

thus ruining the destinies of the nation, they now control the expansion and contraction of the nation's credit. That is easily answered. I could be hypocritical and advocate this dreadful basis of currency, but I have come to the conclusion that the only way to stabilise our currency is to stabilise it to an index figure, giving a purchasing power against that figure based upon the value of the commodities. That is the true basis. There is no limit to it. The only limit is the capacity of the people to produce goods and services.

In conclusion, I hope my remarks have not been in any way offensive. I might be more enthusiastic about this matter than are some members, and I am therefore led away by that enthusiasm and say things which they probably would not say. I apologise to anybody whose feelings I may have hurt. I have endeavoured to be truthful, and used facts to substantiate my arguments. There is nothing more tragic to me than the fact that there is not a 100 per cent. war effort today; that every individual in this community is not like a crusader animated and inspired by an ideal worth fighting for and making sacrifices for. Lack of statesmanship prevents a complete 100 per cent. war effort. I hope some changes will be made in our present democratic system before some of our precious and cherished institutions are lost, and that we shall have a guarantee that after this war there will be a real and a true new order.

On motion by Mr. Hill, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.8 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 26th August, 1942.

Address-in-reply, ninth day PAGE
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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 2.15 p.m., and read prayers.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Ninth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. E. M. HEENAN (North-East) [2.22]: In supporting the motion, I desire at the outset to associate myself with the

remarks of other members concerning the late Hon. J. M. Macfarlane. Our former colleague has left behind him a splendid record of public service that should be an inspiration to us all. I sympathise with the various members who have been so seriously ill during recent months and hope that Mr. Thomson, who I understand has had to enter hospital again owing to the unsatisfactory state of his health, will make a speedy and complete recovery so that he may soon be back amongst us. I also associate myself with the congratulations bestowed upon Mr. Cornish and Mr. Gibson and I trust that they will each render a long term of honourable service in this House.

The few brief remarks I propose to make will chiefly concern matters that are vital to the interests of the province I represent. The first I will mention relates to lighting restrictions on the goldfields. A prominent official, whose name I had perhaps better not mention, informed me yesterday that he regarded the existing position on the fields as a farce. About the only part of the black-out regulations applying on the goldfields is that dealing with motor cars. Up to a few weeks ago, about 50 per cent. of motor cars on the goldfields had their headlights dimmed; the drivers of the other 50 per cent. had not bothered about this, and apparently no action was taken against them, with the result that many people are removing the masks and reverting to the use of full lights. The position is indeed bad, because we have bitumenised roads in and around Kalgoorlie, and during recent months there has been a good deal of rain. Although there have not been many accidents, in my opinion that fact is due to good fortune more than to anything else. On the Eastern Goldfields the street lights are on, and the mines are all brightly lit; and I have been informed by a member of the Air Force who flies to Kalgoorlie that the lights are plainly visible from a distance of more than 50 miles. Numbers of prospectors and others come into Kalgoorlie for the weekend, travelling from places like Bardoc and Ora Banda; and it is essential for them to come in. If they are to comply with the law, they should have their lights dimmed; but it is highly dangerous to drive along some of the roads under ordinary conditions, there being always cattle and sheep about, so that one has to be most careful.

It can therefore be imagined what the position is like when people are forced to drive along those roads with dimmed lights. The situation generally is causing much concern, and I do hope the authorities will take immediate action to give relief. As I stated earlier, a man who expresses his opinions most guardedly and who holds a responsible position described the existing state of affairs as nothing but a farce.

While on this subject, I express the hope that during the current session the Traffic Act will be amended so as to give the relief of 25 per cent. in license fees to those owners of motor vehicles who have equipped them with gas-producers. Last year the Act was amended to reduce license fees by 25 per cent.; but I understand that the reduction does not apply to trucks and motor cars equipped with gas-producers. The position is unfair to people who have gone to the expense of obtaining gas-producers, the cost of which varies on the goldfields from £65 to £120. Those persons are not in a position to use their cars and trucks as much as formerly, and therefore it is only fair and reasonable that the Act be amended to extend some consideration to them. Another question causing great concern on the goldfields relates to the supply of vegetables. I understand that shortage of vegetables has been State-wide.

Hon. J. Cornell: Onions can be bought in Norseman, but not in Perth.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I suggest to the Government that the vegetable problem be tackled so as to relieve the existing difficulty. Most of the goldfields supplies come from Denmark and Albany via Merredin, and there is much anxiety now because of a Press announcement that owing to the shortage of coal, the running of trains will be curtailed. I have been reliably informed that if there is any diminution in the supply of vegetables to the goldfields from Denmark and Albany, the position will be most critical. Accordingly I hope that the Government, when contemplating restricting the train service, will be most careful in that regard. In addition to supplies from Denmark and Albany, vegetables are grown locally. On account of the large increase in the goldfields population, due to an internment camp and the Air Force establishment, there has been a heavy demand on local growers. That seems to be a source of supply which could be exploited; but there

again we are up against the trouble of manpower. I understand that there are many good gardeners in the internment camp but the authorities are reluctant to release them. I fully acknowledge that there may be good reasons for that attitude, but it seems to me that a scheme could be evolved whereby some of these men at least could be taken out of the internment camp in the morning and after working all day be returned to the camp in the evening.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Would that suggestion make vegetables any cheaper in Boulder and Kalgoorlie?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I submit that increased production would have that effect.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Has it had that effect in the past?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: The present position has not occurred in the past, because these men have not been released and there is a shortage of labour.

Hon. C. B. Williams: There was plenty of labour in the past.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: A similar position has arisen with regard to firewood. Surely in an area like the goldfields there should not be any wood shortage. Nevertheless, during the past very severe winter an acute shortage has existed; even hospitals have been hard put to it to cope with the situation.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: In the metropolitan area there is not a shortage of firewood; there is no wood here at all.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I suggest now, with summer approaching, the situation will be relieved; but after the experience of this year a similar position should be avoided in future. It should be possible to evolve some scheme whereby supplies could be accumulated now to cover the coming winter. In this connection I desire to pay a tribute to the Liquid Fuel Control Board. But for the board's assistance in making an extra supply of petrol available, the position would have been very severe indeed. However, the board came to the assistance of the people by making petrol available, and that just enabled us to get through.

Another question causing much concern on the goldfields is the matter of price fixing. It is felt that although to date there have been no prosecutions, there have been instances of overcharging. Apparently the position at present is that if a member of the public has a complaint to make he goes

to the store, gets a docket and then sends it on to the authorities. Many people have to trade permanently with the stores and are reluctant to take such a course. There has been a popular agitation for the appointment of an official for the goldfields and the size of the district is such that the full-time employment of such an officer is warranted.

On the question of mining, the position in Kalgoorlie itself is not so bad, because the principal mines seem to be carrying on, though in a restricted way. In the north country, however, the situation is very acute indeed, especially in the Laverton district. In that area, till comparatively recently, three mines were operating: the Lancefield mine, employing up to about 300 men, Cox's Find and the Gladiator mine. We all know what happened to the Lancefield mine. It closed down and the whole community of about 600 people disappeared in the space of a few weeks. A similar situation has arisen at Cox's Find. The mine there has closed down and Cox's Find, as a town, is non-existent. The saddest development of all is that the Gladiator Mine, which is the mainstay of the town of Laverton, is also closing down and the position is such that, if at all possible, the Government should do something about it.

Laverton is at the head of the line and is located in an important pastoral district. There are many prospectors around the town and there is an excellent State battery. Laverton has also one of the best equipped country hospitals in Western Australia. The closing down of the mine will be a tragic blow to that community. It is owned by a company, but in times like this I consider that its maintenance is a concern of the State. We want to prevent people from migrating and even if the Commonwealth Government has to pay compensation to keep the mine in operation, that should be done. Speaking on the Address-in-reply last year I voiced the sentiments of a number of organisations and people on the goldfields when I suggested that the Government should grant annual passes to old-age pensioners and turned-down miners, to enable them to have a trip to the seaside at least once a year.

Hon. C. B. Williams: They will do it now. They have always done it.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I know that in special instances the department concerned

—I think the Premier's Department—has been very generous. I have had only two or three such instances.

Hon. C. B. Williams: I have had hundreds.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: Old-age pensioners who have been sick have been granted passes to travel to Perth, but a general rule should be made. Many of these men are only just living on their 22s. 6d. or 25s. a week. They have been on the goldfields all their lives and have played a prominent part in prospecting the various fields and in working in the mines. They have spent their money liberally and in their old age it is utterly impossible for them to take a trip to the seaside.

Hon. C. B. Williams: You have never had a refusal yet.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: Anyone who has lived on the goldfields realises that a trip to the seaside once a year is not a luxury, but an absolute necessity, and this is one direction in which generosity could be shown to a body of men who have played a very important part in building up the mining industry which has done so much for our State. In spite of the war, the Commonwealth Government has granted pensions to widows and child endowment to mothers and I hope that the State Government will do what I have suggested.

I have confined my remarks to matters that I consider are of vital importance to the goldfields districts and I hope that some notice will be taken of what I have said. I congratulate the Government on its record during the past year and hope that during the strenuous times through which we are passing, it will be able to put up an equally good performance this session.

HON. W. R. HALL (North-East): I shall try to be as brief as possible. First of all I desire to associate myself with the remarks made concerning the late Hon. J. M. Macfarlane and with the motion of condolence forwarded to his relatives. I also extend a welcome to the two new members, Mr. Gibson and Mr. Cornish, and hope that their terms in this Chamber will be lengthy. We all get on very well together and no matter what may be the party to which we belong, we seem to be good friends. I take this opportunity, too, to thank you, Mr. President, and members of this House for nominating me as Deputy Chairman of Committees. I

will try to do my utmost to carry out the work to the best of my ability, and also to uphold the dignity of that particular office.

If I spoke at any great length this afternoon I should engage particularly in a criticism of the military authorities. The desire to refrain from doing so has prevented my rising to address the House until this moment. I feel that the administration of our Military Forces is not what it ought to be. A certain measure of discontent exists amongst the troops. I am of opinion that the men are not getting enough work to do, and that there is insufficient discipline to permit of their upholding the dignity that was so well maintained by their fathers 25 or 30 years ago. I take it there has been more absence without leave in connection with this war in the last two years than arose during the whole period of the last war. The men have not the necessary confidence in their officers. If men are not given a certain amount of work to do they become discontented. Whether they are on active service or not, they must have something to occupy their minds. I travel from Kalgoorlie to Perth every week, and when looking out of the carriage window I have seen upwards of 1,000 men standing idle or lounging against trucks and so forth. That creates a feeling in the troops which is anything but desirable. It is brought about through lack of discipline, and something must be done to overcome that situation.

We have now been at war for three years and yet have a long way to go. Undoubtedly we shall pass through worse experiences before we reach better times. The State Government should request the Commonwealth authorities to look closely into this matter. Far too many of our soldiers have not yet gone through a musketry course. If only one or two men made that statement, one might turn a deaf ear to it, but the same story is told by numbers of men. It seems that many of them have never handled a rifle or a bayonet, and that if they were shown a bullet so rare a sight would it be that they would not know what it was. When those stories are multiplied to such an extent as they are, we must realise there is some truth in them. It is a sad plight to be in. We were told that the manufacture of munitions would soon be in full swing at Welshpool. We know that Mr. Bolton was waiting for two or three years for machinery for his new annexe, and I do not know that

he has got it yet. Those things are a reflection on the administration. We have a certain duty to perform and should see that it is carried out. Pressure should be brought to bear upon those who are responsible for the neglect. Numbers of our men have been oversea, where they did a wonderful job. They have now returned to defend our shores. Time is going on and we may be getting more and still more weapons, but I still doubt whether we have all the weapons we require. We shall certainly have to make a strong move in that direction.

Reference has been made to the bungles that have occurred in the Air Force. We know that the aerodrome at Southern Cross was shut down, and what has occurred in other places in connection with the Army. I now understand it is intended to transfer the Air Force to Kalgoorlie. That is a good idea because the personnel will be far removed from the coast. We shall not have the same trouble that has occurred in the North. Many complain of the complacency that exists today. That is due to people being kept in ignorance of what is going on. They should be told what is happening. We can pick up an Eastern States paper and read of occurrences in Western Australia, but no space has been found for those details in our local newspapers. If people do not realise what they are in for and what is expected of them, it is only natural that they will suffer from complacency. Members of the community have to pay taxes, and are expected to contribute to war loans, but they are told nothing about what is being done. The more they know, the more readily will they meet whatever situation arises.

The dependants of soldiers have recently had an increase in their allotment. I wish particularly to refer to the wives of soldiers, who, I believe, are allowed to earn whatever they can. I know of a widowed mother who has a son in the Forces. Such a widow, whether her son is in the A.I.F. or the A.M.F., has no right to do a hand's turn, otherwise she will lose her allotment. In the case I speak of there is an only son who was apprenticed to a mine in Kalgoorlie before he joined up. His mother was doing a little work prior to her son joining up because on the wages he was getting it was impossible for her to pay the rent of £1 a week. Later on when the son had enlisted she found that she could not live on the

allotment she received. No distinction should be made between the mother who is wholly dependent upon her soldier son, and the wife of a soldier. The sooner the position is clarified the better it will be for all concerned.

I should like to see closer co-operation between the Civil Defence Council and the military authorities. As the goldfields are not looked upon as a vital area, the A.R.P. activities are not subsidised. Notwithstanding that, the Civil Defence Council still wishes to impose lighting restrictions on the towns there as well as upon the motorists. Mr. Heenan has already given a sketch of the position. I profess to be a friend of the motorists who are the heaviest taxed people in the country. They have been put to the expense of having to comply with the blackout regulations. They have had to paint white squares on the backs of their cars, and paint over the front of them, as well as mask their headlights. All this has cost a good deal of money. Thousands of motorists have had to carry out that work. A further regulation provides that the white squares can be taken from the back of cars so long as a three-inch white line is painted around the mudguards. Then if the headlights are masked, the motorist is all right. That has involved owners of cars and motor vehicles in further expense. No doubt the manufacturers of headlight masks are making a good deal of money.

Hon. H. L. Roche: A new mask has now come out.

Hon. W. R. HALL: Whether we are at war or not a few persons seem to be making plenty of money while thousands of others are struggling for an existence. There is no equality of sacrifice so far as some people are concerned. A few individuals want to supertax others who cannot avoid the payment. The motorist unfortunately belongs to the latter class. The lighting restrictions as they apply to motorists should be lifted on the goldfields. The street lights are allowed to be on. One can see the lights of the mines as far as 12 or 15 miles away. Motorists have been ordered to mask their headlights. Some have done this, but others have refrained from doing so. The result is chaos on the road. One man abides by the regulations, but he has to put up with the dazzling lights of some oncoming car. When a man living out-

back has to come into Kalgoorlie for his week-end stores, he is expected to drive with masked headlights. He is living over 400 miles from the coast so that the position is farcical.

Hon. G. W. Miles: It is brought about by the Labour Government, which you support, asking the Commonwealth Government to bring down this regulation under the National Security Act.

Hon. W. R. HALL: I am not concerned about Mr. Miles's interjection. It is our place, if we think the regulations are wrong, to have them put right.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Just so!

Hon. W. R. HALL: Mistakes are being made every day, and an immense amount of money is being wasted daily. We do not require to be a Bachelor of Arts or a scientist to see that money is being wasted by the military authorities, let alone by the Civil Defence Council and other departments. Some regulations should be imposed in the metropolitan area because it is close to the ocean. I am not one-sided in this matter. It is only necessary to visit King's Park at night, either when driving or walking through, to be able to look down upon lights in the city. One can see enough lights there to guide an enemy plane to the spot. The military authorities themselves do not conform to the regulations. Either they or the Civil Defence Council should clarify the position, so that civilians may know what to do and no longer remain at the mercy of both parties. Mr. Heenan referred to the firewood position. I know how the metropolitan area is affected because I live here a good deal of my time. There is plenty of wood at Wanneroo if it could be got hold of. The question bristles with difficulties, which apply equally to the goldfields.

Hon. J. Cornell: More so up there than down here.

Hon. W. R. HALL: Yes, because firewood has been chopped on the goldfields for the last 40 years. Goldfields residents now have to travel 40 miles to get a domestic supply of firewood. I am not concerned with the work being done by internees, but I am concerned about people getting their domestic supplies of firewood. The Liquid Fuel Control Board has treated the goldfields people generously. Only yesterday another 500 tickets, each of which would be equal to about one ton of wood,

were supplied so that people who have vehicles in which to carry wood may go out and procure it. The local authorities have arranged to issue the tickets and keep the necessary check on them. When a couple of men go out together, they are able to get enough wood to last for a considerable time. The position has certainly been difficult this winter and I cannot help wondering what it will be next year.

One point I wish to mention is the Government charge of 3s. to a person who desires to cut firewood for domestic purposes. The applicant has to secure a permit from the Forests Department, and it is the inconvenience of getting the permit, rather than the actual charge, that is the cause of complaint. The applicant also has to go to a particular spot which is indicated and cut the wood there. I consider that the Government should waive the charge of 3s., because it makes a load of wood fairly dear after the applicant has had to pay for a few gallons of petrol to bring it in. Anybody who does not first obtain a permit to cut firewood is liable to be prosecuted, though I do not know of any such proceedings having been taken. So long as people do not cut the green timber, I cannot see why they should not be allowed to cut the dry wood and stumps. The Government should take this matter into consideration and thus enable the goldfields people to secure their supplies of domestic firewood.

Another matter I wish to bring under the notice of the House is that affecting taxis licensed to do certain work in the metropolitan area. Constitutents arriving in Perth by the Kalgoorlie express often find that there is no motor vehicle available to transport them from the railway station to wherever they wish to go. Taxis are not available because the drivers can make more money by accepting private jobs.

Hon. J. Cornell: There are plenty of taxis using Stirling Highway and doing 50 miles an hour.

Hon. W. R. HALL: Yes. Motor transport is in demand at the Perth railway station. I have gone there at 9 p.m. and have seen people with their bags waiting for a taxi to transport them to their destination. The position for members of the travelling public is also difficult at peak periods when trolley-buses and trams are overloaded. A regulation was promulgated that after a certain date in 1940 no more fuel licenses

would be issued for taxi cars. This meant there would be no more taxi licenses, and so the position has become acute. If the Commissioner of Police has not power to issue taxi licenses, because of a Commonwealth regulation, I should like to see some co-operation between the Commonwealth and State authorities to ensure that more taxis or transport vehicles of some kind are provided for the travelling public. People arriving by train often have to walk to their destination. When trains arrive after midnight, there is no hope of getting transport from the railway station.

There is an aspect of the clothes rationing regulations that deserves mentioning. Business houses are offering at less than cost price articles requiring the surrender of 40 coupons, and when 40 coupons have been parted with, only 16 are left in the ration book. Before rationing was introduced thousands of people rushed the business houses to obtain supplies of wearing apparel. Many of the large firms, I take it, then made excessive profits, and now that ration tickets are required, we find that articles that were unprocureable during the three months preceding the introduction of rationing are now available but many coupons, as well as a fair amount of money, are required to secure them. The provision of coupons for clothes for working men and working women should be reviewed. Those who were able to supply their wants prior to rationing are all right, but those who did not have the money to make purchases at that time are experiencing difficulty in clothing themselves. The Rationing Board should ensure that these working people receive sufficient coupons to enable them to clothe themselves. I support the motion.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West): I did not intend to speak on this occasion and would not have done so had not mention been made this afternoon of the position of the railways and the possibility of the existing services having to be curtailed. In the South-West I heard a railway man indulge in a tirade of abuse against the Collic miners. Apparently he had heard there was likely to be a restriction of the train services and thought it his duty, without ascertaining the facts, to abuse the miners. He had no hesitation in placing the Collic miners in the same category as the coalminers of New South Wales. I knew that our min-

ers at Collie are a body of sensible and hard-working men and was fully convinced that the slander in classing them in the same category as fellow-workers in New South Wales was entirely unwarranted.

At Collie there are 40 more men working in the mines today than there were at this time last year, and they are doing an excellent job. They have hewn a larger quantity of coal in the last 12 months than has been hewn in each of the preceding three years, and they are doing it under greater difficulties. The coalmining industry has suffered greatly through the enlistment of the younger men. The percentage of those who have enlisted from Collie is as high as that in any other part of the State. The fact that there are more men engaged in the industry today than there were a year ago is due to the fact that some of the miners beyond military age have returned to the industry and others hardly fit to go into the firing line have also taken employment there. The people of the State should realise that if it is essential for them to put up with a restricted train service, the blame for it should not be levelled at the Collie coalminers. I repeat that the coal position at Collie is better today than it has been for a long time.

The authorities will need to pay a good deal more attention to our key industries if munition works and other like factories are to be carried on. Apparently the idea has been that we shall get along somehow or other. There has never been much in the way of an over-plus of coal produced at Collie, and surely it should be patent to men in charge that if industry is to be expanded every effort should be made to conserve and increase the necessary service. I rose to make it clear that the position at Collie is good, though admittedly it is not good enough for the reason that more trains are being run and there is a greater demand for coal.

Hon. J. Cornell: And less Newcastle coal and firewood.

Hon. W. J. MANN: That is so. One matter mentioned this afternoon is the slow progress being made with war equipment production in this State. It rather reminds me of the line in Longfellow's poem "Retribution"—

Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small.

The mills of our war industry are grinding slowly, Heaven knows! The output is exceedingly small. With other members, I attended a demonstration a few months ago at the Midland Junction Workshops, but I was not much impressed by what I saw. I am perfectly satisfied that the quality of the work was excellent, but so far as I, as a layman, was able to judge, the quantity was not nearly enough. The works did not appear to be staffed to full capacity. We saw an annexe that had then been built for some months, but it was not furnished with 25 per cent. of the necessary machinery, and I understand that condition still prevails. If this State is to pull its weight in the war effort, the people of the Eastern States must see that we are given better opportunities than we are getting at present. The following paragraph in the Speech of His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor caught my eye:—

The time of Ministers is occupied almost exclusively with matters associated with the war . . . The fullest co-operation has been maintained with the Commonwealth Government in order to make the maximum resources of the State available for war purposes.

That is indeed praiseworthy on the part of the Government, but we do not seem to be getting much response from the Eastern States. The Government has, I understand, placed at the disposal of the Commonwealth Government, to assist it in the war effort, the Public Works Department, the Water Supply Department, the Main Roads Department and other instrumentalities. Yet, when we look around, we find that the Commonwealth Government's response has been infinitesimal.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Have not excessive costs in this State something to do with the matter?

Hon. W. J. MANN: We have not had a chance of producing much in order to ascertain what the costs will be.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: There is the competition of the Eastern States. We cannot live alongside them.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I saw in a New South Wales paper—I am sorry I have not got it with me—some contract prices which seemed to me to be outrageously high. There is nothing cheap in the way of war contracts in the Eastern States; there may be odd cases, but in the main they are a myth.

Rural production has been mentioned, particularly vegetables. I am glad to note that the Commonwealth Government has at long last decided to take some active steps to organise rural production and manpower, so that we may obtain the required essential foodstuffs. We have spoken in this Chamber before about manpower in the dairying industry, but the position is as acute as ever it was, and is likely to remain so. If we are to obtain our necessary foodstuffs, we must have a better system than that which has prevailed in the past. The haphazard methods hitherto adopted will not get us very far. We want a properly organised body, assisted by interested people, to control this activity. One way in which help could be given is for the authorities to consult our agricultural societies, particularly in the parts of the State where essential foodstuffs are being produced. The members of those societies have first-hand knowledge and are better able to give a lead than is an expert, or alleged expert, sent to the country to say what shall be done.

Reference has been made to taxation. I shall not moan about taxation; we recognise that we must pay it. No matter what the financial resources of any man are, I believe that by the time this war is over he will have little, if anything, left. The full financial resources of all our people will be required to finance the war. While I do not mind paying taxation, it galls me to see the tremendous waste going on in many directions. I refer particularly to Army transport as we see it in and around the city. I invite members to stand on the Canning-highway any day for a quarter of an hour; they will be astounded to see the numbers of Army vehicles going backwards and forwards along that road.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Have you seen them between Northam and Perth, alongside the railway?

Hon. W. J. MANN: I stood on the road at Bassendean only a couple of days ago, and witnessed exactly the same spectacle. Something is wrong. One observes a vehicle proceeding along the road with only two or three soldiers in it, I have been told—I do not know how true it is—that a man living on the Canning-highway, or in that locality, has taken particular notice of the vehicles. He has observed many of them proceeding in one direction with only two

or three soldiers in each vehicle and coming back again with the same loading in an hour or two. That may be right, but it does not seem to me to be so. It is a happy-go-lucky business; the authorities are using up petrol and rubber, and depreciating the vehicles.

I hope the Government will continue to pay heed to the need for providing fertilisers. If we are to have food, our producers must be supplied with fertilisers. I also hope that the Government will see that the interests of our tobacco producers are safeguarded. In a normal season, from 300 to 400 drums of benzol are required for fumigating tobacco plants. Less than 100 drums are in the State. I do not know what the position is in this respect in the Eastern States, but I trust the Government will ensure that the tobacco-growing section of our community is given an opportunity to produce the forthcoming crop. We know that Western Australian tobacco is higher in grade than is that produced in any other part of the Commonwealth. We also know that Western Australia is one of two States that increased production of tobacco last year; in the other States there was a decrease. I understand that the Agricultural Department has been moving in this direction. I am not complaining; I am merely urging that the producers shall be allowed to carry on, because planting time is very close. Seeding has already been done in a number of places, and it is highly essential that the young tobacco plants shall be safeguarded against mould.

I desire to pay a tribute to the memory of the late Hon. J. M. Macfarlane, whom I knew for upwards of 40 years. He was an excellent type of citizen and a delightful colleague in this House. He will be sorely missed. I am glad that Mr. Baxter is again able to resume his seat in this Chamber, although I regret that our colleague, Mr. Thomson, has had to return to hospital and that Mr. Bolton is still indisposed. I also regret that the Premier has in the last few months suffered so much inconvenience and pain. I trust all these members will be with us again before very long in the best of health. I support the motion.

HON. J. CORNELL (South): Until an hour or so ago, it had not been my intention to speak to this motion, so what I am to say will be more or less extempore. I wish

first to express my profound personal regret, which I am sure is shared by every member of this Chamber, at the disaster which has befallen our Royal House in the death of His Royal Highness the Duke of Kent. If my memory serves me aright, I do not think a Prince of the Royal blood has died on active service since the Black Prince was killed. This unfortunate happening goes to show that in present-day warfare kings and princes are not exempt from the dangers of war. In common with other members, I express my deep regret at the death of our colleague, the late Hon. J. M. Macfarlane. I join with them in the hope that all members of this House and another place who are more or less in dock due to illness or other causes, will soon be restored to a state of health.

Mention has been made during the debate of the extravagance and waste connected with the Armed Forces—particularly the Military Forces. Anyone who knows or has served in any of the Armed Forces can appreciate that waste is inseparable from war, and the nearer they get to the fighting line the more intense does the waste become. We are all wisecracks and can, from an easy chair, tell the people who conduct the show what they should or should not do. Anyone who stops to think for a moment must arrive at the inevitable conclusion that these things will occur in the Armed Forces. What are we going to do to right them? There is an extraordinary amount of extravagant and unnecessary waste going on in a branch of the civil defence with which a member of this House is connected—but the position remains. He has to show that he has the money to spend, and he is doing it. I do not suppose that any complaint of mine would make him deviate from the course he has adopted.

I remember once when he was speaking on the floor of the House, I said, by interjection, that when he was called upon for service, he would take his toll. I refer, of course, to Dr. Hislop. My considered opinion is that an endeavour has been made to place too many men under arms at once. The authorities have not been able to equip them, nor are they likely to be able to do so for a long time to come. In their endeavour to put too many men under arms at once, they have weakened and undermined—and are continuing to do so—the real fibre of our nationhood, and that relates not to

the men under arms, but to the portion of the population that remains behind them. And once those people are weakened and become grumblers, so will their condition be reflected in the men under arms. Members must not run away with the idea that the German Army was beaten in the 1914-18 war; it was not. It was the population behind the Army that was beaten. We have tried to utilise too many men in a very short period, and have attempted to transport them here, there and everywhere until we have arrived at the position that every essential industry in the Commonwealth is languishing for manpower. That is wrong. Ninety per cent. of our ills and shortages at present are attributable to having so many men under arms, with so many of them wasting their time, and to the fact that there are so few men in the field of production.

I heard the Honorary Minister say yesterday that steps were being taken to organise a mobile seasonal labour corps. What is it to be organised with? I spent the weekend at Norseman, and in an endeavour to keep the mines going old-age pensioners are surrendering their pensions and returning to work. Men over 70 years of age are driving engines! This shortage of manpower will do as much towards rendering our war effort futile as probably the efforts of the Japs themselves. The enjoiner I would place upon those holding responsible positions would be to call a halt to the transference of manpower into the Armed Forces and to concentrate their efforts on releasing some already in. A short while ago it was brought under my notice that a high ranking American officer was asked what he thought of Australia's war effort. In reply he said, "Well, I want to know what it means; what it is going to lead to." The questioner thought he was having his leg pulled and repeated the question and this officer replied, "You say it is Australia's boast that it has 750,000 men in the armed and contingent forces, and is going to bring it up to 1,000,000 men or more. That is a mighty bite out of a population of 7,000,000—men, women and children of all ages." He went on to say, "What are you doing to get these men under arms? You are drawing them from essential industries—industries essential to the conduct of the war and to the continuity of your country. It is all very well for the U.S.A. to put 6,000,000 men under arms out of 130,000,000 people." He

said, "What are you creating? You are creating war industries! You are drawing manpower from essential industries and are creating purely war industries. The fundamental difference between your country and mine is that our automobile industry and a dozen other industries can be converted in very little time to war industries to make aeroplanes and other machines. You have not got them here in Australia. You are creating an industry to make war munitions only. When the war is finished of what use will they be?" That is what we are doing in Australia. I expect the manpower situation and the shortage of essential foods will become greater and greater if this policy is continued. If it persists and these difficulties are accentuated it must have its repercussions on the civil population which is behind the Armed Forces.

Another phase that has created a furore, to which aspect attention was drawn by Mr. Craig and other speakers, is the organisation of the vice squad and the spread of venereal diseases. From my place in this House six weeks after the outbreak of war, when speaking on the Contraceptives Bill—if members will take the trouble to read "Hansard," they will see what I said—I pointed out what would happen. I said that I hoped that those in authority would be guided by what the late Dr. Saw had previously said in this House, that one of the tragedies of post-war reconstruction was to have lost, and dropped like a hot potato, the measure of prevention of venereal disease that the Army had instituted in the 1914-18 war. The disease has become most apparent and I am afraid that it will be difficult to cope with. I am also very much afraid that it will not be confined to the metropolitan area. We have masses of men concentrated throughout the whole of this State and in its central portions. Hundreds and thousands of men are spread over our country. My war experience has been that V.D. will not confine itself to one area, but spreads through them all. I want to know what the military authorities are doing in their camps throughout Western Australia. Another phase on which I wish to speak is the excessive drinking now going on. Again I reiterate that that excessive drinking is confined to about 10 per cent. only of the Armed Forces or 10 per cent. of the civilian population. Successive Governments and the present Government and the

party to which it belongs have been the longest in power—are largely to blame for the present situation.

Since the Licensing Act was first introduced, the only major amendment to it was passed in 1918. What has happened has been that instead of amending the law to conform with the changes which have occurred in psychological conditions, the Government altered its application by instructing the police to open hotels in certain parts of the country on Sundays. At some places hotels are opened for two hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon. That should have been done by statute and authorised by Parliament, not by the Government of the day by way of instructions to the Police Department. If our citizens see such things occurring, they can have nothing but contempt for our Parliaments, nor can we expect anything else. I am not a wowsler, or a Pussyfoot Johnson, but I do say that as we respect and administer the law, so will it be respected.

There are another two glaring instances to which I would draw attention. I am not going to talk on the lighting restrictions. I have already had my say in that connection. We have had the absurd position in regard to motor headlights, and what did we find? We found that as soon as Parliament asserted itself, as it had every right to do, the Government rushed to Canberra. So to speak the Government "ran home to mammy" and asked the Commonwealth Government, its "mammy" for the time being, to promulgate regulations with which the State Parliament could not interfere. In such circumstances how can we as members of the State Legislature expect other than bricks to be thrown at us, not only when the unified taxation proposals are mentioned but even when unification is suggested? Take another instance. For over 40 years we have had in Western Australia the necessary machinery for determining the fixation of wages and hours of work. It was the Labour Party's own creation and it has been built up to what has been described as perfection. Notwithstanding that, we recently had the inglorious spectacle of the Arbitration Court being interfered with and we have in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech brief reference to a proposal to amend the Industrial Arbitration Act.

The inglorious spectacle was presented to us of the Arbitration Court, through its

President, stating certain things and then instead of the Government waiting for Parliament to meet so that the Act could be amended if that was deemed necessary, "mammy's apron strings" were again resorted to and the Commonwealth Government obliged by promulgating regulations that enabled the Government to go over the heads of the State Arbitration Court Bench. I do not say there was no justification for an increase in the basic wage due to the rise in the cost of living, but there was certainly no justification whatever for going over the heads of the Arbitration Court Bench in a manner that amounted almost to indecency. When the Arbitration Act was being amended, I heard in this Chamber a suggestion reflecting upon the probity of Mr. President Dwyer. I had an opportunity to defend him, and I again pay my tribute to an old friend of 42 years' standing who, as John Bunyan would have said, has had the guts to stand up to what he regards as his duty. In my opinion the action taken by the State Government was quite wrong.

I remember a former Labour Premier of Western Australia, Hon. P. Collier, saying that the efficacy of arbitration was not so much in the chasing of the ever-increasing cost of living upwards but in the keeping of wages up during a time of depression. I have heard no serious complaints lodged against our Arbitration Court on the score of its not having reduced wages as the index figures suggested could be done. It seems to me, however, that so long as the regulations that the Commonwealth Government has promulgated under the National Security Act remain in force, no decent self-respecting court would endeavour to fix wages or carry out other associated functions. The court would say, "No, we did that at one time, but the task has been taken out of our hands and placed in those of the Premier. Let him do the work." That is a nice state of affairs! Here we have an independent tribunal on which both employers and workers are represented, with as chairman a man possessing qualifications fitting him to be a Supreme Court judge, and yet authority is taken from that independent tribunal and handed over to the Premier. Such a procedure is fundamentally unsound and wrong, and a day of retribution will inevitably dawn.

Next I wish to mention what appears to be a most extraordinary matter. I have it

on what I regard as irrefutable information that for the first time in the history of local statistics drapery is cheaper in Kalgoorlie and Boulder than in Perth and Fremantle. The Statistician has explained that owing to the fall in the cost of house rents on the goldfields, the basic wage there had not risen as it had in the South-West land district and the metropolitan area. Let someone go to the goldfields and tell that to the people. I was in Norseman the other day, and ascertained what has happened there. People who previously lived in shacks into which one would hardly put a nanny-goat, have been able to move into slightly better types of houses, because so many men have been called up and have left the district. It is all very well to say that house-rents have fallen because scores of houses are empty, but let members go and see what types of houses are now empty and what rentals were paid!

There is a welter of other topics about which I could speak. I am sorry Mr. W. R. Hall is not in the Chamber at the moment. He made reference to the actions of men associated with our Armed Forces. He suggested that they were not getting enough work. Unfortunately that is inseparable from the situation in which such men are placed. The worst that can happen to a man under arms is to get killed or badly wounded. The next worst thing that can happen to him is not to have the opportunity to be either killed or badly wounded. That, tersely put, is the position in which our Armed Forces in Australia find themselves today. With the exception of a few airmen and some associated with the Navy, all are kicking their heels and subject to regimentation day by day. They are fed up to the back teeth and do not give a continental what happens. I suppose that state of affairs is largely reflected in the minds of their officers. As for discipline I agree that the old A.I.F. men differed somewhat from those associated with our present Military Forces. Is it fair to compare the men in khaki today with those who were in uniform in 1914-18? I claim that such a comparison would be altogether illogical. We must consider present-day psychology and the outlook of young men today with the position that obtained during the earlier war.

So far as my inquiries and observations have gone, an apt illustration may be obtained in the shock that, at any rate, some

Australian soldiers experienced when they arrived in Blighty during the 1914-18 war, and saw women drinking in London hotel bars. To present-day soldiers that occasions no shock whatever. In those days women went into bars of their own volition, but today they are taken there by the youth of Australia and all the liquor they can consume is poured down their throats. The psychological aspect has completely changed and later-day thought obviously is reflected in a certain degree of laxity in various directions. I naturally agree that if an undisciplined armed force were to meet a disciplined armed force the latter inevitably would prevail. On the other hand, if the soldiers get a job to do they can be entrusted to carry it out. A lot of the bravado and swank would receive a salutary lesson should the men experience the real horrors of war. That experience will knock discipline into them as will nothing else. Until that time arrives, I doubt whether we can hope for much change.

I trust that the present Government, or any other Government that may take office during the war period, if it is concerned with the conservation of the sovereignty of the State, will endeavour to administer the country's affairs, or such of them as may be left untouched by the Commonwealth, wisely and well and that it will be content to abide by the decisions of the State Parliament even though some of the decisions may be such as the Commonwealth Government may consider not to be in the best interests of the prosecution of the war effort. If that position should arise, then let the Commonwealth Government and Commonwealth Parliament effect the necessary changes—without any invitation from the State Government. I stand today as I stood previously on the question of excessive drinking and what arises therefrom. There is only one way of dealing with the position. It is not a question of the hours of trading or whether the soldiers are consuming too much drink. The question centres on what they drink. Let members consider what was done in the Old Country and in France during the 1914-18 war. Let the Government follow suit and decrease the alcoholic strength of liquor consumed by the troops. When the men cease to get a kick out of the liquor, their swagger and bravado will go. Until that is done, we shall always have trouble. We must get down to tin-tacks and deal with the cause of the trouble

that led to recent disgusting scenes. The evil arises not through over-indulgence but through the strength of the liquor. That is what does the damage. Reduce the alcoholic strength, and the problem will be solved!

On motion by Hon. C. F. Baxter, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 3.59 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 26th August, 1942.

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

QUESTIONS (2).

ROAD MAKING.

Soil Cement Process.

Mr. McDONALD asked the Minister for Works: 1, Has the soil cement process, as developed in the United States of America for road making, been tested in this State? 2, In view of claims for speed and cheapness of construction by this method, can he inform the House of the views of his officers as to the suitability of this method for use in this State?

The MINISTER replied: 1, No. 2, Considered unsuitable owing to relatively high cost of construction.

RUBBER, ECONOMY IN USE.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Works: 1, Is everything possible being done by the Government to ensure economies in the use of rubber? 2, Is it realised that adoption of moderation in loading and speed of motor vehicles ensures big savings in rubber and petrol? 3, Is it his intention to take steps to secure the minimising of acceleration and brake work, correct tyre pressure and wheel alignment, also the retreading or capping of tyres prior to canvas destruction, and table regulations relating thereto.

The MINISTER replied: 1, Yes, so far as Government vehicles are concerned. 2, Yes. 3, No, but the motoring public has been continuously advised by experts in re-