

ing houses. For the reasons I have stated, I oppose the Bill.

On motion by Mr. Doney, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 3.52 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 9th September, 1942.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2.15 p.m. and read prayers.

QUESTIONS (5).

WHEAT, GUARANTEED PRICE.

Mr. PATRICK asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Has he seen the reply given by the Minister for Commerce, as reported in "The West Australian" of the 5th September, in which Mr. Scully said that "he regarded the recently fixed price of wheat as equitable when applied to Western Australian farmers, who grew the greater part of the annual crop in that State?" 2, Was the Minister for Commerce supplied by this Government with figures which accurately set out the production per farm basis of wheat in Western Australia, and which effectively disproved his contention? 3, In order that the Federal authorities may get a better appreciation of the State's position generally, will the Minister see that the Prime Minister and members of his Government are supplied with copies of his speech on the Address-in-reply debate?

The MINISTER replied: 1, Yes. 2, All figures applicable to Western Australia were

supplied to the Minister for Commerce. 3, The position of this State is constantly being placed before the Commonwealth Government. In addition, copies of Western Australian "Hansard" are supplied to every Western Australian member of the Federal Parliament, including the Prime Minister. Copies are also supplied to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Library.

STATE LABOUR BUREAU.

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Labour: Is it his intention to lay on the Table of the House all correspondence, papers and files in connection with the appointment by the Federal Government of the State Labour Bureau as the sole employing agency in the State?

The MINISTER replied: The decision that the National Service Office should be the only employing agency (with limited exceptions) was a decision of the Commonwealth Government and was implemented through the National Security Act. The State Labour Bureau thereby ceased to exist, but its staff was absorbed in the new arrangement. There are no files or papers in the possession of the State Government.

TIMBER IMPORTS.

Appointment of Shipping Priorities Committee.

Mr. TONKIN asked the Minister for Industrial Development: 1, Is he aware that quantities of jarrah flooring and Tasmanian oak have been forwarded from Sydney to Fremantle by rail for use of the R.A.A.F. in this State? 2, Will he protest to the Commonwealth Minister concerned and endeavour to put a stop to this unnecessary and expensive practice?

The MINISTER replied: 1, Yes. 2, Yes. In amplification I would like to add, with your permission, Mr. Speaker, that the State Government has been dealing with the general question of shipping priorities so far as these affect shipments of goods from Eastern Australia to this State. Consultations have been held more recently with the Assistant Minister for Commerce (Senator Fraser) to ascertain whether it would be possible to establish a system ensuring to the largest extent that space on ships from Eastern Australia to Western Australia should be used only for the bringing of essential goods. As a result, the State Gov-

ernment recently decided to set up the following committee to deal with such shipping priorities: The Chairman of the local Shipping Control Board, Mr. Salmon; the representative in Perth of the Commonwealth Commerce Department, Mr. Grogan; the Director of Industrial Development, Mr. Fernie; the Chairman of the Emergency Reserve Stocks Committee, Mr. Smith; and a representative of the State Department of Agriculture, Mr. Roberts. This committee will continuously supervise shipping priorities to Western Australia. It will operate through one of the State Ministers, who will have direct contact with the Commonwealth Minister concerned, Senator Fraser. It is believed that, as the result of the establishment and operations of the committee, the Commonwealth Government will be able to control the allocation of shipping space for cargoes to Western Australia in such a way as to obviate largely, if not entirely, the use of valuable shipping space to carry to this State goods which we can do without or which can be satisfactorily produced within our borders.

SHIPPING PRIORITIES COMMITTEE.

Approval by Commonwealth Government.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM (without notice) asked the Minister for Labour: 1, Has the local committee set up by the State Government been approved by the Commonwealth Government? 2, What control will the local committee have over exports from various ports in the Eastern States?

The MINISTER replied: 1, The proposal to establish the committee and its personnel has, as I have already indicated, been approved by the Commonwealth Government. 2, The control over shipments from ports in the Eastern States will be in the hands of the appropriate Commonwealth authority, but the Commonwealth Minister concerned will use his powers in such a way as to ensure that the authority in the Eastern States responsible for the allocation of shipping space will make the allocation available in accordance with the Commonwealth policy, which happens on this occasion to be identical with that of the State Government.

CANNING DAM OVERFLOW.

Mr. SAMPSON (without notice) asked the Minister for Water Supplies: 1, In view of

the early overflow of the Canning Dam at the estimated rate of 200,000,000 gallons per day, with its possible dangerous results to properties within the area of resultant inundation, is it practicable effectively to divert one or more tributaries of the inflow and, if so, will the Minister make the earliest possible efforts towards this end? 2, Will he give immediate consideration to the release of such quantity of water which while not of sufficient volume to constitute a menace to those whose properties are adjacent to the overflow would, nevertheless, temporarily reduce the danger?

The MINISTER replied: 1 and 2, I have made recent inquiries and find that the overflow of 200,000,000 gallons is quite a normal winter flow. In a time of severe flood it has been as high as 1,000,000,000 gallons in 24 hours. The dam does not increase, but retards the velocity of the flow. The warning we gave was that those who had pumps at the low level of the river should remove them. That is the only danger. The present flow is quite normal and there is no need for alarm on the part of residents along the water course.

BILL—MEDICAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by the Minister for Health and read a first time.

BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

PAPERS—CLOSING HOUR OF SHOPS.

Corrigin District.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [2.25]: I move—

That all papers relating to the closing of shops in the Corrigin district at 1 p.m. on Saturdays, which was the subject of a proclamation gazetted on the 30th January, 1942, be laid on the Table of the House.

Members may consider that I am going outside my own territory in asking for the tabling of these papers, as Corrigin is in the district of the member for Beverley. I am not concerned, however, about the locality to which the proclamation refers, but am afraid that this may become a general practice. I would like to see from the papers relating to this matter what led up to the making

and gazettement of the proclamation. It has been known for some time that the Minister for Labour is very anxious to close all shops throughout the State at 1 o'clock on Saturdays. That is the policy he has attempted to put into force by legislative enactment. One cannot raise any objection to his attempting to give effect to his policy, but I want to find out under what authority the Minister took this action. Certain things may be done by proclamation but only within the scope of an Act, and I have been unable to find in the Factories and Shops Act any section delegating power to the Minister for this purpose.

In country districts throughout the State it has been the custom for a number of years to have shops, with very few exceptions, kept open on Saturday night until 9 o'clock. That has been done to give people an opportunity to do their shopping. Employees of farmers and other people have been able to go to town to make purchases, frequent places of amusement and meet friends. The system is commendable because people in the country are in a different position from those in the city. Some have long distances to travel to the town. Since the war, difficulty has been experienced in securing labour and those who work in the country have had to spend long hours at their particular occupations. Through the shops being open on Saturday nights they have been able to do their shopping after work. I asked a question of the Minister for Labour concerning the closing of shops, and was informed that an instruction was issued that all shops throughout Western Australia must close at 5.30 p.m. On investigating the matter I found there appeared to be some doubt as to who issued this instruction.

The Minister for Labour: The order was issued by the Chief Inspector of Factories who, under the Closing Time of Shops National Security Regulations, is Deputy in this State for the Commonwealth Minister for Labour.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: That is so, but there seems to be an idea that the Minister for Civil Defence did it. I do not propose to ask the two Ministers to have a debate on the matter. The fact remains that the instruction was issued, and it was very disappointing to people in the country. As far as Corrigin is concerned, Saturday has been a late shopping night for a long time. Then for some reason, without consulting the local

authority, the Minister took it upon himself to issue this proclamation. Under what authority did he do it? If he shows me the papers I will understand the position. In the circumstances I wish to find out. The Goldfields area is one where numbers of people visit the towns late on Saturdays. If this authority can be freely exercised by the Minister it will prevent many country people from shopping on Saturday afternoons. They can remain in town late on Saturday and get up a little later on Sunday morning, whereas if the shopping is done in the daytime it means loss of time and consequently loss of labour.

I was recently at Corrigin on a Saturday night expecting to have the opportunity to address a fairly substantial number of people, in an endeavour to assist the Commonwealth Government's loan proposals, but I found the town was like a morgue. The chairman of the road board informed me that the shopkeepers were compelled to close their shops at 1 o'clock under the proclamation issued by the Minister, and he wanted to know under what powers it had been done. I did not know, but there certainly had been a proclamation and I wanted to know how it came to be made, and under whose authority. I hope the Minister will not refuse to produce the papers. I would like, if possible, to stop the Minister from doing these things. I can remember his introducing an amendment to the Factories and Shops Act to compel everyone to close, but his constituents by a referendum refused to carry out his desires. I advised the Corrigin people on this occasion that if they presented a petition in the manner provided by the Factories and Shops Act they could override the decision of the Minister, if that was their wish. I do not wish to delay the House. The proposal is reasonable.

THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I have no objection to the motion. I shall be quite pleased to place the papers on the Table of the House in the near future.

Question put and passed.

MOTION—STATE CIVIL REQUIREMENTS.

To Inquire by Select Committee.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [2.33]: I move—

That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into any existing or threatened shortages in the supply of essential requirements for

civil consumption in this State, and as to the allocation to this State of a fair quota of the Australian production of such requirements, and as to the shipping and other transport services for the carriage of such supplies to this State, and to report thereon to this House.

I bring this motion forward in consequence of a number of representations made to me by people carrying on businesses in the metropolitan area, and in doing so I start by mentioning what is clear to members that Western Australia, with the probable exception of Tasmania, occupies a position of peculiar isolation. I might say that it is far more isolated than Tasmania because it is further from Eastern States' supplies. Quite apart from the existing isolation, it is conceivable that at any time the emergencies of the war may be such that shipping to this State may not be possible and that the only other means of transport, namely the trans-continental railway, may be so occupied with defence movements that no space is available for commodities to be brought here. Such an occurrence is by no means impossible and if it did occur it might exist for a considerable time—for weeks and possibly months. We have to face the possibility that in such an emergency we would need to live on our own fat from the point of view of civil requirements for, perhaps, a long time. Quite apart from such an emergency there is the possibility of shortages in the ordinary course of events.

The object of this motion is to ask Parliament to make a survey of the position so as to ascertain the actual and possible shortages in essential commodities for civil consumption in this State. If we appoint a Select Committee and it investigates this matter, and reports to the House, the Government's hand will be strengthened in any representations it makes to the authorities in the Eastern States. Whilst the matter is the responsibility of this Government it is also the responsibility of Parliament. Members should know what the position is and what it will be, and reassure themselves on the point. If the result of an inquiry by a Select Committee were a report that all was well and that there was no reason to apprehend any privations from shortages of essential requirements, then it will have been well worth while. The Parliament and public, and the merchants responsible for purveying the commodities would be reassured, as also would members.

Mr. J. Hegney: Would the committee be required to go to the Eastern States to make investigations?

Mr. McDONALD: That depends on what the committee thinks. Personally, if I become a member of it, I propose to conduct the investigations in Perth and no further afield. It is a matter for the Government and also for each member. I refer particularly to those members who represent constituencies outside the metropolitan area. If there is a shortage of essential requirements, and hardship and privation or perhaps dislocation of business occur because supplies are not obtainable, the inhabitants of each constituency will hold their member partly responsible. The matter is of particular interest to representatives of North-West constituencies or distant constituencies like that of the member for Murchison and country constituencies, which are some distance removed from the main sources of supply in this State. I therefore put it to the House that it would not be proper to say, "Leave this to the Government." It may have done much, and even all that should have been done, but it is a matter where the individual member must accept responsibility and inform himself for his own sake as well as for the sake of his constituents.

We should not wait until shortages and dislocation of supplies arise. We want to do what we have so often failed to do, that is take time by the forelock and look into the possibilities of shortages and see that they do not occur. I know that there has been activity, and I believe satisfactory activity, on the part of the Government in connection with emergency supplies of a number of commodities, particularly foodstuffs. I understand that foodstuffs have been accumulated in certain areas to meet any emergency. It may be that all that is necessary to be done has been done, but even there the position in regard to foodstuffs is so important that we cannot be too sure that we have visualised all the possibilities and made certain of there being no shortages of essential foods in any part of the State; and particularly is that incumbent on a State like Western Australia which is an over-producing State so far as a number of food commodities—especially wheat—are concerned.

There are, I may add, many authorities dealing with different aspects of this matter. I have looked into the position and have

listed a number of them. There is the Director of Rationing in Western Australia and also in the Federal sphere. There is the Shipping Board established by the Commonwealth Government. There is the Department of Materials Supply. I believe that is a Federal department that is associated with munitions and, I think, with other commodities as well. There is the department known as the Import Procurement Division of the Customs Department, which deals with the importation of commodities from overseas, particularly Great Britain, and the allocation of those commodities between the merchants of the different States.

All these, and perhaps more, authorities are dealing with the question of supplies, but it would be of interest to the House and satisfy the responsibilities of Parliament if a Select Committee made the necessary investigation, and so ascertained from local representatives of the Federal authorities I have mentioned what they have done. Insofar as some communications may be of a confidential nature, reliance may be placed on the committee to ensure that no information is made public that is of a nature that must remain confidential for the time being. After hearing and learning all there is to be known on this subject then, even as regards the confidential and secret matters affecting the defence of the State, the committee could give the House an assurance in its report that it believed, in relation to matters that could not be made public at the time, provision had been made by the responsible authorities to avert shortages of commodities and dislocation of supplies.

The Minister for Labour: Does your motion cover only essential food supplies?

Mr. McDONALD: No; it covers the essential requirements of the civil population. It refers to the requirements for civil consumption. By the term "consumption" I propose its use in its widest sense. I refer to the consumption of goods of all kinds, covering every requirement of the civil community as related to trade, business, food or clothing.

Mr. J. Hegney: Your motion deals only with essential goods.

Mr. McDONALD: Yes, I am not concerned about non-essential and luxury goods. I am concerned only with what is essential to the civil life of the community. Already in the State we have experienced shortages. We have had an extreme shortage of steel,

not only for civil requirements but for military requirements as well. As we all know, there has been an acute shortage of firewood in the metropolitan area. I have here a letter from the director of one of the largest retail stores engaged principally in the sale of clothing in the metropolitan area. In the course of his communication that gentleman states—

So far as this State is concerned, the principal shortage is in men's and boys' clothing, including overcoats. I should say that our stock of men's clothing and overcoats is only one-third of what it normally used to be, and this is not the worst of the story. The trouble is that we are finding it extremely hard to purchase, as this clothing is made up of woollen materials and the Eastern States mills have been primarily engaged on military contracts since the inception of the war. Woollen underclothing for men, and, to a lesser extent, for women, is also in short supply. Cotton athletic singlets, which are very largely used by working men in the summer time, are extremely hard to get. Other short lines are woollen dress materials, blankets and travelling rugs, grey flannels for working singlets, working boots, materials for shirts and pyjamas and men's socks.

The writer goes on to point out, very properly, that some of these commodities are short because the woollen mills have been directed by the Commonwealth Government to concentrate mainly on military requirements, but even though that is so, it does not assist the people of Western Australia who are unable to buy the class of goods that are essential for their purposes. I refer mainly to working men who require to purchase working singlets and other articles of clothing. With regard to the allocation of a fair share of the goods available to merchants, the writer says that the larger manufacturers have, on the whole, been very fair and have endeavoured to allocate manufactured goods produced in the Eastern States between their various customers throughout Australia on a ration equivalent to what had been purchased by those customers in normal times. The writer also refers to the position regarding working boots and says—

These have been short but the Federal Government—through the Rationing Commission—are just releasing in Western Australia 10,000 pairs of military boots.

Mr. J. Hegney: Will that supply have to last for the period of the war? Have you seen the boots?

Mr. McDONALD: I am quoting what the writer has stated. I do not suppose 10,000 pairs of military boots will do so very much

in putting boots on about 1,000,000 feet in Western Australia. The writer further says—

I am informed that the Fremantle retail stores are in a desperate position for stocks.

In the Press last week there appeared the report of an interview with a Fremantle retailer in the course of which he stated baldly: "There are no ready-made suits to be had in Fremantle." Whether that is right or wrong I cannot say, but that was the published statement.

Mr. J. Hegney: The only suits procurable now are the "Victory suits."

Mr. McDONALD: And perhaps the "siren suits," but they are not of much use for ordinary purposes. The Minister for Mines will recall that recently a deputation from the Collie miners waited on him and complained that they were not able to procure shirts and boots. They demanded that some activity should be shown with a view to securing for them decent supplies of what, in their case, were essential for the production of the commodity for which they were responsible in order to assist the war effort of the State. I am aware as the Minister for Industrial Development said, that a board has been set up to deal with shipping priorities which constitutes part of the motion now before the House. I was glad to hear that. If the board functions, it may cover some of the ground contained in my motion, but I am told that the mercantile people of this State regret that the board contains no representative of the merchants. The board is composed entirely of officials and, so I am informed, there is no representation of the people who are engaged in the actual business of importing and selling commodities which may become in short supply.

The Minister for Labour: Just as well!

Mr. McDONALD: I disagree with that statement.

The Minister for Labour: They are the people who have been importing salt and flour and sand and other unnecessary things.

Mr. McDONALD: If that is so, this priority board should have been in operation months ago. That is one of the reasons for my motion. Why should we import such things as sand, salt and flour if we take a long view of the matter?

The Minister for Labour: Because the commercial community has no conscience in these matters.

Mr. McDONALD: I do not like that statement. I think that on the whole people are doing their best to further the war effort.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I think the quantity of flour imported was small.

The Minister for Labour: One hundred and fifty tons in a week.

Hon. C. G. Latham: But was it not a special kind of flour?

Mr. McDONALD: To stop such imports as the Minister has mentioned, Parliament should take time by the forelock and appoint a committee to make recommendations so that there will be no recurrence of these happenings. I have been told—I cannot verify this matter because I lack personal knowledge—that 400 or 500 tons of blood and bone manure were left on the wharves in the Eastern States, because shipping space was filled with less essential goods.

The Minister for Lands: That is a cargo which must be put in suitable surroundings, as you will realise.

Mr. McDONALD: I appreciate that point. We know that gas-producers have been imported, shall we say, by selfish merchants? I am also told that we have been importing masks for motor headlamps, and a consignment of flour has been brought from the Eastern States. I welcome the appointment of a committee to regulate the use of shipping space and confine it to essential supplies. I am sorry the appointment was not made months ago. What I desire now is an inquiry by this House, for we are the people responsible, as to what shall be done to prevent any dislocation or any unwise utilisation of shipping resources in future.

If the motion is carried, I think it will be a simple matter to get the desired information. A questionnaire could be sent out to all those people in a position to assist the select committee—the Chamber of Commerce, the Chamber of Manufactures, the Trades Hall authorities, retail shopkeepers, and any other people in a position to advise from the point of view of consumers or sellers. The Select Committee, I suggest, should include a member from one of the North-West districts because he represents a very large area where shortages may well occur; one from a distant district like Murchison, where there is also an isolated com-

munity, and a member from one of the country districts, which also have their difficulties in view of transport limitations. Although we have experts on many existing committees, I venture to suggest that members of Parliament, with their special knowledge of the State and of their communities, are as thoroughly qualified to advise Parliament on any possible shortages of essential supplies in their constituencies as are members of the various boards, which are composed of some men who do not possess anything like the knowledge of affairs in this State that is possessed by members of this House.

I commend the motion to the House, and hope it will be passed. We have had enough criticism of State Parliaments, and I believe that by an inquiry such as this, and possibly by other inquiries, the State Parliament can fulfil the functions for which it exists. We should not leave everything to the Government, though I believe from what the Minister for Lands in particular has told me that some very wise steps have been taken with proper forethought in connection with emergency supplies of foodstuffs. Still, I say it is not for us to leave everything to the Government; the responsibility lies with the whole of the members. We should exercise our own functions of investigation and report, and satisfy ourselves on a matter vital to the community which, in the emergency of being very isolated, may become a matter—I will not say of life and death—of choice between the normal functioning of our trading, business and manufacturing activities, and a state of very severe privation.

The House can have few more responsible functions at this time than that of making a survey of the existing supplies in the State for civil consumption. I do not touch the military side because that is entirely a matter for military responsibility. We, however, are responsible for the civil side, and I do not know of any more important function for this House than an inquiry to satisfy itself that proper protection is being afforded the civil population in relation to supplies that are essential to their carrying on. I hope members will be afforded an opportunity to do this service for the people they represent.

On motion by the Minister for Labour, debate adjourned.

MOTION—BASIC INCOME FOR ADULTS.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [3.1]: I move—

That this House considers that the proposal by Mr. Lloyd Thomas to establish a basic income for every adult of 25s. a week should be examined by officers of the Treasury and the Government Statistician's department, and a report thereon made to Cabinet.

This is essentially a motion for reconstruction. Just as the member for West Perth said that we should occupy ourselves with the obtaining of food for the people we represent, so I think we should employ some of our time with the question of reconstruction. It has been said that the Federal Government is giving attention to reconstruction; but I would like to hear from the Minister concerned, in this debate, how we stand in the matter. It is high time to clarify the position as to where the State Parliament will stand in regard to reconstruction. The motion deals with a proposal made by Mr. Lloyd Thomas, who is a radio broadcaster. A few copies of his utterance have been delivered here for perusal by members. I am not here either to support or to oppose what Mr. Thomas advocates, but draw attention to the fact that Mr. Lloyd Thomas broadcasts twice a day to the people of Western Australia and that he has a large following. I am told that in the electoral district of Subiaco the member for the district was chairman of an audience of one thousand, which turned up to a meeting on reconstruction called by Mr. Thomas. Further, I am informed that he addressed a large meeting at Bunbury.

Now, where are we standing in this matter? Mr. Thomas makes proposals which I shall state very shortly from the pages of the work he has published. Those proposals not only are revolutionary as regards their proportions but really displace the need for a Treasurer, because they involve definite taxation. His proposals amount to the taking-over of £300,000,000 a year from the national income and re-distributing it. I repeat, Mr. Thomas has a large following in Western Australia. I began my remarks by asking where we stand in matters of reconstruction. Mr. Thomas is a resident of Western Australia, and so far all his work has been done around the broadcasting stations of this State. One of his points in the "Quiz" at the end of his book is this—

How do you take up these proposals?—Through your member of Parliament.

And if your member refuses to support an Act to bring in these proposals known as the base income?—Then put him out.

The question is, are we getting broadcast out of this Parliament? In my district Mr. Lloyd Thomas and Mr. Beeby and perhaps others have a far bigger following than members of this Chamber have in their electorates at the present time. Mr. Thomas's views are heard twice a day all the week.

The Minister for Works: So were Barker's!

Mr. NORTH: Barker got a seat.

The Minister for Works: But he did not take it.

Mr. NORTH: I am not advocating Mr. Barker's views, but am making the point that at present members of the community are enabled to hear views upon which there is no check, and that those who promulgate these views obtain large followings. I consider it to be our duty—

The Minister for Works: To advocate them in this Chamber?

Mr. NORTH: The hon. gentleman can speak for himself when the time comes. It is necessary to ensure that these proposals are checked. If they are correct, it is all right. We have officers under the control of Parliament such as the Government Statistician and Treasury officials. They understand taxation, and know the facts of such things. If we permit proposals to be put to the people and large followings obtained, then if those proposals are without any foundation we are neglecting our duty as members of Parliament. Quite enough work has to be done throughout this country without allowing large numbers of people to spend their time upon projects which are unnecessary. Therefore my motion urges that the proposals to which I have alluded be sent to the Government Statistician and to the Treasury with a view to this House obtaining a report as to whether the things advocated are sound.

The Minister for Mines: Are you distributing these proposals?

Mr. NORTH: Some copies of the proposals were sent to the House, and I handed a few around. In order that members generally may become aware of the nature of the proposals, I shall read from the "Quiz." We must bear in mind that we have the member for Murchison with us, and that it would not be in order for me to say whether the proposals deserve consideration until I am in possession of that hon. member's outlook

on the question. For I know that the hon. member is in a position to hand us proposals which will do all the things of which Mr. Thomas speaks, and far more, without any trouble at all to us. We have repeatedly carried motions of such nature. In order to enable the member for Murchison to take an intelligent interest in the proposals, I shall read for his special benefit the ruling given by the head of the Federal Reserve Bank of the United States of America. The ruling concerns what happens if one issues free currencies. Mr. Thomas proposes a scheme which is quite orthodox. Through Mr. O. L. Isaachsen, general manager of the Bank of Adelaide, I have been handed a document, straight from Washington, stating the views of orthodox finance upon the proposals of the member for Murchison. The Governor of the Federal Reserve system at Washington has there criticised views similar to those we have often heard here. We are all guilty—not only the member for Murchison—of the proposals for national credit. Here is the reply given by the head of international finance to the proposal for national credit—

Your plan as described in the Congressional Record is for the Government to finance its expenditures by issuing new money and avoiding the payment of interest. In this fashion you would have the Government meet not only its normal expenditures in excess of receipts but also the enormous defence expenditures now under way and in contemplation and ultimately the entire outstanding Federal debt.

The sovereign power of Congress to authorise such a programme is beyond question. What has to be determined, however, is whether it would be for the good of the country to embark on such a course. To my mind it would be disastrous. Plausible as your proposals may be made to appear, there is no escape from the truth that someone must pay for everything. If the Government could save the billion or more a year without causing any corresponding or greater losses to the country, no one could reasonably be opposed to your proposal. I am convinced, however, that the creation of the huge amount of new money contemplated by your plan could only lead to incalculable losses for the country as a whole. The sovereign power of Congress to authorise such a programme is beyond question.

Towards the end, the Head of the International Finance says—

Financing government by issuing currency would have a double-barrelled effect upon the interest income of the public. It would reduce the amount of interest received by savers, and it would increase the amount of money available for investment. As use

for these funds was sought, interest rates on all types of debt would decline, until the bare costs of investment could not be met. In such circumstances funds intended for investment would either remain uninvested or would out of necessity be used for the speculative purchase of existing consumption goods, physical property or equities of various kinds. This would intensify the inflation already generated by capacity production for the defence programme if financed by new money. Such conditions would completely demoralise our economic system as now constituted. It would mean the end of capitalism and require the substitution of some other system in its place.

I read that not to advocate the views expressed therein, but to try to give members an idea of how the money magnates, the financial Tsars of the world, are meeting the masses of propaganda distributed all over the world by keen fighters like the member for Murchison. So far, there is scarcely a ripple on the ocean.

The Minister for Mines: It is mostly undercurrent.

Mr. NORTH: Now, here we have an extremely clever speaker over the air who, year in and year out, holds his public. He comes forward with an orthodox proposal to do those very things which the statesmen of the world say should be done. We have been told in speeches delivered in both Europe and America that the masses are coming into their own, that the old days of privileges are past, that there will be jobs for all and consequently no more unemployment. We have heard such talk from statesmen all over the world, but not one concrete proposal has yet been made to bring all this into effect. The so-called new ideas are, in fact, as the member for Murchison has said, as old as Lincoln's. They are being opposed tooth and nail in high places. Thus I urge members to give the fullest consideration to any orthodox ideas or proposals for reconstruction, so that these may be checked. In other words, we should be friendly to those who are willing to do something. We should not knock back their proposals, or ignore them, without any consideration. Such proposals are being ignored today in high places. What I am about to read is an attempt to answer a request made by Mr. Churchill, who has often been referred to as the great warhorse with never a moment's time for reconstruction.

The Minister for Mines: Like all other British Prime Ministers he will not get the chance when the war is over.

Mr. NORTH: That is so. This is what was said of Mr. Churchill in London on the 16th June of this year —

Economic problems facing the United Nations in the future are now being discussed in the Press, and "The Times" draws attention to the hopes recently expressed by leading American statesmen that the world will be freed of exploitation and that goods will be freely exchanged for mutual benefit.

The newspaper points out that the present Prime Minister 12 years ago, when out of office, spoke of the need to solve the problem of distributing the products of industry widely among the masses.

The Minister for Mines: When out of office?

Mr. NORTH: Yes. The report continues—

He referred to "the strange discordance between consuming and producing power" and refused to believe no better adjustment could be made between supply and demand. It was he who urged that upon "this mysterious crack and fissure in all our arrangements and apparatus the keenest minds of the world should be concentrated." He gave a much-needed warning that economic problems, like political issues, cannot be solved by any expression however bereft of national will, but only by taking the right action. In characteristic phrase he declared, "You cannot cure cancer by a majority." And indeed went on to urge that Parliament should set up a body which could discuss these economic questions without heat or bias, without political prejudice or preoccupation with their effort.

Mr. Churchill's advice was not taken. Authoritative opinion at the time refused to believe that any remedy was needed or could be found outside the body of classical economic doctrine. Events have proved that he was right, not they. A great body of informed and responsible opinion on both sides of the Atlantic is now convinced that the most vital and urgent problem of peace is to find a cure for the strange discordance between production and consumption. Statesmen, economists and businessmen have to lay their heads together and devise means by which the world can produce what it is capable of producing and distribute what it produces among the people who need it and can use it.

That report contains many generalisations, all of which we can support. But now Mr. Thomas has come to light—the first person I have struck with a concrete proposal of pounds, shillings and pence. I propose to read the questions and answers at the end of the booklet that I hold, for the benefit of those members who have not already perused them. The booklet is got up with the Atlantic Charter and Mr. Roosevelt's Four Freedoms, linked up with those matters which

everyone supports. The questions and answers are as follow:—

To whom is the basic income paid?—To every person over the age of 21.

How much will be the payment?—It is suggested that it should be 25s. per week, but it could be increased or decreased according to the contribution to the social security fund.

That is obvious!

Who pays for the basic income?—Every person who earns any money.

How much would they pay?—On the basis of 25s. per week basic income the contribution would be approximately 7s. 6d. in the pound of all earnings.

How would this contribution be made?—In the case of wage-earners or payments for services rendered by means of tax stamps. A person earning £8 per week would receive £5 in cash and £3 in stamps.

How would he receive his basic income?—By payment in cash through a bank or post office, or by cheque.

Could a person be deprived of his basic income?—Only upon it being proved to the satisfaction of a magistrate that the person was irresponsible and was squandering his income on drink or in some other undesirable way—

The Minister for Mines: The magistrate would be kept very busy!

Mr. NORTH:—

in which case it could be ordered that for a certain period the income be paid out in kind instead of in cash. Persons sent to prison for more than seven days should be deprived of the income for the period of their imprisonment, and the amount paid to the prison authorities towards the cost of their upkeep. Persons in hospitals and institutions should have four-fifths of their income payable to the authorities concerned, and balance paid to them in cash by the institution.

Could the basic income be seized by creditors?—No. It would be inalienable except for the purchase of a house through a government housing board or approved builder or building society.

Could a person assign his income?—No. A husband would not even be permitted to purchase a house in his wife's name because it would destroy his own security in the event of a separation.

He is going a bit too far there!

Could a husband and wife jointly assign their incomes to purchase a house in their joint names?—Yes, provided the joint assignment did not exceed £1, i.e., 10s. on each income.

Mr. Sampson: That is out-marshalling Marshall!

Mr. NORTH: The booklet proceeds—

What would be the position regarding a house so purchased in the event of a separation?—The same as exists at the present time under common law.

Would the basic income abolish existing pensions—i.e., old age, invalid, widows, etc.?—Yes, and abolish with them the restrictions on earning capacity.

Would it abolish child endowment?—No; it is suggested that child endowment should include the first child.

Is any provision made for people under 21?—No. It is presumed that the majority of people under 21 have parental care.

Now we come to figures. These will interest the member for East Perth, he being an accountant—

How much money would be required to pay the basic income?—On present figures approximately £6,000,000 a week, or £312,000,000 a year.

On the basis of 7s. 6d. in the £1 on earnings, how much would the contributions yield?—On the last available aggregate income figure (£800,000,000) the yield would be £300,000,000.

Mr. Watts: These figures are Australia-wide, I suppose?

Mr. NORTH: Yes, but they are being put forward in this State. There is no suggestion as to whether this question should be handled by the States or by the Commonwealth Government. Either set of Governments would probably do the job.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: Or handled by 6PR.

Mr. NORTH: I continue reading—

... How would the deficit of £12,000,000 be paid?—From the £16,000,000 paid out in existing pensions to invalids and the aged without considering the new cost involved in widows' pensions. There would be a surplus in the fund if the social security contribution was 8s. in the pound instead of the 7s. 6d. suggested.

Do single people pay more than married people?—No. The basic wage is paid to the wife as an individual citizen and not as a wife.

Wouldn't such a heavy contribution stifle ambition and enterprise?—Why should it? The man on £8,000 a year would still have £5,000 left, plus his basic income. The man on £800 a year would still have £500 left, plus his basic income. The man on £200 a year would pay a contribution of £75, but he would receive back for himself all but £10 in basic income and, if he was married, his wife would receive £65 for no contribution, so the family income would increase by £55 a year.

How would the basic income affect industry?—It should help it, because it would keep a constant flow of money in circulation amongst the people who spend it best.

Mr. Marshall: Does not taxation take a certain amount of money out of circulation?

Mr. NORTH: That is a good question. I continue reading—

How would the basic income affect employment?—It should improve employment, because purchasing power creates employment.

Are there any exemptions?—No. All income would have to pay social security contribution. All persons over 21 would receive the basic income subject to a residential qualification for new arrivals in the country.

Would new arrivals pay the contribution?—Yes, subject to a qualification that if they left the country within a certain period contributions would be returned to them, and subject to the contributions being returned to them in the event of unemployment and incapacity as basic income, but only to the limit of the contributions made.

Why the restrictions?—Because if the basic income was common only to one country—say Australia—it might attract people to the country who had no intention of playing their part in the development of the nation.

Is the basic income plan suitable to all countries?—Why not? It is only a question of degree, dependent upon the amount of aggregate income. A country with a small aggregate income might have to pay lower benefits for a lower contribution—but the standard of living is probably lower too, so that relatively the position would be the same.

Does the basic income involve any unorthodox principle?—No. It is exactly the same principle as old-age, invalid and widows' pensions—with this difference: everyone contributes. It is a right, not a privilege, and not subject to political whims or patronage. It would remove all property restrictions and restrictions on earnings.

What would be the cost of administration?—It should be comparatively low. Once it was decided that a person was eligible for the income by reason of birth or length of residence, there would be no police work to do, as in the case of pensions, where a large staff is engaged investigating claims and making certain that none of the complicated provisions of the Act are violated.

How would the cost of the basic income compare with the cost of the war to Australia?—It would be less. But it is not, strictly speaking, a cost. The money would be going into construction, and not destruction, and maintaining a constant flow through industry and production.

How much is Australia spending on the war?—The present indications are that approximately £400,000,000 will be spent in 1942-43.

What would be the effect of the basic income on general taxation?—It should assist materially in reducing it, because social services will not demand the same support from general revenue. Institutions such as gaols, hospitals, asylums, etc., would receive the basic income, less a nominal deduction for the inmates' pocket money. This would relieve their finances. No patient would be so poor that he or she could pay nothing.

Would the basic income be subject to direct taxation?—No. Direct taxation would be levied only on the income remaining after de-

ducting social security contribution, and would not include the amount returned as basic income.

Would it mean a big drop in income tax?—It would mean a drop. But exemptions for wives and children would be disallowed (basic income and child endowment would provide greater benefits), and the peace-time need for taxation would not be so great because of the savings in social services which the basic income would create.

Would the basic income create wasters and loafers?—Not more than we have at present. A man or woman content to exist on 25s. a week is already a loafer, unless he or she is prepared to endure it for a purpose—such as writing, composition or study, which will bring rewards later. In that case the nation would benefit in the end.

What would be the effect of the basic income on public and private charities?—It should eliminate the need for them, with the exceptions of hospitals, asylums, etc. The kind of charity which gives out meal and bed tickets, blankets, food orders and so on would largely be unnecessary, because the basic income would provide the basic needs of every person.

How would the basic income affect unemployment pay?—Completely. There wouldn't be any, and the States of Australia would save millions. Incidentally, there would be very little need for unemployment pay, because the basic income would in itself circulate sufficient money to keep employment at a high level.

What is needed to establish the basic income?—An Act of Parliament.

How should I set about trying to create it?—By asking your member to vote for an Act to establish a basic income.

And if he refuses?—Help to put in another member. In our democracy the individual controls the policy of the country in the last resort. Every individual must play his part. Every individual must shape the policy of the member. He should represent the majority of his electorate, and not any one section of it. If sufficient people want the basic income they can get it—through the ballot box, and with it security from want and security from economic fear.

I regret having trespassed on the time of members to this extent, but at any rate, they now know what Mr. Thomas is talking about. Take the man who is paying an income tax of 15s. in the pound. If he can be persuaded that by paying 7s. 6d. in the pound he will have that much taken off his income tax, and that he will be assessed at a lower rate, possibly he will be interested in the proposal. We do not know whether all these contentions are correct. In the course of my study of economics I learnt that in some ways the expression, "national income" is a misnomer. We say that the national income is £1,000,000,000 or £800,000,000 as it was when the book to which I have referred was

written, but we do not mean that that is the net income of the nation. The Deputy Premier may be drawing an income of £2,000 a year, as he would draw if he were a judge. He might be employing a chauffeur and a gardener, and be paying £250 a year to each man. He would therefore be paying out £500 a year in connection with those two employees. It could not be said that that £500 a year must be added to the gross income enjoyed by the Deputy Premier, because actually it would be coming out of his income.

It may be that the proposals which have been enunciated are not watertight. I do not wish to discourage anyone who will give attention to such things. Much rather would I wish to encourage people to advance concrete proposals and to show how they could be carried out. No doubt the proposals I have brought forward will meet with opposition at the hands of certain taxpayers. My idea is that the Government should use its departmental officials to create something akin to a war inventions board. Anyone who had genuinely bright ideas could submit them to those officials, who would have to be chosen for their competence to deal with such questions. Thus we should avoid the difficulty of numbers of persons spending night after night studying ideas only to have their hearts broken because the ideas were found to be impracticable. Parliament would, upon receipt of reports from the officials concerned, be brought into line with people outside who wanted certain things done. Anything that was found to be good could be returned to the movement or transmitted to the Federal sphere. I want to know where we stand in Western Australia concerning reconstruction compared with where the Commonwealth stands. Are we both doing the same sort of work together or doing it haphazardly?

If all these things were left to the Commonwealth Government, no doubt they would be attended to. Those of us, however, who support State Parliaments and local government must in turn support the idea that the State Parliament should be the one to handle reconstruction. It was for that reason I was so keen to have passed in a previous session a motion providing for the examination of a number of public works. I hope that matter has been considered and that we shall hear something of the subject during this

session. Even if such works are put in hand and there is no real worry about unemployment for some time after the war, there will still be need for somebody at some time to come forward with a concrete proposal of pounds, shillings and pence to provide for the fulfilment of the promises made by all the nation-builders who have made speeches over the air and contributions to the Press.

I want to stress that I do not identify the National Party with my remarks, or with these or any other proposals. I merely ask that as a State we should lend a helping hand to any person who is prepared to assist in the reconstruction that must take place after the war. I stand by my own proposal which I put forward years ago in this House and which appears in the Nationalist paper. If we are sincere in our desire to handle the economic problems which exist and which Mr. Thomas in this booklet attempts partly to solve—and his proposal is to be followed by other schemes submitted by the same group of people—we will do as the "Daily Mail" did in London to establish the miracle of flying, and as the Commonwealth Government did when it sought to bring the Federal capital into being, namely, offer a substantial sum of money for suggestions. I have suggested that £100,000 should be awarded to any person who can produce an answer to the economic quiz which the statesmen of the world bandy around, and who can solve the problems of overseas trade and local production. Mr. Thomas attempts to solve the difficulty by taking income from the big man and giving it to the small man so that the latter may spend more.

The Minister for Labour: Do I understand that you are offering this £100,000?

Mr. NORTH: I think I would be safe in doing so, because under my proposal the money would not be paid until the scheme was found to be workable; until it had been passed by bankers and other people. The conditions are simple. Advertisements would be published calling for suggestions as to how to give effect to the Atlantic Charter and Mr. Roosevelt's Four Freedoms. What is the problem Mr. Thomas has to solve? It is this: A factory is built in Subiaco to manufacture machinery. More workers are employed and machines are to be sold from that factory similar to machines which previously came from the outside world. Mr.

Cordell Hull wants those machines brought into this country and would knock down the tariff. The problem is simply understood by those who have studied it. If machines are introduced from abroad and the tariff wall is knocked down, 2,000,000 people in Australia will be out of work. If machines are not brought into this country, the tariff will remain and wars will continue.

That is the problem that has to be solved. Who can solve it? Some people say that the use of national credit is the solution. Others say that is a fallacy and that it would lead to inflation. They do not, however, say what should be done, apart from making the nice general remarks that I have quoted to the effect that consumption should be correlated with production. We can all say that. What should be done is to offer a helping hand to any person who suggests a solution. If I had any power, I would invite members of the public not occupied in other duties to consider these problems and seek a solution, and if I were in a higher position I would certainly offer £100,000 to any person who could produce a method by which Mr. Cordell Hull's plans and the Atlantic Charter could be given effect to without their conflicting with Australia's local and national manufacturing ideals.

The Minister for Mines: Whom would you appoint as judge to see whether such a scheme was all right?

Mr. NORTH: There would have to be a committee of bankers, statesmen and other people—say about 20—who would have to pass these proposals before they were adopted.

The Minister for Works: Would you brief counsel to argue the points at issue?

Mr. Hughes: If that were done, the £100,000 would soon be gone!

Mr. NORTH: I am only one humble citizen. I am sure that if a few citizens got together on this matter they could draw up what was wanted and put the Atlantic Charter into a blue print. No man in the civil service could do this. Men capable of working out a scheme are those who go in for big deals, and whose names are never revealed: men such as those who are spoken of in the Left books, who have a knowledge of this kind of thing. Such men as these must be drawn into the scheme. They must be offered big money and they will prepare

a blue print covering the solution of our problems.

Let it be understood that I am not advocating Mr. Thomas's proposals, but I am pointing out that effect cannot be given to the platitudes so constantly expressed unless we employ the best brains in the world to consider the matter, and pay them. Such men are not in the Governments nor in the civil services, as we discovered during the last war. As a small step towards attempting to solve these great questions, it would be a very nice gesture on the part of this House to urge that Mr. Thomas's proposals and others that might follow should be tested by our experts under the control of Parliament. Treasury officials could read this book in a couple of hours, and probably in a few minutes put their fingers on any weaknesses that might exist in the proposals. If the proposals are absolutely sound, the House could hand them over to the Reconstruction Committee. If we ignore suggestions like those of Mr. Thomas, I am sure we shall do a bad service to enthusiasts in Western Australia.

Question put and passed.

MOTION—WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT.

To Disallow Fees Regulation.

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [3.38]: I move—

That Regulation 20 made under the Workers' Compensation Act, 1912-1941, as published in the "Government Gazette" on the 5th day of June, 1942, and laid upon the Table of the House on the 4th day of August, 1942, be and the same is hereby disallowed.

This regulation has reference to the fees to be paid to the Medical Register Committee appointed under the amendment to the Workers' Compensation Act, which was passed last year. Members will recall that in pursuance of the Government's view that the dealings by medical practitioners with workers' compensation cases should be open to review by a committee to be appointed, provision was made in the Act for the appointment of a committee consisting of a judge or resident magistrate as chairman, two medical practitioners as members, and two other members to be appointed by the Governor. Those persons have been appointed, and the Minister has supplied their names. The chairman is Mr. Justice Wolff. The two medical members are Drs. Frank L.

Gill and M. Kasner Moss, and the two other members are Messrs. Wilfred L. Carter, and Geoffrey L. Keating. Everybody knows Mr. Justice Wolff and the high position he occupies in the judiciary of this State. Most of us are acquainted with the two medical practitioners who hold positions of some importance in the medical world of this State. I believe that Mr. Wilfred Carter is the manager of an insurance company, and Mr. Geoffrey L. Keating is a Trades Hall official. I have no objection to the members of the committee. My objection is to the fees proposed to be paid for the services to be rendered by them as such members. Regulation 20 provides—

The fees and expenses shall be as follows:—

Chairman—£7 7s. per meeting or any adjournment thereof.

Members—£5 5s. per meeting or any adjournment thereof.

Registrar—£100 per annum.

That is the regulation which I seek to disallow. At the outset I wish to state that I have no objection to the fee of £100 per annum suggested for the registrar. In dealing with the amount set down for the chairman, Mr. Justice Wolff, I recognise that his normal remuneration as a judge of the Supreme Court is probably at or about the figure mentioned there if calculated on a daily basis, but this is not calculated on a daily basis. The regulation provides that the payment shall be £7 7s. per meeting or any adjournment thereof, and it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that a meeting might last an hour and be adjourned to the following day when it may last only ten minutes, in which case an hour and ten minutes makes the learned judge eligible for an amount of £14 14s. I do not think that was the intention, but the regulation has been drawn in such a way as to convey something not intended. If it was a question of £7 7s. per day my objection to that part of the regulation would not be so great as it is.

Mr. Hughes: Why should a public servant in receipt of £2,000 a year get paid for extra work?

Mr. Doney: That is all in pursuance of the "austerity campaign," I suppose!

Mr. WATTS: It appears to be the practice for payment of that kind to be made, and I am prepared to assume that the work contemplated in the Medical Register Committee proposal would be done in what is

commonly known as the spare time of the member in question. I am also prepared to assume that these meetings would take place after the hours in which he ordinarily does his work and, if it had been calculated on an hourly basis and some reasonable fee fixed I would not have made such a big objection. But as it is worded, I think the House will agree that it should be re-drafted and re-gazetted.

The regulation says "per meeting or any adjournment thereof." Let us assume that the medical practitioner's rate is reasonable. Then, why should the lay members receive the same remuneration? If it is right for the medical practitioners to receive an amount calculated in that manner, there are strong grounds for suggesting that those members of the committee without any particular professional qualifications, and who do not run the risk as doctors may do of losing patients when engaged on this business, should not receive the same remuneration as a medical practitioner. It seems to me that the whole of this regulation has been framed without proper consideration of the circumstances of the case. I do not think this House will allow it to remain and be enforced as it is at present. I believe the Act itself provides that the total cost of this Medical Register Committee will be calculated annually and be divided up amongst the various insurance companies, including the State Insurance Office, that are engaged on workers' compensation business; and it has been suggested to me, because of that, that it does not much matter what the fee is because when it is divided up amongst 40 or 50 companies it will be a very small amount per company per annum.

That may be a nice point of view, but if a regulation of this sort is to stand it will establish an extraordinary precedent, and I propose to compare the fees with those paid to members of other boards, many of which comprise professional men of one kind or another. I will refer to a return furnished in another place last year by the Chief Secretary. It deals with 77 boards in all, but I propose to refer to only three. The first is the Medical Board of Western Australia which acts under the Medical Act and which controls, generally speaking, the medical profession in this State in all its avenues, and not only in regard to workers' compensation. According to the return the members of this board are paid £1 1s. per member

per meeting from the board's own revenue. That is a very different thing from what is proposed here—£7 7s. and £5 5s. per meeting or any adjournment thereof.

The next board to which I refer is the Dental Board of Western Australia. Its members come almost within the category of medical practitioners these days. That board has seven members and their remuneration is nil. The next is the Pharmaceutical Board, which is composed of chemists, and again they occupy a somewhat similar position to the members of the other boards. They have seven members on this board and their remuneration is nil. Taken by and large I submit the motion to the House and believe that I have presented a case which shows that there is need for this regulation to be again taken in hand and re-drafted and re-gazetted in some more acceptable form.

I conclude by saying that I have not the slightest personal animus against any member of the committee. Mr. Justice Wolff and I were friends many years ago. I look back with pleasant recollections to the days when he and I were article clerks together. Two of the other members I do not know at all, but even if I did I would still say there is no personal reflection on them. My opinion is simply that this regulation should be referred back whence it came, to be re-drafted more in keeping with our ideas of what payments should be made for services rendered by persons in the positions occupied by these gentlemen.

On motion by the Minister for Labour, debate adjourned.

MOTION—PUBLIC TRUSTEE ACT.

To Disallow Charges Regulation.

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [3.47]: I move—

That Regulation 6 made under the Public Trustee Act, 1941, as published in the "Government Gazette" on the 26th day of June, 1942, and laid upon the Table of the House on the 4th day of August, 1942, be and the same is hereby disallowed.

This regulation has been made under the Public Trustee Act and I am, unfortunately, obliged to move to disallow the whole of it. Regulation 6 deals with the commissions and remunerations which shall be chargeable by the Public Trustee for services rendered by him. It contains a number of paragraphs running from (a) to (h) I have no objection to the greater number of the provisions,

but as I have said, I am obliged to move to disallow the whole of the regulation. The two parts of it to which I take exception and ask the House to agree with me, are paragraphs (b) and (f). Paragraph (b) states—

Rents or other income collected by agents and on which an agent's commission is charged shall, at the discretion of the Public Trustee, be charged at a rate of commission not exceeding two and one-half per centum.

Paragraph (f) of the regulation reads—

The Public Trustee shall take and retain a commission of one per centum on all moneys received for investment under the provisions of Section 37 (1), (2), and (3) of the Act.

With regard to paragraph (b), which provides that it shall be at the discretion of the Public Trustee to collect commission to the extent of two and a half per cent. on rents or other income collected by an agent and on which commission has already been charged, I think, first of all, that the charging of such commission should not be at the discretion of the Public Trustee. It should either be fixed by regulation at a specified fee and charged in every instance, or should not be chargeable at all. It does not seem right that the Public Trustee should in any specific case be able to make up his mind whether he should charge commission on an amount collected on which commission had already been paid to an agent or some other collector or, on the contrary, whether he would not collect any fee at all. The latter I believe would be the proper course in a case of that description because there would be nothing for the trustee to do, and so I believe this provision should be taken out of the regulation.

It appears to me that if the Public Trustee employs, or continues the employment of an agent for the collection of income in connection with an estate, then the estate itself should be obliged to pay only the required commission to the agent. That is my point of view. It should be sufficient for the estate to pay only the commission that is payable to the agent so employed or kept in employment. In any event, if we are prepared to concede that it is reasonable for the Public Trustee to receive any such commission under the provisions of the Act, it should not be in his discretion to charge or not to charge commission as he might see fit. It should be laid down in the regulation what he should charge, and that commission should be charged on every occasion.

Dealing now with paragraph (f) of the regulation which provides that the Public Trustee shall retain one per cent. commission on all moneys received for investment under the provisions of Section 37, even if my first objection is not regarded as sufficient ground for the rejection of the regulation, I have no hesitation in saying that this portion of the regulation is. Sub-sections (1), (2), and (3) of Section 37 of the Public Trustee Act provide as follows:—

(1) The investment of moneys under the control or subject to any order of the Supreme Court shall be made by the Public Trustee.

(2) All moneys or damages so received or awarded by or to the Public Trustee shall, subject to any specific or general directions of the appropriate court, be held and applied by him in such manner as he thinks fit for the maintenance and education or otherwise for the benefit of the persons entitled thereto.

In Sub-section (3) there is the real bone of contention.

(3) (a) All moneys ordered by a magistrate of a local court to be invested under the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act, 1912-1939, shall be paid to the Public Trustee, and the receipt of the Public Trustee, or of anyone authorised by him in that behalf, shall be a complete discharge to the magistrate and all other persons concerned.

(b) The Public Trustee shall thereupon hold the said moneys for the person or persons entitled thereto.

It will be remembered that when the Bill was before the House for consideration last year, I opposed the inclusion of this particular provision, which sets out that all moneys ordered by a magistrate to be invested under the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act shall be paid to the Public Trustee for investment or disposal otherwise. I stated then, and I still think, that resident magistrates in such cases as have come before them have taken such action as they considered was necessary and have carried out their investment duties satisfactorily, I believe, in all instances. No case has been brought to my notice where the position has been the reverse. I submit it was totally unnecessary for the Act to provide for anyone else to handle this money other than the magistrates themselves. However, the provision was retained in the Bill which thereafter became an Act, and the Government now has in the regulations under the Public Trustee Act a provision that enables the Public Trustee to levy in respect of all cases coming within that category a charge of one per cent. on all moneys received by that official for investment.

I did not desire the Public Trustee to have that authority; but now he has it, so far as I am concerned I do not intend to agree to a fee of one per cent. being chargeable on an amount paid as compensation to dependants of a deceased worker. For my part I desire to see that the money is retained for that purpose and the Public Trustee should do, as magistrates and others have done in the past, the best in the interests of the people entitled to the money. I hope to see that they are not deprived of one shilling, let alone one per cent., of the money to which they are entitled. In the circumstances, if members do not choose to take exception to the regulation on the ground of the first objection I raise regarding the extra amount of commission payable, they should agree to disallow the regulation in order to remove from it the provision that will permit the Public Trustee to charge commission on moneys handed to him for investment on behalf of those to whom compensation has been awarded. For those reasons I ask the House to disallow the regulation.

On motion by the Minister for Justice, debate adjourned.

MOTION—GOVERNMENT STOCK SALEYARDS ACT.

To Disallow Yarding Regulations.

MR. SEWARD (Pingelly) [4.55]: I move—

That regulations under the Government Stock Saleyards Act, 1941, gazetted in the "Government Gazette" of the 10th July, 1942, and laid on the Table of the House on the 5th August, 1942, be and are hereby disallowed.

Last session the House passed the Government Stock Saleyards Act which, as the Minister explained in his second reading speech, was introduced for the purpose of obtaining proper control over saleyards. Formerly the position had not been sufficiently clear, with the result that legislation was introduced so that proper authority would be vested in someone to exercise the required supervision and control over stock placed in the yards. The regulations, for the disallowance of which I am now moving, have been introduced consequent upon the passing of that legislation. Presumably, when the regulations were drawn up the Minister had assistance. No doubt he called to his aid various stock brokers who have been using the saleyards for many years and who would be quite competent to furnish him with advice.

On the other hand, I do not know if he also secured the advice of the stock owners. He may have done so, and if he did I would like the Minister to indicate during the course of his reply what stock owners furnished him with that advice. I think all will agree that owners of stock who have sent their cattle and sheep to the saleyards for disposal over a period of many years would be competent to give helpful advice regarding regulations that should be framed to control the handling of stock in the yards. Unfortunately I am compelled to move for the disallowance of the regulations as a whole, although I recognise that many of them are quite satisfactory and necessary. I appreciate the fact that it is absolutely essential for regulations to be gazetted dealing with such matters so that stock handled in the yards shall be under proper supervision, and that the necessary authority shall be exercised in that respect. I have no desire to secure the disallowance of all the regulations, but only of a very few which I will indicate.

One of the objectives of the Bill introduced last year was to separate the abattoirs from the saleyards. Under the saleyards regulations, certain charges are being levied and the income is to be used to make improvements to the yards which, in many instances, are urgently required. I would like some better indication than is given by our recent experience that proper supervision is going to be maintained over any expenditure made on the yards. Quite recently the sleeper flooring of some of the yards was removed and cement was laid down, but whoever was in charge of that work was either horribly incompetent or negligent. Although cement flooring has been put down, it has been laid on a flat base and there is no drainage. It is immaterial whether an owner has sheep in a sleeper-floored yard, a cement-floored yard or an earth-floored yard, if it becomes wet the fleece will be damaged. I should like the Minister to have a thorough investigation made and if my statements, as I have every reason to believe, are true that the floor has not been properly drained, someone should be called to account.

Stockowners recognise the necessity for and justice of paying fees when the money is to be used for improving the yards, but adequate supervision should be exercised to ensure that stockowners get value for their

money. All too frequently sheep are sent to the saleyards, and the first thing that owners hear is that they have secured say 25s. for so many sheep, and for one, two or even half-a-dozen of the same sheep, anything down to 10s. That represents a big loss. Especially does it apply to an owner who is living a long way from Perth and who has probably had to truck his sheep on a Monday afternoon. What would be more natural than that a sheep, after being in a truck from Monday afternoon to Wednesday morning, should lie down in the pen? If it has to lie down on the floor of a pen covered with water, the fleece will be stained and the value of the animal immediately reduced.

The first regulation to which I take exception is No. 7, which reads—

The Minister will not be responsible for any injury or damage to or for the death or escape of any stock brought or delivered to a saleyard.

The whole object of the legislation passed last year, as stated by the Minister in moving the second reading, was to place someone in charge of the yards so that control could be exercised to prevent anyone taking sheep out of the yard unless he had the requisite authority to do so. That is provided for in the regulations. Regulation 3 reads—

Any person placing or causing to be placed stock in a saleyard shall place them in such pens or yards as the officer in charge may direct, and shall in all matters relating to the reception, yarding, removal and delivery of such stock, carry out the directions of the officer in charge in regard thereto.

He has also to give a statement of the number of sheep placed there, and a further regulation prohibits anyone from taking stock out of the yard until he has obtained the authority of the person in charge. In these circumstances, that person should be responsible for the escape of any stock brought in or delivered to the yard, and the regulation, instead of providing that the Minister shall not be responsible, should stipulate that the Minister shall be responsible. Therefore I ask for the disallowance of Regulation 7. When the Minister was speaking last year he indicated the necessity for this responsibility, although he said it was difficult to believe that anything up to half a truckload of sheep had disappeared from the time of the sale to the time for taking delivery of the stock. It is absolutely necessary that responsibility should

be vested in the controlling authority at the yards for the safety of stock during the time they are under his care. This responsibility should extend, not only to preventing escape, but also to the handling of stock. If there is no responsibility on a person handling stock and he pushes them along a race, it is quite possible for injury to be caused to sheep, and immediately that happens the value of the animal decreases. Under another regulation such stock cannot be sold, and the loss in that case falls on the unfortunate owner, who may be hundreds of miles distant in the country. By placing the responsibility on the controller, we shall ensure the exercise of proper care by servants when handling stock on behalf of the owners. Regulation 17 reads—

Yard dues shall be charged only once for any lot or stock resubmitted for sale on the same day by the stock agent responsible for the first offering.

Regulation 18 provides—

When any lots passed in or sold by stock agents are transferred to another stock agent and again submitted for sale on the same day, yard dues shall be charged on both transactions.

I can quite believe that these regulations were brought in at the instigation of the agents. It is conceivable that an owner, having stock for sale, may have it offered by an agent but, believing that the value is not being realised, the owner refuses to sell and has the lot passed in. Subsequently he decides to put it up for sale on the same day through another agent and it is sold. For this reason he is to be charged double yard fees. Surely that is wrong! If the stock is put up again through the agent responsible for the first offering, the owner pays only one yard fee. I cannot help thinking that this regulation was brought in at the instigation of agents with a view to preventing the transfer from one agent to another. Of course a man might buy stock at the beginning of a sale and, finding that the market has gone up, might transfer it and have it sold again the same day. That is a different matter. Two people have sold that stock and two people have used the yard, and so there should be two yard fees. I have no objection to that. But when the ownership does not change and the owner decides to resubmit a lot through another agent at the same sale, it is not fair that he should be asked to pay two yard fees.

That regulation needs to be altered. Regulation 20 provides—

Yard dues shall be levied on all runs given from stock yarded for sale on the day prior to sale day.

Regulation 21 reads—

Yard dues shall be levied on all runs given on the day of sale.

That, I understand, is to cover cases where a consignment of sheep is sent down for sale either on the day before or on the day of the sale, and someone decides to purchase them beforehand. Fees are then charged in accordance with the regulations. I direct attention to the fact that there are fees other than those set out in the regulations dealing with yard fees that may be levied with the approval of the controlling authority of the stockyards. I will deal with them presently. Regulation 25 is another one to which I ask the House to disagree—

Any stock dying in a saleyard or arriving dead shall be taken possession of and treated by the controller.

The part I have read of this regulation is all right, but there is no provision for valuing the animal, whether it be a sheep or anything else, and that is highly necessary. Stock are placed in trucks in remote country districts and sent to Midland Junction for sale. If an animal dies after being put in the saleyards, there should be some provision for an authority to value the animal. A dead sheep, for instance, would have a skin on it, and the value of that skin should be determined so that the interests of the owner may be protected.

Now I come to Regulation 26 —

Any stock arriving in a saleyard in a crippled or disabled condition shall not be offered for sale by auction. Stock agents shall arrange with the officer in charge for the removal of all disabled stock to the abattoirs for immediate slaughter.

Again there is no provision for valuing the animal, and that is a highly important matter. Either the controller of the abattoirs or the stock agent should value animals not fit for submission to sale. The next matter I desire to draw attention to is the fees charged on stock submitted at the yards. Regulation 16 reads—

The following dues and fees shall be paid in respect of all stock yarded for sale, whether sold or not, that is to say—For every ox, bull, cow, heifer, and yearling, 9d.; for every calf under the age of one year, 6d.; for every sheep, lamb or goat, 1½d.; for every pig of the value of £1 or over, 3d.; for every pig

under the value of £1, 1d.; cattle-dipping charge, per head, 6d.; sheep-dipping charge, per head, 3d.; for every horse offered for sale, 1s.; for every vehicle offered for sale, 1s.

Dealing with the figures of stock that went through those saleyards last year, I find that if those fees are charged the authorities will have a revenue of just under £7,000 a year. A total of 34,410 cattle went through the yards. I have no means of ascertaining how many of those cattle were over a year and how many under a year old; but I shall assume, for the purpose of arriving at some conclusion, that three-quarters of the number, or 25,807, would be over one year old. At 9d. per head that would mean £967 1s. 3d. in yard fees. The quarter under a year old, or 8,602, at 6d. per head would represent fees totalling £215 1s. 0d., making a grand total of £1,182 2s. 3d. for the cattle passed through the Midland Junction saleyards last year. As regards sheep, 668,314 at 1½d. each would represent £4,176 19s. 3d. In the case of pigs, there is the same difficulty as with cattle, because I have no means of determining how many were valued at over £1 and how many were below that value. If three-quarters of the number of pigs yarded (140,328) were valued at over £1, it follows that 105,246 at 3d. would represent £1,315 11s. 6d. and the remaining quarter, 35,082, at 1d., £146 3s. 6d.; or a grand total of £6,820 16s. 6d.

As I indicated earlier, there are other charges such as cattle dipping and sheep dipping, which increase the total. In addition, we have Regulation 27—

Stock upon which all market dues and fees have been paid may be yarded free for a period of 24 hours from the time of sale, if the consent of the officer in charge be obtained. If such stock be not despatched from the saleyard at the expiration of such period, the yarding fees to be paid upon such stock for every day or part of a day that such stock remain yarded shall be as follows:—For every head of cattle, 1d.; for every horse, 1d.; for every sheep, ½d.; for every lamb, ½d.; for every pig, ½d.; for every goat, ½d.

On the face of it that regulation may appear all right, but I remind the House, especially as regards stock coming from back areas, that trains do not run very regularly, more particularly stock trains, and that therefore it may be necessary to keep stock in the yards probably until the Friday, or until a train can be obtained to take them away. That places another burden on the stockowner, while bringing in more revenue to the

yards. The main thing to bear in mind, when arriving at the revenue of the yards, is that there should no more revenue derived than is actually required for the purpose for which the yards have been erected. On the figures I have given, it can safely be said that the annual revenue of the Midland Junction yards is over £7,000. Yesterday I asked the Minister a question as to the capital cost of the saleyards at Midland Junction. Unfortunately in his reply the hon. gentleman gave me information as to the cost of saleyards and abattoirs combined, £186,321 12s. 4d. as at the 30th June last. I had asked for the cost of saleyards and abattoirs separately.

The Minister for Lands: You will find that information in yesterday's votes and proceedings.

[Resolved: That motions be continued.]

Mr. SEWARD: Perhaps I did not express my question clearly. On the figures I have just given, it appears that in ten years' time there would be received by the Midland Junction saleyards a total of £70,000, or very nearly the entire cost incurred in respect of the saleyards up to date. That is too severe a drain on present-day stockowners. Those yards will last considerably longer than ten years. Future owners have a right to pay something towards the cost. I had hoped to be able to give members the yard fees collected in other States but the only ones to hand are those from Melbourne, where for every head of cattle including bulls, calves, cows, and bullocks the charge is 6d.. In the case of sheep or lambs the charge is 1d. The present charges are altogether too high. For some years now stockowners have been asking through their organisations for a reduction of those charges. The charges were fixed not by the Government but by the stock agents. The stockowners had no means of ascertaining whether the charges were equitable. That is the reason why I asked the Minister, and the hon. gentleman agreed, in future to keep the accounts of the saleyards separate from those of the abattoirs. Thus it would be possible to ascertain definitely whether charges are too high or too low. On the figures I have given to the House, I say that undoubtedly they are too high. A few years ago a firm of stock agents that had not previously been operating in this State erected a saleyard in my electorate. On the occa-

sion of their first sale, they charged 1d per head for sheep. I pressed for a reduction and, although the firm held out for some time, eventually it reduced the charge to ½d. We are entitled to ask for a reduction and I appeal to the Minister to give serious consideration to that request, and also to the request to alter the regulation in the way I have indicated.

On motion by the Minister for Lands, debate adjourned.

MOTION—ARMY DISTINCTIONS AND CONTROL

MR. DONEY (Williams - Narrogin)

[4.22]: I move—

Having regard to recent grave changes in near-lying theatres of war this House is of opinion that increased mobility will be secured and the best interests of Australia be served—

- (1) by discontinuing the distinctions in use today in respect of the designations and general treatment of Australian troops belonging to the A.I.F. or the A.M.F.;
- (2) by using the resultant joint body of troops for war service either in or out of Australian territory, thus more satisfactorily and quickly ensuring the successful defence of this country; and
- (3) by reducing the Commonwealth Government's control of the Army to a minimum.

Further, that the Premier immediately acquaint the Prime Minister and the several State Premiers with this decision, at the same time requesting prompt action to effectuate it.

What I desire to do by submitting this motion to members for their consideration is to speed up the preparedness of our Australian troops by giving them, as near as possible, 100 per cent. mobility. The motion will also give members an opportunity to express themselves upon a question of supreme national importance and one that, to my mind, should be considered without further delay. Nobody would, I imagine, for one moment deny that today the essential requirement of our fighting men is that they should be quickly and easily mobilised; but for reasons well known to every member the Commonwealth Government will not permit of this being done, except in a very minor degree. During the past few months, the character of the struggle in which we are engaged has undergone some serious and dramatic changes. These changes have taught us a great deal. They have taught us particularly that troops must be where they should be in the least possible space of time.

Members will agree with me that there are few factors in war more important than that of speed. They will reflect that we used to be taught that in endeavouring to smash the enemy the prime duty of the soldier was to keep his name out of the casualty lists, that is to say, keep himself from being killed or wounded or made prisoner. How can a soldier manage to do that except by being quick? Either individually or in the mass he must be quicker than the enemy, and the soldier in the mass is a phase of the matter we are now considering. By denying to the soldier the quality of mobility, the Commonwealth Government is plainly doing him—and the nation, too, of course—a criminal disservice. As I view the situation, it requires no stretch of imagination at all to foresee history treating these cramping, paralysing ideas of the Commonwealth Government as probably Australia's major war blunder. I assert that no front-line general would show himself at all favourable to this particular idea. The whole business of immobility is preposterous in the extreme. Recently a Gallup Poll was taken upon the special matter I am dealing with in this motion.

The Minister for Works: You would not take those polls seriously?

MR. DONEY: Not entirely so, but many do. We represent these people and a majority appears to be influenced, otherwise I should take but little notice of those polls. In any case, the Press attaches sufficient value to them to give them a fair amount of space, so I am not going too far wrong in drawing attention to them. I point out to members, for what it is worth, that the poll showed a decided majority in favour of the idea I am now expressing.

The Minister for Works: I suppose the voters were all too old to join the Army?

MR. DONEY: That might be so; who knows? In Australia we have the finest fighting material, the finest shock troops, in the world. Members will agree that I am not exaggerating in making that statement. Nearly all the enemy officers who have encountered our men in action hold that opinion, yet we are keeping them back in the way I am suggesting and thus depriving them of their fighting spirit. It is a pity the Prime Minister, Mr. Curtin, and the Minister for the Army, Mr. Forde, have not seen our men in action. Could they do so, they would lose their hesitancy straight away.

To see Australian soldiers springing to the attack is to me a really wonderful sight—a most thrilling and inspiring sight.

The Minister for Mines: Where did you see them? Were you at the front or at the back?

Mr. DONEY: I am quite prepared to debate, at a suitable time and place, who was the nearer, the Minister or I. What about it?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Williams-Narrogin will address the Chair.

Mr. DONEY: I thought it desirable to wait to discuss that matter in private. In respect of our men and their fighting qualities, there is no just creeping and crawling along with occasional nervous rushes forward, but the calculated insistence of trained, strong men to smash through to their objective in the briefest possible time. The attitude of the Commonwealth Government towards the Army has something radically wrong with it. We are constantly crying to the United Kingdom and the United States to send their armies over to help us, at the same time making it very plain indeed that, so far as we are concerned, thousands of our fine fellows will have no chance at all to fight except in the unlikely contingency—as I see it—of an enemy invasion. We would then be forced to fight him on our own soil.

Mr. Cross: How do you know all that?

Mr. DONEY: I do not know all that. Like the hon. member, I know merely what the papers tell me. The hon. member desires always to create the impression that he gets news before any other member does. The Commonwealth's attitude to my mind is an absolutely miserable one to adopt, an unsporting and a cowardly attitude at that. In these circumstances, I cannot see any use whatever in Australia claiming to be flat out for victory. Members will agree that we are not half-way towards being flat out by the manner in which we are moving now. In the Old Country, in Russia, Germany and, for that matter, I suppose Italy also, certainly in Finland and Japan, we see nations that at a moment's notice, can swing their men here, there, or anywhere they are most needed. Why do we not do that? We have had any amount of practice at the game. I cannot understand why it is our Government is so slow at recognising the inevitable. We always seem to wait until the last moment.

The Minister for Works: Our men have been distributed all over the globe.

Mr. DONEY: I am not talking of those who have gone up North and elsewhere, but am restricting my remarks to the A.M.F. What is the psychological effect on men when they are trained month after month and, in many instances, year after year with only a 5 per cent. chance of ever using their training on the enemy? Actually they lose their sting. It cannot have any other effect. Within reason armies need always to be on their toes, fighting, moving forward, doing things! I know from talks with members of the A.M.F. and of the A.I.F., who have recently been transferred, that they become tired of the nature of the training given to them. It is hard training, I admit, but they do the same thing over and over again every day with no likelihood, or at all events small likelihood, of ever coming into contact with the enemy.

Mr. Fox: Well, we had better lift the black-out.

Mr. DONEY: The hon. member is stupid enough—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Williams-Narrogin must not reflect on another member.

Mr. DONEY: Maybe it is deserved when a man deals lightly with a question of supreme national importance such as this. It is plain to me and to every member that if we fritter away our time and opportunities as we are doing, and if in consequence the Axis countries put the whole world in subjection, civilisation will absolutely crash and there will be no more happiness for the people of Australia or for British people anywhere in the world. With so much at stake I cannot understand why we do not use our soldiers, ourselves and our resources to far better advantage than we are doing. The position of the Empire and of all free countries was never so critical as now; perhaps not at this present moment but, as members know, in the ebb and flow of battle the bad patches are constantly recurring. However, if only we were true to ourselves, true to the code we were born to as Britishers; if only we could put into practice once more those qualities that have made us great and will make us still greater: if only we could throw off this lethargy from which we are suffering, I am sure we could again in quick time experience the string of victories to which our cause en-

titles us. In the earlier days of the war our Federal leaders made a pledge to their supporters that they would discountenance the sending of soldiers oversea, and undoubtedly that contributed more than any other factor of which I can think to this dreadful slowing-down process. I fear that that pledge is still a factor of considerable influence right throughout Australia.

The Minister for Mines: What was the Government of the day doing then?

Mr. DONEY: The Minister knows as well as I do and can tell us later. He will have an opportunity to speak. No party or any leader of a party has any right to exact the nation's obedience to party pledges of that type, particularly in the very grave times through which we are passing today. Such peace-time pledges and practices should go into cold storage for the duration of the war. For all I care they could stay there until they froze to death, because it is plain that the new post-war order is likely to be so entirely different from the present system as to require new alignments in all directions, in all spheres of activity—in the social, commercial, governmental, industrial, and monetary spheres. This is the time for new ideas, for short cuts and quick decisions. We need to slash and drive through all the old ideas, pledges, statutes and such-like obstacles. But we are not doing it. I had the opinion when I came to this country that we were an up-to-date people, but it is made to appear to me and to many others that we are a slow-moving people indeed, no longer receptive of new ideas or at any rate not as receptive as in the past. We seem to learn nothing new and to forget nothing old.

The Minister for Mines: You cannot call conscription something new. It is as old as you or I.

Mr. DONEY: What is?

The Minister for Mines: Conscription! That is what you are talking about.

Mr. DONEY: No, I am not! That is not the substance of the motion.

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for Williams-Narrogin must address the Chair.

Mr. DONEY: It shows how unreceptive we are to new ideas when generals, N.C.Os. and soldiers are sent home from the front for the purpose of modernising us. Their efforts, however, do not, indeed are not, permitted to take effect. The G.O.C. for Australia knows everything about his job and nothing at all about politics. He will say

to the O.C. of an A.M.F. unit or a joint A.M.F.-A.I.F. unit, "This unit leaves in an hour for 'X'", which can represent any place at all north of Australia. The O.C. is uncomfortable for the moment and then mentions Mr. Forde's name. Mr. Forde knows nothing whatever about troop dispositions but everything about his party's policy, and he says that the battalion is not to go outside Australia. He might go to the length of saying, "I will let you have, 50, 60 or 70 per cent. of these men who have expressed themselves willing to go oversea, but you cannot have the others"; or he might say, "I cannot let you have any of them now, because it will take a couple of days or weeks to give effect to the change-over." What an amazing position that is! There is the G.O.C. requiring to secure the concurrence of a civilian before he can move troops from one part to another.

I read some three weeks ago in "The West Australian" of the tragic last-minute appeal of Signaller Turner. He was in his "possy" among the boulders of Ruin Ridge. I am unlikely ever to forget his message, and I imagine it must have similarly impressed all members. His message was—"Rock it in! Rock it in!" Just those three words twice repeated in his call back to the guns which did rock it in, but Rommel smothered the ridge and our fellows went down fighting. The battalions concerned were the 32nd, my old battalion the 28th, and I daresay a few others as well. Those three words "Rock it in" I would have printed on every hoarding in Australia if I had my way. If anything can inspire us surely it would be Turner's message. They are fit, on an occasion like this, and through a period such as we are now passing, to be our national slogan. My hope is that those words would serve as a clarion call to a complete and enthusiastic surrender by the Australian people to the claims of the war upon this nation, thus enabling us to fight like blazes and to the last pound note and the last man!

I ask you, Mr. Speaker, and members generally, if we are in truth rocking it in? I cannot see that we are. No doubt we intend to rock it in next week, or next month, or next year, but certainly indeed we are not rocking it in now. If my memory serves me well, about three months ago the Commonwealth Government first talked of separating A.I.F. volunteers from the balance of the men in the Army who would,

of course, be A.M.F. and then re-grouping into fresh battalions. I do not know whether members know exactly how far that arrangement progressed in that desirable direction, but I do not think it went too far. While some men have been transferred the matter, in a large measure, has not yet been finalised. To me, having always the idea of speed in my mind, it is a major disgrace. The situation might quite easily so shape itself overnight as to make it imperative that strong forces be sent to this or that island, or spot to the North of us. It is then too late to talk of separating A.M.F. from A.I.F. and re-grouping them into fresh battalions.

In the national interest the Prime Minister—no matter what Government is in power—should be prepared to jettison without hesitation these old ideas and put all our fighting men on the same basis, and afford them all the same treatment. The Commonwealth Government did not hesitate to break all the laws in regard to uniform taxation, and in other directions, too. So I ask why in the name of commonsense and safety can it not take similar action in the interests of a uniform and unified army? This disinclination to send our fighting men oversea is just the dregs of that stupid and dangerous opinion that gained ground in certain political groups here two or three years ago. They considered that we were strong enough in ourselves to adopt an attitude of isolationism, although the opinion was diluted to this extent that we were not to help others, but others, of course, must come along and help us. There was a time when America held precisely that same isolationist idea and, as a matter of fact, that doctrine found acceptance by pretty well 50 per cent. of the people of that nation. But America in due course, having got a crack on the neck, saw fit to push that idea on one side and today it is just as sensible in the matter of its national duty as is the vast majority of Australians.

The Minister for Mines: The President of that country was sending men to England before they got the crack.

Mr. DONEY: We all know when the President was wise enough to take his present stand. These remarks conclude the case I have to submit in support of my motion. I do not now wish to include paragraph 3 of the motion as printed, but do not quite

know how I stand about omitting it. On looking at the words "to a minimum" it strikes me that they contain nothing specific and have not a great deal of meaning. With your consent, Mr. Speaker, and the concurrence of the House, I would like to excise paragraph 3 from the motion.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member should have given notice of his wish to amend.

Mr. DONEY: In that case I will have to include it in the motion, and maybe one of my friends will take the opportunity at the next sitting of the House to move as an amendment its excision.

On motion by the Minister for Mines, debate adjourned.

MOTION—DAIRY INDUSTRY ACT.

To Disallow Cream-Processing Regulation.

MR. DONEY (Williams - Narraggin) [4.49]: I move—

That new Regulation 39A, made under the Dairy Industry Act, 1922-1939, as published in the "Government Gazette" on the 5th June, 1942, and laid upon the Table of the House on the 4th August, 1942, be and is hereby disallowed.

I desire that this regulation stand or fall on its merits. For the better understanding of such remarks as I intend to make, I will read the regulation. It is headed "Percentage of butter from various grades of cream" and is as follows:—

39A. (1) Every factory manager shall so handle and process cream which is received and graded as "choice" quality at his factory that the minimum weight of "choice" butter manufactured therefrom determined by grading not earlier than four days after manufacture, in accordance with Regulation 32B of these regulations, shall be 50 per cent. of the weight of butter-fat contained in such cream.

(2) Every factory manager shall so handle and process the cream which is received and graded as "first grade" at his factory that the minimum weight of "first grade" butter manufactured therefrom determined by grading not earlier than four days after manufacture, in accordance with Regulation 32B of these regulations, shall be 80 per cent. of the weight of the butter-fat contained in such cream.

It must not be taken for granted that because I move to disallow the regulations, I criticise the spirit in which they have been drawn, or that I consider the Department of Agriculture has acted against the interests of butter-producers. In fact, the position is quite to the contrary, but it must be recognised that the Department of Agriculture is just as liable as is any other department to fall into error. With regard to

the manufacture of butter, I have three aims in view. First of all, we must improve, and keep on improving, the quality of Western Australian cream and butter so as to ensure our success in the export markets. Secondly, we must retain the virility and growth of rural factories and, thirdly, the best possible price must be paid to the producers. In the circumstances, any move either by way of the promulgation of regulations, or by other means that appear liable unfavourably to affect one or other of those three requisites, must be subjected to the closest scrutiny.

In 1937, regulations tabled in this House provided for 30 per cent. choice butter from choice cream, but contained no reference whatever to the time that must elapse between the making of the butter and the time for grading. There was absolutely no attempt, so far as I have been able to ascertain, to enforce those rather mild and generally quite acceptable regulations. To all intents and purposes, they were, and have been ever since, a dead letter, and might just as well never have been promulgated. I do not think I misunderstand the intentions of the department in not enforcing those regulations. Experience has taught the authorities that it is far wiser to teach producers by persuasion and advice than by the enforcement of punitive measures, such as those contained in the regulations that are under discussion. Whether that be so or not, to commence now with the enforcement of regulations that are harsher than those the department never bothered about previously is entirely illogical.

In place of the rather mild requirements that formerly obtained, the new regulations set out that grading should take place within four days of manufacture, that the 30 per cent. choice cream shall be increased to 50 per cent. and the amount of first-grade butter is now to be 90 per cent. Even those figures could have been accepted if it had been possible for the Minister for Agriculture to demonstrate to the House that the quality of the butter would thereby be improved, that the new regulations would not burden factories with such additional costs as would inevitably lessen the return the factories could obtain for the producers and, of course, would not increase the amount to be paid by the consumers. Had the Minister been in his seat at the moment, I would have questioned him as to whether the new

regulations were likely to have any such effect and whether the alterations could be made without decreasing the amounts to be paid to the producers. I think the new regulations must inevitably add to costs. An increase in costs will be inevitable if we are to determine precisely the percentage of choice, first-grade and second-grade separately. If that is to be done, it will be necessary separately to process those three grades. We cannot get away from that fact.

I understand it is the custom of factories today, apart from the two largest factories, to put choice and first-grade butter-fat into one set of vats or containers. The two exceptions are the Bunbury and Spearwood factories. Even those factories, for aught I know to the contrary, may process separately except, of course, in the flush winter months. To force all factories to grade separately is very substantially to increase costs. I am given to understand by those who know a good deal more about the subject that I do that the increased cost would be not less than 1d. a pound, and probably it would be more than that. Obviously, there would be additional work involving extra labour, vats and containers, and possibly additional machinery. As members are aware, extra machinery and labour are particularly difficult to secure in these times; in fact, machinery is impossible to obtain.

The Denmark factory on a maximum output processes not more than 4.4/5th tons of choice cream per week. The Albany factory does not process more than 2.2/5th tons, while the Narrogin factory processes less than two tons. I do not wish a wrong impression to be gained from the statement that the Narrogin factory processes such a small quantity of choice cream. That position arises to a large degree from the fact that the Narrogin factory draws its cream from the drier feeding areas of the wheatbelt and over long distances. Often the supplies are railed under swelteringly hot conditions that other factories do not have to contend with. Consequently, the initial costs of that factory are somewhat higher than those borne by other concerns. It must be remembered that the Narrogin factory is a powerful factor in maintaining competition against its more strongly entrenched rivals to the west and north. I stress the point that if we do away with competition, going so far as to cripple

the smaller factories, the larger concerns as a consequence will have the field to themselves. In those circumstances, they will not continue to pay anything like the prices they are paying today with, of course, disastrous results to the producers. Members know this is always the inevitable result of the crushing of the smaller by the greater.

Meanwhile it needs to be admitted that when producers sell cream for the best price obtainable, though this is complained of by certain people, it is an ordinary and proper business practice at which no one should grumble. All the same the long view must be taken, and this view is that the more eastern factories—that is, those out towards the wheatbelt—are essential to the ordered progress of the industry and to the maintenance of competitive prices to producers. I have pointed out that while the larger quantities of choice cream would, on a commercial basis, justify separate processing, smaller quantities of one ton to six or seven tons certainly would not, so I suggest that the regulation be reconstructed and that separate processing be not insisted upon until the quantity of choice cream to be processed is, say, eight, nine or ten tons or thereabouts. I think that is quite a fair suggestion and, if amendments were made along those lines, I have no doubt the regulation would be acceptable throughout the State.

I have referred to the need for improving the quality of butter. I hope it will not be taken for granted that the new regulations will have that effect. I do not think they will. I see a possibility of factories, when faced with the need of maintaining 50 per cent. choice and 90 per cent. first-grade, reflecting that their competitive instincts in the past have all too often led them to pay choice and first-grade prices when really they should not have done so, and so the new regulations would lead to less choice and first-grade cream being delivered in future. If that happens members will appreciate that the effect upon the income of cream suppliers will not be very pleasant.

On motion by the Minister for the North-West, debate adjourned.

MOTION—RUBBER.

Economy in Use.

MR. CROSS (Canning) [5.3]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House, in view of the serious shortage of rubber supplies, to-

gether with the possibility of further restrictions for civilian requirements, immediate intensive action be taken so as to obtain the most effective use from used tyres in the interests of the State and in order to further assist in the war effort.

Rubber is a vital war material and it is one of the vital requirements for road transport. On the 16th April last I asked a series of questions regarding the collection of scrap rubber. I questioned the Minister for Industrial Development as follows:—

1, Is he aware that in the last war (1914-18) thousands of tons of secondhand rubber were exported to Japan? 2, Is it a fact that, due to the loss of Malaya, shortage of rubber supplies are likely to become acute? 3, Does he know that very considerable quantities of old rubber exist in this State? 4, If so, what steps are being taken to collect and re-treat that vital requirement?

The Minister gave the following answers:—

1, No. 2, Yes. 3, It is known that a fair amount of such rubber exists. 4, The Commonwealth Department of Supply and Development has arranged to undertake the collection and treatment of scrap rubber throughout the Commonwealth.

I do not know exactly what quantity of scrap rubber exists in this State, and neither does anyone else. I do not know what quantity of raw rubber is in existence, but I do know that the democratic powers have lost practically the whole of the sources of their supplies with the exception of Russia, which can and does produce enough for its own requirements. Immediately the Japanese moved into Indo-China, the Government of the United States of America appointed a board to import as much rubber as possible, and before the fall of Singapore there had been landed in the United States 700,000 tons of raw rubber. That is not a great quantity for the United States because, before the war, it was using 630,000 tons of raw rubber a year.

Since I asked those questions, it is true that in this State there has been what I may term a lackadaisical effort to collect supplies of used rubber. Do members realise the gravity of the position we are likely to reach in the matter of civilian and possibly military requirements unless there is a speeded-up effort in this direction? I have been making a few inquiries and keeping a sharp eye on what has been happening to the rubber supplies collected in this State. I am quite satisfied that the present activities are not likely to result in the best interests of the State. Appeals have been made to people

to send rubber to Perth. Not long ago the Kalgoorlie district alone forwarded some 7,000 or 8,000 secondhand tyres to Perth. One would naturally think that, when so large a number of tyres was sent, every one of them would have been closely examined by an expert to ascertain whether there was any possibility of getting further life out of them by repairing or recapping them. Not very good facilities exist in the country districts for repairing the canvas or recapping tyres. Owners in the bush, when they stake a tyre, making a hole as big as the fist, frequently discard it and fit a new one. At present the old tyre must be handed in, and some of those tyres have been sent to Perth.

As regards the 7,000 or 8,000 tyres received from Kalgoorlie, the intention is to send them to the Eastern States as scrap for use as secondhand rubber. When the tyres reached Perth they were looked over by some people who are not experts either in tyres or rubber, and they put aside a number of the tyres which they considered should be further examined with a view to having them repaired and probably resold to the public. They had some of the tyres examined by an expert. Then a man who knew something about rubber tyres visited the dump and asked those present to pick out 10 of the worst tyres in the condemned dump. Ten were picked out and this man had a look at them, with the result that he got two good tyres from those 10. I had intended to have these two tyres here today, but they will be available tomorrow for members to inspect. They are fairly big truck tyres. Such tyres are scarce today in the metropolitan area. They cost when new £17 each. They require about 10 lbs. of rubber to repair, but when recapped they are capable of giving 75 per cent. of their past service. It appears to me that most lackadaisical methods are adopted in this matter. One would not think that people could be so foolish as to send these tyres to the Eastern States if they can be of use here. Upon reaching eastern Australia they will be repaired there, but will not be sent back to Western Australia.

In America the tyre position is so serious that special legislation has been passed to deal with it. I shall not read that legislation to this House, but in America it was found that about 50 of the companies operating in new tyres were doing their best to squelch the retreading industry and force

new tyres on the public wherever possible, besides discouraging the recapping of tyres. It is true that tyres from our country districts have been sent not only to the salvage depot at Claremont but also to the four firms operating in Perth. The tyre position in this State is so serious that every tyre collected should be examined by an expert. Moreover, there should be better methods of collection. One can go almost anywhere in the State and collect motor tyres. A man recently said to me, "I could go to Mukinbudin alone and collect a truckload of tyres. They are lying around everywhere." Numbers of these tyres, by recapping with a small quantity of rubber, will save large quantities of rubber. Experts tell me that by recapping the average tyre, at least 7 lbs. of rubber and 1 lb. of cotton and $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of steel can be saved. The 600 by 16 tyre, which is often used on motor trucks, is highly difficult to obtain here, even if one has a No. 3 priority. There should be plenty of secondhand canvas tyres in Perth pretty nearly as good as when new; but the small quantity of new rubber is doled out with such reluctance that it is indeed difficult to get even the rubber required to repair such tyres.

All secondhand tyres collected should be sent to a central dump, and there examined by an expert. The matter should be controlled by either the State Government or the Federal Government—I care not which—and if a tyre is found to be capable of being recapped, then the local recapping firms, of whom there are six, could do the work. Under those conditions anyone requiring a new tyre could be supplied in the order of priority. Retreaded tyres should be obtainable for about half the cost of new tyres. On those terms whatever Government undertook the business would be able to make a success of it. The military authorities have tyre experts who know all there is to be known about rubber and retreading, and the processes of saving motor tyres. There is, for instance, Ron Smythe, whom I do not know, but who is reputed to be one of the most capable experts in Western Australia in the retreading business. I think he is employed in the ordnance stores at Midland Junction. There is another expert named Kelly, whom, again, I do not know. If the military authorities want to use those two men as tyre experts, they should be employed in that capacity. There is also an

expert named Walter Knight, of the Dunlop Rubber Company, with whom, once more, I am not personally acquainted.

The present position, when vital supplies cannot be replenished, constitutes a public scandal. I fear that within the next 18 months or two years—and the war will last more than two years—we shall be unable to procure any tyres at all. Possibly tyres will have to be removed from private cars to be used for military purposes. Appeals were made to the people to collect rubber, but nobody came from the Government to see whether any rubber was collected. I would impress on the Minister the need for intensified action and for the closest supervision. In some cases tyres have been condemned although needing only about $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of new rubber to recondition them—as against 70 or 80 lbs. of rubber needed to make a new tyre. The Minister should take action to prevent further shipment of condemned tyres to the Eastern States, unless each of such tyres has been examined by an expert here from the aspect of recapping. If all the old tyres were collected and sent to a central depot, and a supply of new rubber made available for recapping purposes—I understand about five tons of rubber would be required to recap 7,000 or 8,000 tyres—that would be a more economical way of dealing with this problem.

When I spoke to the Address-in-reply, before I left for the Eastern States, I mentioned that a recapping machine urgently required in this State had been lying on the Melbourne wharf since March last. I am pleased to say that, as the result of bringing the matter under the notice of the responsible authority when I was in Melbourne, the machine is now in Perth and at work. That is some improvement. We have many machines for the purpose available here and we have experts who can undertake this work. By doing it here, we would be retaining our experts in the State. Therefore, members will readily appreciate how desirable it is that we should retain old tyres in the State to be re-treaded and made available for use by our own people. I appeal to country members to support the motion. They know what happens in country districts when a car hits a stump and a tyre is damaged. It cannot be repaired in the bush, so the owner is forced to buy a new one. I trust the Minister will take the necessary steps—even if it means imme-

diately communication with the Commonwealth Government—to make the fullest possible use of discarded tyres in this State.

THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The Government offers no objection to the motion. The member for Canning has placed before the House much valuable information and has, I think, established justification for the strongest possible action to be taken to ensure that used tyres, capable of satisfactory re-treading treatment, shall be retained in the State, treated here and subsequently made available to our motor vehicle users. The hon. member suggested that the efforts so far made in Western Australia to collect used tyres have been lackadaisical. My experience is quite the opposite. At Northam a collection effort was thoroughly well organised and capably carried out, with the result that every piece of used tyre and tube in the town was collected and taken to the central depot. This Australia-wide collection of used rubber has been put in hand by the Commonwealth Government and is under the direction of the Minister for Supply and Development (Mr. Beasley). Every member is aware that Mr. Beasley is highly practical and possesses considerable ability and driving force. I therefore feel sure that, under his direction, this plan of collecting used rubber to have it re-treaded or re-processed will be altogether successful and will achieve extremely valuable results.

I can quite imagine that Commonwealth officers in this State, who have the authority to decide whether used rubber shall be sent to the Eastern States for re-treatment or re-processing or whether such action shall be taken in this State, would perhaps be strongly inclined to send it to the Eastern States. That position is being closely watched on behalf of the State, and we will take every step possible to ensure that all tyres capable of being re-treaded shall be re-treaded in the State. We have in the metropolitan area and in some of our country districts rubber re-treatment plants of large capacity, plants which, under expert management, have proved to be most effective in re-conditioning tyres and making them suitable for use a second time on motor vehicles. It is desirable that not only should such local plants be employed for that purpose, but also necessary that the tyres, when re-conditioned, shall be made available for

use in this State for the purpose of carrying on our essential industries. The Government proposes to support the motion and will take every possible action, should it be carried, to put it into effect.

On motion by Hon. C. G. Latham, debate adjourned.

MOTION—FEDERAL SENATE VACANCY.

As to Reference to Electors—Ruled Out.

MR. SPEAKER: The member for East Perth has on the notice paper a notice of motion with respect to a reference to the electors as a means of filling the Federal Senate vacancy. I point out that the choosing of a person to fill a casual vacancy in the Senate is governed by Section 15 of the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act, 1900, and by the Joint Standing Orders for the election of a Senator, and that such Standing Orders cannot be suspended by this House. Standing Order No. 1, page 93, provides that whenever Parliament has been informed that the place of a Senator has become vacant, a motion shall be made that the President and Speaker do fix a day and place for the choosing of the Senator by both Houses sitting together, such sitting to be not more than 14 days after the date of such motion. For these two reasons, as well as for others, I rule the motion out of order.

House adjourned at 5.29 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 10th September, 1912.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2.15 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION—LIGHTING OF MILITARY VEHICLES.

MR. SEWARD asked the Minister for Mines: 1, On how many occasions since the 11th May was Colonel Hoad informed by

letter of breaches by the Allied Forces of the Lighting of Vehicles Order? 2, What replies to such letters were received from Colonel Hoad.

The MINISTER replied: 1, A military liaison officer representing Colonel Hoad attends each Civil Defence Council meeting and he has been kept verbally informed of breaches. 2, Replies were generally to the effect that the Army was masking vehicles as opportunity offered. Latterly the council was informed that Military Headquarters had approved of a new type of mask. Details were supplied and the liaison officer was advised that in the council's opinion, it would not improve the position, being not in accordance with civilian restrictions.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Wilson, leave of absence for two weeks granted to Hon. W. D. Johnson (Guildford-Midland) on the ground of ill-health.

BILL—FEEDING STUFFS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 8th September.

MR. BOYLE (Avon) [2.21]: The Bill provides for a much-needed extension of powers for the policing of the Act, which was originally passed in 1928. At present, as the Minister explained, there is a limitation of powers when proceedings are taken in the court, and the Government seeks to amend this state of affairs by including in the definition of "analyst" an official attached to the staff of the Government Mineralogist, in addition to the analyst attached to the Department of Agriculture. At present only two analysts are qualified to issue reports and give evidence, and unless the Bill is passed the rules of procedure in court and the policing of the Act will be handicapped.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment and the report adopted.