other day when I went up there.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Then you had better keep away.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Miners are not as amenable to control as are many other workers. We ought to remember that they spend, underground, seven or eight hours out of every 24 hours, working by the light of a candle like that on the Table of the House.

Hon. T. Moore: Not as good as that.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: We should be sympathetic to the miners. Any man who works on the surface is not worth as much as is a miner, particularly a coalminer, and I object to anybody running him down. If we tell the truth, we must admit that the miners at Collie were very loyal to the war effort.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West) [5.17]: The only part of the dispute that really causes me concern is the flouting of the law. Mr. Williams told us that the Collie miners are, or may be, entitled to increased wages. That may be so; I do not know. But we have an organisation set up to deal with such matters. I feel that unless Governments, be they State or Commonwealth, are prepared to stand firm, irrespective of the results to the community, and never give way when organisations have been set up to deal with such disputes, this country will be in for a very bad time. It appears as if the Commonwealth authorities, after having given way so frequently to the coal strikers in the Eastern States, have now determined to make a firm stand in poor little Western Australia, where we have been singularly free from industrial trouble in the coalmining industry. But we in Australia are becoming a very undisciplined people.

I personally hope that in every case where conciliation or arbitration bodies have been set up to settle disputes, the Government will not give way unless legal means have been followed to end the disputes. The more we allow license in industry to prevail over the law, the more trouble we shall be building up for the future. The only attitude to adopt in cases where we have set up arbitration courts is to insist upon those courts functioning. I am sure that this country is going to have endless trouble unless the

people stand behind the Government and insist upon the law being obeyed. Our laws in Western Australia are falling into disrepute. People have not the regard for the law that they used to have. Years ago, a man who broke the law was regarded as one of not very good standing, but today a breaker of the law is considered to be a decent citizen so long as he is not found out. I do hope that the Government will stand firm in this matter and insist upon obedience to the law.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [5.21]: I, in common with Mr. Dimmitt and most of the members who have addressed themselves to the motion, greatly deplore the circumstances that have arisen. It is not my intention to attempt to justify the action of the Collie miners; nor do I wish to minimise in any way the far-reaching effects of this crisis. The trouble has been brought about wholly and solely by the refusal of the authorities in the Eastern States to recognise Western Australia's position. This is an illustration such as those we endeavoured to put before the people when the Referendum was about to be taken. We endeavoured to point out what would happen if we continued to give away our powers to authorities in the Eastern States.

This crisis, as Mr. Williams stated, has definitely been brought about by the authorities in the East. The Collie miners followed absolutely the correct procedure. They felt that they were suffering disabilities as compared with other sections of the industry. They approached the local reference board and, at great length, argued their case. The local reference board, under existing conditions, has no absolute authority. The most the board could do would be to recommend the authorities in the East to allow a finding in favour of the miners or to dismiss the case. In this matter the local reference board came to the definite decision that the miners' claims were justified. The recommendation was sent to the central authority in the Eastern States. Ordinarily that would have been the end of the matter, other than the formal acceptance of the decision by the Eastern States authority, but, for some unknown reason, that authority refused to entertain the decision. I understand that it did not even give a reason. I am also given to understand that the Collie min-

ers, not once but a number of times, endeavoured to get the case re-opened, but without result.

I am one of the many people who believe that strikes are a barbarous method of settling industrial disputes. At odd times they might give the strikers some advantage, but more often than not they cause loss not only to the workers but also to industry and the public generally. This is one of the instances where not only the industries, but also the people of the State are suffering and, while I repeat that I do not attempt to justify the miners for the extraordinary stand they have taken, I consider that we must be fair to them and admit that, after all, theirs was not a hasty decision. All the proper courses were followed to bring about a settlement of the trouble, and they failed. If this State is going to allow its affairs to be handled by authorities in the Eastern States that know very little about our conditions and I sometimes think, care less—though I do not say that applies in this case—we shall be in for a very bad time.

I am very hopeful that we shall soon have news that the miners are returning to work. I have no authority for saying that except information from the man-in-the-street, and that street is not in Perth. I am glad that the motion has been moved. I deplore some of the references that have been made to the miners because we are just a little proud of the record they put up during the war. If a few who are lower paid than others have brought about this trouble, we regret it exceedingly, but I am hopeful that the enormous ramifications of such a strike will be brought home to the hot-headed members of the miners' union and that the men will realise that, while they have a tremendous weapon at their disposal, they ought to be most reluctant to use it as it has been availed of on this occasion.

HON. G. B. WOOD (East) [5.29]: I have pleasure in supporting the motion, and commend Mr. Dimmitt for having introduced it. Mr. Williams has stressed what a wonderful job the Collie miners did during the war. It annoys me to hear anybody speak in that way, because it appeals to me as being almost an attempt to justify the action of the miners on this occasion. Many other people did equally good work during the war. The nurses are the most hope-

lessly underpaid of any profession, working as they do long hours for £2 4s. 6d. a week.

Hon. W. J. Mann: But there have been men 70 or 80 years of age working in the mines at Collie.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: And many aged nurses have been doing their bit, too. That is not the point. Because the Collie miners did a good job during the war, it does not follow that they have a right to throw the whole State into chaos. I would like to call the attention of the House to what happened in the farming areas yesterday and is happening today. Many farmers took their sheep to the station to be trucked; some actually had them on the trucks. Then they found that there was to be no sale at Midland Junction tomorrow. I know the information was put over the wireless, because I heard it myself; but all farmers have not wireless sets, and some of them did not know. When everything is all over, and sheep come in next week to the market, the butchers will take full advantage of the position, and down will go the price 6s. and 7s. a head. That has happened on many occasions.

I am very glad that the great South-West power scheme, of which we have heard so much, is not in existence. I shudder to think what would have happened to people in the dairying industry, and to people shearing sheep, and to those engaged in many other avenues of primary production had this dislocation occurred at a time when they were connected with the power scheme. I would be sorry to see those farmers and other primary producers dependent on these aristocrats of industry. As Mr. Dimmitt pointed out, it is bad enough in the metropolitan area. When this sort of thing happens in the country, it will give the miners another stick with which to flog the community. I would like people in the country to note what has happened and not to be so keen on this great South-West power scheme, particularly if it was their intention to do away with oil engines and any other power appliance they might possess.

We have been told of the great job that the miners have done. I am certain that they have been working up to this stage. There have been no stocks of coal on hand; the present position proves that. The miners have gradually worked up to this and waited

till they knew they had a grip on industry in Western Australia, especially around the metropolitan area, before they took action. I have no axe to grind. I do not know whether they are justified in asking for a 20 per cent. increase or not. That is not the point. If the Government can do something about the matter, I am sorry it was not done last week before things got into this state. We never heard of the trouble that was brewing. There was nothing in the Press. It is a good thing that this motion was moved because it will give the miners an opportunity to see that Parliament takes exception to this sort of thing.

HON. G. W. MILES (North) [5.35]: While I regret the strike in the coalmining industry as much as any member of this House, and consider that the time has come when we must see that the laws of the land are obeyed instead of a state of anarchy being created, as is happening throughout Australia today, I do not put the whole blame on this Government; and I consider the wording of the motion is too drastic for this House to carry. To take the business out of the hands of the Government till next Friday seems a ridiculous suggestion for a responsible body of men to consider. I shall vote against the motion.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central) [5.36]: When the State is faced with such a serious position, members of Parliament should be very careful how they express their opinions. We have had a glaring example of inconsistency this afternoon from a member who belongs to the legal profession. He started by saying that he did not blame the miners a bit for this trouble, and a few seconds afterwards he was telling the Premier of this State what he ought to do to penalise the men. However, I do not want to be too hard on the hon. member. Perhaps he has had a busy day.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: He has certainly given the matter some thought.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I am sure we all greatly regret the position that has occurred. However, one member has summed up the matter in a few words, and I have risen in order that the point he made might be emphasised. That point is: Do we stand for law and order, or do we not?

Hon. G. W. Miles: That is the point.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I do not think there is a member of this Chamber who could fail to sympathise with miners, whether they be goldminers or coalminers, but especially the latter. With all due respect to my colleague, Mr. Wood, I do not think it matters very much if members like to refer to the good record of the Collie miners. Nevertheless, reading the statement by the Premier, we must sympathise to a certain extent with our own Government in this matter. I want to congratulate Mr. Dimmitt, who moved the motion, because I think this is an opportunity that should be seized by all members who feel so inclined to give expression to their views on the very serious state of affairs which has been existing throughout Australia, and which has now come in a most emphatic form to our own State. I am glad Mr. Wood referred to the farmers, because I could not help noticing that members who have spoken so far—and I do not want to be offensive—belong to a party pledged to protect the interests of people in the metropolitan area. They were all metropolitan members who spoke.

Hon. W. J. Mann: What about me?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I am not referring to the hon. member. I am alluding to the metropolitan and metropolitan-suburban members who spoke.

Point of Order.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: On a point of order, Mr. President, I ask for a withdrawal of that remark.

The President: I did not catch the remark to which the hon. member refers.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: I am referring to the remark that those who have spoken belong to a party pledged to safeguard the interests of the metropolis. That is not so; it is entirely wrong. We are in Parliament to safeguard the interests of Western Australia and not of the metropolitan area only. I object to that remark and ask for a withdrawal.

The President: I am sure Mr. Hall will withdraw the remark.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Certainly, Sir! May I put it in another way that will not be so offensive? What I want to say, now that the hon. member has given me time to think, is that the metropolitan and the metropolitan-suburban members who are

pledged, I take it, to preserve the interests of the people who returned them to this Chamber—

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: I do object, Mr. President, to these remarks that the hon. member is making! We are not under any pledge whatsoever to safeguard any particular interests. We are in Parliament to look after the interests of the whole community and I object to Mr. Hall's remarks and innuendoes.

The President: I am sure Mr. Hall will withdraw quite unreservedly the remarks to which objection has been taken.

Debate Resumed.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Yes, Sir, I will withdraw them unreservedly. All I can say is that the statements made by members that I have in mind did refer—and we have a record of this—to the great inconvenience suffered by people in the metropolitan area. I wish to make a point of that. No mention was made of people outside the metropolitan area until Mr. Wood referred to the inconvenience and loss suffered by farmers. The point I want to make is that this does not affect the metropolitan area alone by any means but is going to have very far-reaching results. The effect will be felt as far away as Wiluna.

Hon. C. B. Williams: To a much greater extent than here.

Hon. V. Hamersley: And away around the coast.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Yes, away up the coast. Whether some members like it or not, this does not affect just the people in the metropolitan area, as appeared to be suggested by two or three members.

Hon. C. B. Williams: They have been spoon-fed too long.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I hope that will not annoy Mr. Dimmitt. What needs to be emphasised, I think, is that the State Government should take action to reach some agreement with the Commonwealth Government in regard to industrial disputes. Only today, members of a certain body are holding a meeting to discuss whether they will become subject to the Commonwealth Industrial Arbitration Court. It is high time that, in order that these difficulties may be ironed out and that men may no longer resort to what all members agree is a bar-

barous method of settling industrial disputes, the two Governments—Commonwealth and State—should get together and reach some agreement to eliminate strikes. I want to emphasise that there is a tribunal before which these men have a right to state their grievances. Further, I want to point out that it is not too much for us to expect that the State Government, knowing of the shortage of coal, should have opened negotiations with the Federal authorities; and that this gentleman who arrived only today should have come here a fortnight ago so that this matter could receive the early attention to which it was entitled.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East) [5.41]: This House would be wanting in its duty if it did not voice its opinion on this matter and express its disapproval of the action of the Collié miners in causing so much inconvenience to the public of Western Australia and so much loss of wages to their fellow-workers. I am not attacking the miners for asking for improved conditions; but I do attack those in authority in the union who are responsible for driving people into the unfortunate position in which they find themselves today. If a man breaks the Criminal Code, he can be dealt with; but, apparently we are helpless to deal with those who break arbitration laws. I had that lesson brought home forcibly to me when the Arbitration Court was inaugurated in Western Australia something like 40 years ago.

Unfortunately the position has continued to prevail; and although every provision is made for enforcing the observance of Arbitration Court awards upon employers, no system has been devised to impose similar conditions upon employees. We know that fines have been imposed by the Federal authorities but have been waived. I am not going to say that I am in favour of running a lot of men into gaol, because that would be absurd. Nevertheless, it is time consideration was given to ensuring that powerful unions are made to pause before they bring chaos upon the people of their State. I have suggested in this House before, and it seems opportune to repeat the suggestion now, that the unions in Western Australia receive approximately £90,000 per year from their members. It is time the Industrial Arbitration Act was

amended so that we could say to the unions, "We are going to impose a levy upon you to the extent of a percentage of your dues, and the money so taken shall be put into a trust fund. We will pay you interest on that money, which will be retained as a safeguard and, in the event of your union going on strike, you will be liable to forfeit the amount of money standing to your credit in the trust fund." I am not suggesting penalising any individual. The unions will have all the ordinary protection of the law, and so will the individuals concerned.

We know that the Commonwealth Government proposes introducing a tax of 1s. 6d. in the pound in order to provide for social amenities. Why should we not compel unions to provide a certain amount as a safeguard against upheavals such as that confronting us today? I am not condemning the miners for seeking to improve their conditions. If they have grievances, they are justified in exhausting every means within their power to secure redress. That is the law of the land—and they should abide by the law of the land. Therefore I say that this strike, which is having such a deplorable effect on the people, rightly merits our condemnation. I have a certain amount of sympathy with the Government, which phase was mentioned by Mr. Mann and Mr. Williams. The control of the coalmining industry has been taken out of the hands of the State and is now exercised by the Commonwealth. If ever there was justification for the opinion expressed in this House in connection with the Federal Referendum, this strike furnishes that justification.

I commend Mr. Dimmitt for having brought the matter before the House; and I certainly would not think of accusing him of attempting to take the business out of the hands of the Government. This is the place where we have the right to express our opinions freely in the interests of the people we represent. It is not only the metropolitan area that is suffering from the effects of the strike; they are apparent in country areas as well. I am pleased that Mr. Wood mentioned that point, for this trouble is affecting the whole of Western Australia. In fact, I am surprised that our North-West members are sitting so quietly in their seats when we remember that at Fremantle a

steamer has been held up since last Tuesday, again entirely through the men being associated with a union with its headquarters in the Eastern States. If anyone can suggest a more stupid, silly and arrogant action than that which resulted in the "Koolinda" being held up at Fremantle when people in the North are wanting the perishables that she was to ship to them and when the meat supply of the city is short and 400 or 500 head of cattle in the North are awaiting shipment to the South, I shall be surprised.

Hon. T. Moore: Well, the "Koolinda" sails tonight to bring them down.

Hon. A. THOMSON: It is about time; the vessel should never have stopped at Fremantle in such circumstances. I do not think this House—

The PRESIDENT: Order! There is so much talk going on that I cannot hear the hon. member speak.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I can hardly hear myself, Mr. President! This House is justified in voicing its protest in respect of both the action of the Collic miners and the holding up of the "Koolinda" at Fremantle. We take strong exception to unionists breaking the law of the land. That is the point. Such stoppages are wrong. We have provided the unions with every facility to have their grievances dealt with. The late Mr. Alec McCallum, speaking in another place at a time when I was a member of the Assembly, said that Western Australia had provided in the Industrial Arbitration Act for one of the best tribunals that existed in any part of the world.

This House also assisted in seeing that provision was made to adjust the grievances of the workers and helped to provide a court before which they could place their claims. At that time it was suggested that, with the passing of such advanced legislation, the weapon of the strike would be abolished. I was one of those who subscribed to that view, but I regret that my anticipations have not been fulfilled. I support the motion because it does not take the business out of the hands of the Government but serves to demonstrate to the people of Western Australia that this House strongly objects to the action that the union has taken and, if the Government needs to be assured of support, it can rely upon the whole-hearted assistance of Parliament in

any endeavour it may make to maintain the law of the land.

HON. H. SEDDON (North-East) [5.56]: Mr. President—

The Chief Secretary: If I do not have time to reply to the debate before the adjournment, I shall have something rather strong to say.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I wish to add a little to the debate.

Hon. T. Moore: The men are going back to work in the morning, so why worry about prolonging the debate?

Hon. H. SEDDON: There are one or two aspects that have been briefly referred to in the motion, which should be stressed. As other members have pointed out, the motion was brought forward not with any idea of taking the business out of the hands of the Government but as a means whereby this House would be able to express its opinion. This dispute is only in keeping with many others that have taken place on previous occasions. Unfortunately it has arisen because there is an impression abroad throughout the community that a strike will very often bring results that other methods will not achieve. In this instance, as Mr. Mann has pointed out, the strikers were more or less in the position that they had exhausted the ordinary provisions which have been set up during the war for dealing with disputes, and they thought they had no other means of bringing their grievances before the community than that of the strike.

There is another aspect that should be given prominence because it will have to be appreciated by the public of Australia—I refer particularly to the section of the Australian public that is classed as the workers. It is that that section of the community must display a sense of citizenship and of public responsibility in connection with any action it takes which has the effect of creating chaos and causing disturbance throughout the length and breadth of the country. Today between 35,000 and 40,000 men have been thrown out of employment in consequence of this dispute, and those people are out of employment purely as the result of an ill-considered action. If only from a sense of responsibility to their fellow workers, one would have thought action would have been taken by the miners to

avoid the hold-up that has taken place. The State Government has known, for a long time, the danger of placing the fuel supplies of this country in the hands of one authority. Many years ago the Government took the responsibility of instituting a system of power supply whereby the whole of the industry of the metropolitan area was supplied with power from one centre. The result has been that we have found the whole community held up whenever there has been interference with the generation of power at that centre.

We are passing through a most difficult period, and are entering on a dangerous time with a set of conditions that might easily reduce the whole of the civilised world to chaos, if we do not exercise a sense of responsibility and fair-mindedness towards the whole community and, above all things, realise that our first duty is towards the community. I well understand and appreciate the sense of loyalty that exists among the workers, whereby they feel they should not let each other down; but there is a greater responsibility. Unless they realise their responsibility to the State, the result will be that the whole structure will come tumbling down about their ears and they will find themselves in a position that will be serious and distressing indeed.

To those engaged in manufacture in this country, I say that unless the Government is prepared to take steps to see that power is made available from more than one source, they will have to take the necessary action to provide for the generation of power to carry on their own work. I definitely support the motion. It is necessary that there should be free and definite speech on the situation and, if as the result of this discussion we can impress on the workers of the State their responsibility to the community, this debate will have been entirely to the good.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [5.57]: I do not desire to disguise or minimise the seriousness of the state of affairs that we have experienced during the past few days. I do not think that in the history of this State we have ever had such a serious position created by an industrial dispute. My experience, over many years of association with industrial organisations and industrial disputes, is that it is wise not to inflame those who are associated

with the dispute, more especially when negotiations are taking place with a view to arriving at a solution of a difficulty that must have been considered particularly serious and important to have developed to such an extent that the whole of this State and all of its services, organisations and institutions are affected.

I do not object to the motion that has been moved, because every member has that right, in order to draw attention to what he might consider to be a state of affairs that should not exist. Might I suggest that Mr. Dimmitt's motion, to discuss as a matter of urgency the failure of the authorities concerned to make provision for the supply of electricity in the metropolitan area during a hold-up in the production of coal at Collie, has hardly been touched upon by any speaker to the motion. Most speakers have taken the opportunity to refer to the Collie miners—some of them in a way that, I am sorry to say, does not do them any credit—without, as far as I can remember, making any mention of the actual circumstances of the case. I think it is just as well that, for a few minutes, we should examine the facts.

Several members this afternoon have said that the law should be carried out. One or two members have featured that particular point, and have gone to the extent of saying what they would do, or would like to see done, if the law was not carried out in regard to industrial disputes. I say the State Government is carrying out the law. The law today, in regard to coalmining, is essentially a Commonwealth responsibility. One member this afternoon criticised this Government because it had not endeavoured to prevent the Commonwealth Government assuming the control that it has today. I would like to ask that member how could the State Government have prevented the Commonwealth Government from assuming that control? The control of coal today is a wartime measure, introduced at a time when this country was in a serious position, and when every member of this House was quite content to allow the Commonwealth Government to have control of coal production in the Commonwealth—for one reason only—that they realised coal was a commodity vital to the war effort, and that it would be a miracle if we could produce sufficient coal for all our requirements. We must bear that point in mind, before criticising the State Government.

Mention has been made of the various Commonwealth authorities to whom the Collie miners could appeal. The Collie miners have taken all the steps possible for them to pursue with relation to the various tribunals and authorities to whom they could appeal under Commonwealth legislation. I do not say this to excuse the Collie miners for having gone on strike, because we, as a Government, have endeavoured to persuade them to return to work, but they did exhaust every avenue open to them under Commonwealth legislation in order to have their case heard. Members are aware that under the National Security (Wage-Pegging) Regulations, no authority has power to increase wages or even alter conditions of employment unless the organisation can prove that an anomaly exists. I do not wish to go into the pros and cons of this particular dispute, but the authorities to which the miners have appealed up to date have said there is no anomaly, from their point of view.

Hon. L. Craig: That is the law.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The miners have insisted that there is an anomaly and have felt that they have a particularly good case in that regard. When they found they were getting nowhere with the representations they made to the Commonwealth authorities, they said, "We must do as some other organisations have done. We will cease work and go on strike." It was only at that stage that the State Government could come into the picture at all, because while the ordinary negotiations were going on between the union and the Commonwealth authorities there was no necessity for the State Government to come into the dispute, except to impress on the Commonwealth Government and Commonwealth authorities the great trouble that would be created in Western Australia if the miners in this State ceased work for one day only. This Government has made all the representations it could to the Commonwealth Government in that regard. I feel sure that, had it not been for the representations of the State Government, we would not have had Mr. Willis, representing the Commonwealth Coal Commissioner, in Collie this afternoon to deal with this particular case.

I would point out that before the war the State Government, through its instrumentalities, was always in the position of

having what were considered to be adequate reserves of coal supplies, more particularly for the East Perth Power House and for the railways. Those reserves consisted mainly of importations from the Eastern States—Newcastle coal. From 5,000 to 10,000 tons of small coal were held in reserve for the East Perth Power House and from 10,000 tons to 20,000 tons of large Newcastle coal were held in reserve for the railways. When the war had been in progress for a little while, those reserves, owing to war conditions, dwindled below the figures I have mentioned. Eventually the Commonwealth Government took over the control of coal production and distribution throughout Australia and appointed a Coal Commissioner.

Hon. C. B. Williams: What is his name?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr. Norman Mighell. The Commonwealth also appointed in each State a local coal committee, a body charged with the responsibility of ensuring that whatever stocks of coal were available should be distributed equitably amongst those desiring it. The position became so acute at one stage that the committee had to say that our reserves of coal, held to meet such conditions as we have experienced in the last week, must be used before we could get any shipments of Newcastle coal.

Hon. C. B. Williams: The nit-wits!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Consequently, we could not retain our reserves of coal. That is the reason why our reserves of coal for the East Perth Power House and the railways dropped to such a very low ebb, and it is the reason why, when production ceased for a few days, we reached the position in which we find ourselves today. I do not think there is one member in this House but would pay a tribute to the coalminers of Collie, not only for their effort during the war years but also for their work over the last 20 or 30 years. There is no coalfield in Australia with anything like an equal record for continuity of work. Excepting the present time, there has been no major dispute on the Collie fields for many years, and yet we find one member who is apparently so vindictive that he would say to the Collie miners, "If you continue on strike any longer, we shall deprive you of those little amenities you have enjoyed for years." That is not the way to settle an industrial dispute.

Let me deal with one or two other aspects. There is no question that every section of the community is being affected one way or another by the fact that no coal is being produced at Collie. At present power is being supplied only to hospitals and to the sewerage pumping plants in the metropolitan area. I wish to correct a misapprehension regarding the supply of current to hospitals. There may have been cases such as those which were quoted by Dr. Hislop, but as far as the main hospitals are concerned, they are receiving all the power they require for the purpose of using their equipment. I wish to make that point quite clear. Notwithstanding the statements in the Press and notwithstanding the propaganda used in this connection, I say definitely that arrangements have been made for sufficient power to be supplied to the main hospitals to enable them to use their equipment as required.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: That is definitely not so.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I concede that the hospitals have been requested to economise consumption in the matter of lighting, but I have been assured by our authorities that the power has been and is still available to enable them to use their equipment. To those who have criticised the Government for not having publicised what it has done, I wish to point out that the Government took action as early as it was possible to do so. We communicated with the Prime Minister, not only by telegrams and letters, but also by telephone conversations. We impressed upon the Commonwealth Government—and I assume on its authorities—the position with which we were confronted.

If any member has not read the Premier's statement published in "The West Australian" this morning, I advise him to do so. That statement could have been greatly elaborated, but it contains a frank disclosure of what the Premier has done on behalf of the State Government. I suggest that any fair and reasonable individual would say that no man could have done more than the Premier has done. Today, Mr. Willis, the Central Industrial Authority, is at Collie. We have sent two Ministers to Collie—the Minister for Mines and the Honorary Minister—not with any intention of trying to influence the miners or anyone else in the matters in dispute, because they are sub-judice, but in order to represent to the miners the

actual position prevailing not only in the metropolitan area but also throughout the State.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Did the Commonwealth know the whole of the facts?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am wondering whether it did. However, we are not going to allow any member to say that the Government did not take whatever opportunity was available to place before the miners themselves, quite irrespective of the dispute, information about the conditions prevailing at present. I wish to advise members that a message from Collie has been received within the last half hour by the Premier. The message is to the effect that the miners will be returning to work in the morning. It reads—

Men decided return to work tomorrow morning on understanding that Willis remains and hears men's claims. State Government to help wherever possible to assist him to obtain necessary authority from Commonwealth to hear and determine claims. Men prepared to work on Saturday (pay Saturday) if required by Government.

With these remarks I conclude, except to say that the State Government did make representations to the Commonwealth to the effect that unless some satisfactory means could be found whereby the case of the Collie miners could be heard, we desired that the Commonwealth should retire from the position it occupies at present regarding its control of industrial conditions in Western Australia.

Members: Hear, hear!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I have told members what the law is, and I have pointed out that the State Government has complied with the law as far as it could and has done its best to persuade the miners to accept the position as we placed it before them and to resume work at the earliest possible moment. I trust that Mr. Dimmitt will see fit to withdraw his motion.

HON. J. A. DIMMITT (Metropolitan-Suburban—in reply) [6.15]: I wish to thank members who have contributed to this debate and not the least amongst them the Chief Secretary. During the discussion members have departed a long way from the motion. Even the Chief Secretary has done so, but he probably found it necessary in order to answer some of the queries raised by various speakers. However, we are not concerned, as I indicated when

moving the motion, with the merits of the case. What we are concerned about is the effect and the result. There is no question about the seriousness of the position. One point about which I am concerned is that I believe the opportunity was present to convert the furnaces at the power house from coal to oil burning, and I say this in spite of what the Chief Secretary has told us.

Why was not provision made to change over from coal to oil burning so that electricity could be supplied by the power house even if there was a stoppage of coal supplies? I consider that it must have been a deep and bitter disappointment to the 140 odd men who landed a few days ago, many of them from Britain and Germany, men who have not been in this country for five or six years, and also to the 21 men who had served 3½ years in the Forces, and who landed in the dark last night after flying over a blacked-out city.

Hon. C. B. Williams: They fought in vain.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Keep your beer quiet!

Hon. C. B. Williams: They fought in vain. Strikes will get the worker the money; nothing else will.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: If this is the new order they are returning to, they must come back with a sense of disappointment and frustration. I desire to ask leave of the House to withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

House adjourned at 6.17 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 25th September, 1945.

Motion: Urgency, Collie coal stoppage and disruption of industry	PAGE 341
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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

MOTION—URGENCY.

Collie Coal Stoppage and Disruption of Industry.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received the following letter from the member for West Perth:—

I wish to inform you that, when the Legislative Assembly meets tomorrow, Tuesday, the 25th inst., I desire to move the adjournment of the House to discuss a matter of urgency, namely, the stoppage of work on the Collie coal mines, the industrial loss and hardship occasioned to the people of the State, and the avoidance of such situations in future. Ross McDonald, 24th September, 1945.

It will be necessary for seven members to rise in their places to support the proposal.

Seven members having risen in their places,

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [4.33]: In moving that the House do now adjourn on a matter of urgency, I do not think I need any further evidence than the appearance of this Chamber. It is evident from the circumstances under which we are meeting that something has taken place which is of sufficient importance to occasion concern. The stoppage of work at Collie has caused such widespread dislocation and loss that I feel sure people of the State would expect this Parliament to make it a subject of discussion.

I do not consider this to be an occasion for any words which might widen the breach that has arisen in connection with the dispute or which might militate against the exercise of a spirit of reason and a sense of responsibility on all sides. It is rather a time for a sober appreciation of the nature and effect of such a stoppage, and a discussion of means by which in future such stoppages may be minimised or prevented.

Let me say I admit at once that coalmining is an arduous calling. I know that after six years of abnormal conditions and strain due to the war, we must expect some degree of unrest and some degree of industrial disequilibrium until we reach a more normal basis, and I would be one of the first to give the Collie miners full credit for having, in common with many other millions of Australians, kept to their work steadily during the critical years of the war. I believe, however, that while allowing all those things, it is necessary for us to face the fact that, through the stoppage at Collie, a great deal of industrial loss has been occasioned and a great deal of personal hardship and inconvenience have been caused. We are told by the newspaper that 20,000 men are out of work and that there has been a great loss of perishables; and the grave words of the Premier himself show the seriousness with which he views the conditions that have