

election is postponed to prepare an annual or other electoral list or electoral roll, which ordinarily would have to be prepared if no postponement had been proclaimed.

Clause 5 makes the necessary provision for the holding of elections to fill extraordinary vacancies when they occur during the currency of a proclamation. In such an event it is provided that the last prepared electoral roll of the authority concerned shall be the electoral roll for and shall be used in connection with the election, subject to the proviso that amendments may be made to the roll by adding the names of any persons who it is satisfied are qualified to be electors and by deleting therefrom the names of any persons who it is satisfied have ceased to be qualified.

That is a brief explanation of the Bill, and furthermore the Minister has announced that not only will he wait for 10 per cent. of the ratepayers to ask for an election, but that in the event of any municipality or local authority requiring, by resolution, an election to be held, the request will be granted. In consequence of the Government's promise to submit to Parliament a Bill seeking to give the Governor power to postpone elections, only two municipal councils, so far as the Department is aware, have proceeded with the preparation of the rolls this year, and I understand in those instances that preparation has not been as thorough as in former years. As a matter of fact, the shortage of manpower was the chief reason why these rolls were not proceeded with, particularly in the cases of the Perth and Fremantle City Councils. It is a tremendous job to prepare the annual rolls for the Perth City Council, and that is one of the reasons why the local authorities desired the postponement of the elections. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. J. A. Dinmity, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 1.13 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Wednesday, 14th October, 1942.*

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

### QUESTIONS (8).

#### STATE CIVIL REQUIREMENTS.

##### *As to Essential Foodstuffs.*

Mr. NOLTH asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, In order to preserve 100 per cent. distribution of essential foodstuffs during the war, will he consider pegging the price of milk by obtaining a subsidy from the Commonwealth Government to meet increased producer's costs? 2, To what essential foodstuffs is this principle being applied in Britain? 3, Is the subsidy of £1,500,000 already voted to the dairying industry available for this purpose?

The MINISTER replied: 1, To preserve 100 per cent. distribution of essential foodstuffs there are very wide implications to be considered in connection with many commodities. 2, I have very little advice on this matter. 3, We have no final word as to the method of distribution of the subsidy mentioned.

#### CITRUS FRUITS INDUSTRY.

##### *As to Price.*

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Industrial Development: Required manpower to enable those engaged in the manufacture of lemon and other citrus products having been provided, will the local price

(£9 per ton) be increased to equal or to approximate the price (£13 10s. per ton) payable by manufactories in the Eastern States?

The MINISTER replied: This matter is to be referred to the Assistant Minister for Commerce (Senator Fraser) and the Commonwealth Commissioner for Prices. It is thought that steps being taken to increase the amount of citrus fruit processed locally will have the effect of ensuring a better price to growers.

#### RURAL RELIEF FUND ACT.

##### *As to Repayment of Advances.*

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Is he aware that the Trustees under the Rural Relief Fund Act are seeking payment of outstanding instalments of advances made under the Act? 2, If such repayments are being sought, is he prepared to take action to ensure that claims for repayment will be suspended during the war, or, alternatively, as the money used formed portion of a grant from the Commonwealth to the States, is he prepared to make arrangements for the debts to be written off?

The MINISTER replied: 1, Yes. Section 11 of the Rural Relief Fund Act provides that the advances are to be repaid. Letters are being sent to all farmers who are due to repay instalments asking if payment can be made. 2, No farmer is being pressed to pay; it is left to the individual concerned to advise if he can meet the instalments. In a number of instances applicants have expressed their wish to meet the instalments. The money was granted by the Commonwealth on certain conditions and repayments are being used to assist other farmers or to make further advances to farmers already assisted. Experience has shown that the existence of the Fund has been the means of saving farmers' assets, where through no fault of their own they have been unable to meet creditors' claims and have had to apply for further assistance. Over £6,000 has already been expended from moneys repaid to the Fund. The Commonwealth owing to existing conditions has only been able to make small sums available each year and the Trustees are anxious to obtain repayments to build up a revolving fund and assist in the rehabilitation of the pastoral industry which in the past has had only limited assistance

because of the amounts involved in individual settlements.

#### ELECTRICITY SUPPLY.

##### *As to Economies from Daylight Saving.*

Mr. BOYLE asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Has the renewal of the Commonwealth National Security Act Statutory Rule, known as daylight saving, effected any economies in the output of electricity from the Government Power Station, East Perth? 2, If so, to what extent?

The MINISTER replied: 1, and 2, Whilst the fact that there is one hour more of daylight in the evening under summer-time conditions must lessen the consumption of electricity for lighting purposes, it is impossible to determine the extent of such decrease.

#### RUBBER.

##### *As to Production from Russian Dandelion.*

Mr. KELLY asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Is he fully advised as to the possibility of production of rubber from the cultivation of the Russian dandelion? 2, Have investigations made in other countries shown that the Russian dandelion can be cultivated economically? 3, Would the extraction results obtained elsewhere warrant extensive experiment in the colder districts of this State? 4, Have any seeds been made available for experiment in Western Australia?

The MINISTER replied: 1, 2 and 3, Yes. 4, These have been imported following representations of the Australian Minister in London, have now arrived in Canberra, and are to be available to the States.

#### GRASSHOPPER MENACE.

##### *As to Measures for Combating.*

Mr. KELLY asked the Minister for Agriculture: In view of the seriousness of the grasshopper pest reported as prevalent again this season in the eastern wheatbelt, will he consider the advisability of circularising all road boards likely to be in the position to render assistance in combating the menace, requesting the local authorities to (1) gather authentic records as to the habits of the grasshopper; (2) locate and plot affected areas; (3) determine breeding grounds; (4) co-opt individual farmers for general information?

The MINISTER replied: Yes. It is most unlikely that untrained people will be in a

position to reveal any further information than is already known regarding the habits of the grasshopper. This portion of the problem has been, and is being, studied intensively in this State and elsewhere, and three departmental leaflets have already been published on this subject. However, any views expressed by local individuals are always given careful consideration. Maps are sent every year to the Agricultural Bank for distribution to field officers in order that egg laying areas may be plotted to facilitate future treatment. In practically all districts visited it has been the practice to maintain close contact with reliable local farmers. A number of these men write frequently to the Department reporting the date of hopper emergence and other matters of interest.

#### FARMERS' AND PASTORALISTS' DEBTS.

*As to Proposed Legislation.*

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Lands: Is it his intention this session to introduce legislation to carry into effect the resolution of this House passed last year, asking for legislation for the adjustment of secured debts?

The MINISTER replied: The matter is under consideration and the very wide financial implications are being investigated.

#### WOOL, RAILWAY FREIGHTS.

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Railways: 1, What is the freight on one ton of wool from Katanning to Albany when the wool is to be appraised at the latter place? 2, What is the freight on one ton of wool from Katanning to Fremantle in similar circumstances? 3, If the freight charged for one ton of wool is the same for both journeys, is it intended to ask the Commonwealth Government to pay the difference when the State railways have performed a smaller service and should be entitled to a lesser freight? 4, If so, does he consider that this is a suitable contribution to the Commonwealth war effort?

The MINISTER REPLIED: 1, 37s. 7d. 2, 64s. 6d. 3, On account of the limited facilities for appraisal at Albany, wool from stations north of Broomchill, which would be normally in the Albany zone, is railed to Fremantle by arrangement with the Commonwealth Government and that

Government pays the difference in freight. 4, Answered by No. 3.

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motions by Mr. Wilson, leave of absence for the remainder of the session granted to Mr. Raphael (Victoria Park) and Mr. Styants (Kalgoorlie) on the ground of military service.

On motion by Mr. North, leave of absence for two weeks granted to Mr. McLarty (Murray-Wellington) on the ground of military duties.

#### BILLS (3)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment.
  - 2, Perth Dental Hospital Land.
  - 3, Albany Reserve Allotments.
- Transmitted to the Council.

#### MOTION—WANT OF CONFIDENCE.

*Living Standard, Administration, War Effort, Civil Defence, State Rights—Lapsed.*

MR. HUGHES (East Perth) [2.24]: I move—

That the Government, having—

(1) Failed to provide for the development and population of the State with an adequate standard of living reasonably commensurate with the natural resources and scientific knowledge available in the past and having no plans for that purpose for the future;

(2) Failed to ensure for a large number of the citizens of the State even the basic wage and failed to protect the purchasing power of the remuneration of those citizens depending wholly or in part on the basic wage;

(3) Failed to maintain the integrity and impartiality of the administration of law and public affairs;

(4) Failed either by precept or example to give any inspirational leadership to the people in support of the war effort of the Commonwealth Government;

(5) Failed to provide efficient and economic civil defence equipment and organisation;

(6) Failed to maintain the status and sovereignty of this Parliament and by promulgating regulations under the National Security Act, 1939-1940 (Commonwealth) derogated from the rights and powers thereof and failed to resist unnecessary encroachments thereon; and for various other reasons, does not possess the confidence of this House.

The Premier said the other day that I did not get any support in moving a no-confidence motion, and intimated that I probably would not get any support in moving this one. Unfortunately, that is true. I am compelled to admit that in the last six

or seven years there has been no fight in the Opposition against the Government. I think I have said before that no Government is blessed with such a pliable Opposition as we have in this Parliament. The Premier is entitled to draw an inference for the future from conduct in the past, but I do not think his conclusion is altogether right, because I believe there are two or three, or perhaps more members of the official Opposition who are definitely opposed to the Government and would turn it out of office if it were within their means to do so. So on this occasion they may not refrain from doing anything indicative of political hostility or antagonism to the Government. We had quite recently a very good illustration of what I mean. I heard from one member of the official Opposition grave complaints about the attitude of the Government in its capacity as mortgagee under the Agricultural Bank Act, in dealing with the mortgagors who are farmers throughout the State.

If one were to examine the statements made in that connection, one might come to the conclusion that the Government, as a mortgagee, is very hard in its attitude. I do not know if the Agricultural Bank Act is administered harshly against the farmer mortgagors, but I am aware that most mortgagees are hard and will enforce their right to secure the payment of principal and interest owing to them even though it may mean the absolute ruin of the mortgagors. They stand on their first mortgage securities and insist on being paid. I believe that throughout the whole of the depression it would be seen, if we could secure a statement of the losses sustained by first mortgagees throughout the world—I do not refer only to Western Australia or even Australia itself—that those first mortgagees, not only regarding land but chattels as well, suffered very small losses indeed.

In the metropolitan area we have always had a large number of mortgagors. Hundreds of working men bought their homes on terms, the basis of which was a first mortgage, the security for which represented two-thirds of the value of the property, and then probably a second mortgage, leaving some equity for the purchaser. When the depression was experienced, values fell immediately. Over-night in many instances the equity possessed by the purchaser was

wiped out and, as the depression continued, so did the equity of the second mortgagee. On the other hand, I know of very few instances in which the value of the security decreased to such an extent that the first mortgagee suffered any loss at all. I have always supported the contention of Country Party members that there should be some readjustment respecting the obligations of the farmers, and that the first mortgagee should be brought within the scope of any such readjustment. I know from my experience in Perth in dealing with farmers' debts adjustment matters, that when the depression hit the farmers they were placed in a difficult position. They had been induced to contract liabilities when wheat commanded a price of £1 per bag.

Machinery and city financial institutions flooded the country with high pressure salesmen who urged the farmers to expand their credit. The farmers could buy anything merely by signing a hire-purchase agreement. With the advent of the depression many could not meet their commitments. The machinery merchants and financial institutions that, by virtue of high pressure salesmanship, had induced the farmers to enter into commitments on the basis that the status quo of high prices for wheat and wool would continue, did not approach their farmer clients and say, "When we got you to enter into this contract we did it on the basis of wheat at £1 a bag and wool at 44d. per lb." That was the real basis of such contracts. The continuance of the status quo regarding prices was an essential towards enabling the farmer to meet his obligations. In view of the depression the farmer could not possibly meet them because the real basis of the contract had disappeared. The same position applied to the workingman who had saved up £50 or £100 which he paid as a deposit on a home, and committed himself to pay the balance by instalments with interest thereon. Many such men found themselves out of employment and naturally could not meet their commitments. I do not know of any first mortgagee who has voluntarily abated one penny of the debt due to him.

I have handled hundreds of such matters and I have yet to come across one instance where the first mortgagee has said, "I am willing to abate portion of the principal owing to me because of altered cir-

circumstances." When legislation was introduced to provide some relief for the farmers, the creditors lined up in three groups. The first comprised the first mortgagees. They included banks or financial institutions that held as their security a mortgage over the real estate, goods and chattels and personal estate of the mortgagor. The second group comprised second mortgagees and unsecured creditors. In the farming areas the unsecured group consisted mainly of country storekeepers and wages men. The country storekeeper had stood by the farmer and had kept his assets intact for the first mortgagee, while the farm labourer had worked on the farm and assisted to maintain the security intact. When it came to writing down debts the farm labourer was written off with 2s. 6d. in the pound. Personally, I know of many instances of money being owed to farm labourers who were obliged to accept in settlement 2s. 6d. in the pound or nothing. They had no choice in the matter. They had been working for 30s. a week and keep, which would represent about £3 a week, and all they were able to collect was 7s. 6d. a week.

Country storekeepers had upwards of £10,000 owing to them by farmers, yet they were forced to give their debtors release on the basis of 2s. 6d. in the pound, with the result that an individual who one day was apparently a prosperous storekeeper was converted next day into a ruined man—all because he had had to grant release to his debtors to the extent I have indicated. Here again the country storekeepers had incurred liabilities to city merchants and large firms. Although they had to release their debtors on the basis of 2s. 6d. in the pound, they did not receive any corresponding relief from the banks or the big city firms. The country storekeeper had to pay 20s. in the pound, which spelt ruin for him. As a result, men became destitute who a few years previously had been regarded as prosperous country storekeepers. The first mortgagee has always been hard in his dealings. I do not think any machinery merchant lost anything in the depression. I know of an instance where a machinery firm charged a man 10 per cent. interest on arrears right through the depression period and, when it passed and the man was able to pay, the best the machinery firm would do was to

reduce the interest on the payment of arrears down to 5½ per cent. So that right through the depression they lost not a penny. They bore no part of the brunt of the depression. First mortgagees always advance within a safe margin of security, and never let up. It is a great pity that at the depth of the depression all farmers in Western Australia who were not mortgagors did not club together and decide to walk off their farms, surrendering them to the mortgagees. Then the mortgagees would have gone on their hands and knees to ask the mortgagors to stay on the farms and preserve the security intact.

Recently I saw in the Press that the present Government was the mortgagee of a company conducting operations in our North-West. The company comprised some of the most propertied men in Perth, who had invested money in operations in the North-West. Naturally, being business men, they expected that if the company proved successful they would take the profits; and, also naturally, they expected that if the company failed they would lose their capital like any other investors or speculators. But I observe that the Government, as mortgagor, when it came to taking possession in that capacity of the assets of the company, decided to pay to the shareholders something over £70,000, so that every shareholder would receive back the full face value of the amount contributed by him for shares. That action is the most generous of any mortgagee I have ever known or heard of. Never in my life have I seen or heard of another mortgagee who acted so generously. I venture to say that if the chairman of that company had been the mortgagee and the Government the mortgagor, he would simply have gone in and taken the security. He might have said to the Government, "Well, bad luck; you have lost your money; you did not invest wisely." When the company had lost its money and apparently could not go on any further, and it therefore came to the mortgagee to step in and either realise its security or take possession of the assets, arrangements were entered into whereby £70,000 of public money—I do not think the Government had any legal right to do this—was given to the shareholders to reimburse the loss they had sustained as a result of their speculation. I repeat, from the standpoint of a mortgagee, that was the most generous action that has ever

come to my notice. Moreover, it was an action that could not be reversed.

When I saw that news in the Press I thought, "This will surely bring forth a protest from the Country Party members; surely they will seize on this and point out that the action of the Government, as mortgagee of a company comprising wealthy business men in Perth, differs greatly from Government action relatively to agricultural mortgagees." We know that mortgages to the Agricultural Bank include a drag-net clause under which the only thing left to a farmer who has received advances from the Agricultural Bank is his soul. The bill of sale comprises everything. The only possession of a farmer who owes money to the Agricultural Bank that cannot be seized and sold to pay his debt is his soul; and the reason for that, apparently, is that the Government feels there would be difficulty in realising anything from souls. The Government having adopted that attitude towards this company I expected members of the Country Party to say immediately, "Here is generous treatment by the Government as a mortgagee, and we now expect the same type of treatment to be extended to farmer mortgagors." I venture to say that nearly every mortgaged farmer in Western Australia would surrender his farm to the Government tomorrow, if he could get from the Government, in cash, the difference between the value of his farm when he signed the mortgage and the value of the mortgage debt today. On these terms every farmer who was a mortgagor would sell. He would be a fool if he did not. His asset is depreciated in some cases so as to be hardly greater now than the first mortgage debt. If the Government came along to the farmer and said, "What we did for these wealthy city business men, we are prepared to do for you; we will take the value of your farm when you first contracted the mortgage debt and will give you in cash the difference between the mortgage debt and the value of the farm," the farmer would at once accept the Government's offer. Apparently, however, the farmer's case was not one in which such a parallel could be drawn.

I have to admit the Premier's charge that I shall not get any support for a motion of want of confidence. I have not obtained support for such a motion in the past. I do not know what would be the result if the same generous treatment was meted out to-

day to farmer mortgagors as was meted out to wealthy city men who were mortgagors of the Government. Perhaps the country would be ruined. In my unsophisticated mind, however, I had thought that this would bring forth a howl from Country Party members who had criticised the Government's treatment of farmer mortgagors. The Premier, of course, was right, and I again was wrong. Nothing of what I expected did eventuate.

I consider that the Government has failed in the essential function of government. After all, it is the Government's business to govern the country. Government of the country goes somewhat further than merely allowing the governmental machine to function. Government of a country, I take it, consists in so arranging the affairs of the country that it will develop and prosper, and that there will be brought to the people of the country those things that are essential to their welfare and prosperity, so that the standard of living will be raised as high as the natural resources of the country will permit. I ask, what is the limit to the standard of living that can be accorded to the Western Australian people? I submit that this is a country where destitution should never have been known. Let us view the heritage that we call Western Australia. It is a highly prolific wheat-producing country. It is rich in cattle; it produces cattle enough to feed many times the population it carries today. It is prolific in sheep; it produces fruit probably equal to any in the world, not only as regards quality but also quantity. Its mineral wealth is untold both in quantity and in variety. It is almost impossible not to find in the State a mineral not of service to man throughout the world. It may be in combination with some other mineral, but it is available to the people.

With regard to building materials, I believe that in Western Australia a handsome house can be built of 95 per cent. of local products; at a pinch we could do without imports at all. Therefore, the poorest man in Western Australia should be living in luxury. The homes of people in Western Australia with the lowest incomes ought to be far better than are the homes of the middle classes. The standard of food and clothes which we could give our people, if we developed and organised our State, would place the humblest citizen in a very much

better position than are the upper middle class today. Unfortunately, however, there has been no improvement in the standard of living of the poorer people. I venture to say that there has been no improvement in the standard of living of the people at large for the past 40 years. The member for Canning, who is the Government's leading economist, told us that the purchasing power of the basic wage today—

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order in quoting something that was said on another matter this session.

Mr. HUGHES: If we make a comparison of the purchasing power of the basic wage today and consider what we can obtain for it in actual foodstuffs and other requirements, it would be very doubtful if there has been any improvement since the famous Harvester judgment, when Mr. Justice Higgins awarded £2 2s. a week for a family in Melbourne. Without any extensive examination of statistics, I think it can be said without fear of contradiction or exaggeration that the price of commodities has always been in front of increases in the basic wage.

Mr. Cross: That is true.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HUGHES: There is the blessing of the leading economist on the other side! I think we ought to know that, too. Ever since I can remember, people on lower incomes have been chasing the cost of living. I doubt whether there is any point of time in the past 30 years of which it can be said that a wage increase preceded an increase in the cost of living. Every wage increase that has been granted on the score of living costs has been made to compensate for an increase that had already taken place in living costs. Therefore, there has been no improvement in the standard of living, or, at best, it is so small as to be almost negligible.

Therefore, this problem of improving the standard of living must be approached from another angle. It must be approached from the angle of ensuring that where an increase is given that increase shall not be absorbed in increased cost of living. The Government had a golden opportunity to approach the problem and solve it from that angle. When the present war broke out, rents were pegged. Rent is a material factor in the cost of living. Homes have never been available to the people at large,

notwithstanding all the political and economic discussions we have had. It is almost impossible today for a working man to acquire a home. Take a young man who marries at, say, 25 years, if he manages to save £50 or £100 he pays it as a deposit on a home or buys a block of land. If the home costs £800, he has to pay £1,600 before he actually acquires it, and he very seldom lives long enough to acquire it. That is because the burden of interest is so great as to make it practically impossible for him to secure his home. The Government has done nothing at all to give a working man a chance to own his home. The Workers' Home Board is no different from private moneylenders and financial institutions. Until the Government does approach this problem from that angle and solves it, interest payments will prevent workers from securing good living conditions which are available.

One more illustration to show how the first mortgagee never loses: In years gone by there was a stampede to sell the people piano-players. These were landed in the State at £80 or £90 and sold for as much as £250 or £300 on terms. Cases occurred where purchasers were unable to meet their commitments, and because piano-players were a drug on the market the mortgagees did not attempt to re-possess them. They struggled on and tried to make the purchasers pay the instalments. Today, however, there is a shortage of pianos and mortgagees can now, after 10 or 12 years, re-possess the pianos and so get all their money and interest. The position is now being forced from that angle, thus showing that the first mortgagee never loses.

I recently read a statement in one of Douglas Reed's books, entitled "Nemesis," to the effect that the real struggle in Germany, in fact, in Europe, is between mortgagees and mortgagors, between the section of the people burdened with interest-bearing debt and unable to rise in status because of that burden, and the section living in luxury—sometimes in idleness—because they are the creditors and are drawing the interest. He points out that the problem will never be solved in Germany until the mortgagor-mortgagee question is settled. I submit that the problem of the farmer in this State will never be settled until this question of mortgagor-mortgagee is cleaned up, and it will not be cleaned up unless the Government—be-

cause nobody else can do it—solves it. I endeavoured to tackle the housing question. I was aware that a housing shortage was occurring in the metropolitan area and moved for the appointment of a Select Committee of this House to make inquiries and suggestions for solving that problem. The Government, however, would not agree to the appointment of a Select Committee. The Government said it had a committee appointed; I do not know whether it had or had not; but I know nothing was done in the matter and that the housing problem today is much worse. We know today that in city electorates working men and their families are threatened with being turned out in the street, and we know that if that happens they cannot get accommodation for themselves and their children, simply because an acute shortage of houses has developed and the Government did nothing to cope with it. The shortage has occurred notwithstanding drastic legislation fixing rents in both the Federal and State spheres.

I submit that after years of government by Labour the standard of living of the workers is no higher than it was 40 years ago. Many people in the community do not even receive the basic wage: that is paid only to workers who come under industrial awards and agreements. Many in the community still have their wages fixed by a common law agreement between themselves and their employers. Consider the great mass of farm labourers: They have never received even the basic wage, nor have they been able to secure the protection afforded by the Industrial Arbitration Act. I submit that the Government should have tackled that problem long ago. The time is long since past when we should have legislation fixing a minimum wage. The fixation of wages by Arbitration Courts and wages boards in the beginning was an experiment in social legislation, but it has gone through its experimental stage. We have now reached a stage when there should be attached to the Industrial Arbitration Act a schedule of wages and conditions that should be the minimum to be applied to anybody in any employment, just as we have in our Companies Act a schedule known as Table A. That table consists of a model set of regulations for the government of a company. When a company is formed, it can frame its own articles of association, or adopt Table A in whole or in part. If it

does not expressly exclude Table A, then automatically the company is governed by the provisions of that table. We should have in the Industrial Arbitration Act a schedule of regulations governing the minimum requirements and relations between employer and employee, so that whether an employee is under the arbitration Act or not he would get the minimum wages and conditions. But after 20 years nothing has been done in that direction.

If this State is to survive it must have population. If we do not populate Western Australia, we shall not be able to hold it. I think the teeming masses of Asia and Europe will insist on the opening-up of this country to those overcrowded countries unless we can show that we have done something to populate it. I do not know what population this country could hold and give a high standard of living to the residents, but I venture to say that it would not be less than 7,000,000 to 10,000,000. With the natural resources we have, and the scientific information available, I believe that that number could live in this country with a very high standard of living. We have all the basic requirements to give a high standard of living. During the last ten years the population question has been such as to cause grave concern and alarm to those people who believe that we ought to hold this country. I wonder when this war is over what we are going to say to the 400,000,000 Chinese who are struggling today in their own country. If they say to us, "We fought for you and helped you, and now want to come into your country," are we going to say, "We want this country for ourselves"? That is quite a logical argument—China for the Chinese and Australia for the Australians, but they can point out "You do not want it for yourselves." The Asiatics have pointed out many times that we are holding a vast unpopulated country. But we need not go to Asia. Take the European countries, where the population has been increasing and the pressure of subsistence has increased until the population is bursting out and seeking new territories.

There are some interesting statistics in the "Year Book." I have taken the quotations of 1940, because since 1941 the statistics have been disturbed by the abnormal conditions of war. Western Australia is losing population, and has been for ten years. Our population is derived from natural in-



crease—that is the increase of births over deaths—and what is called net migration—the increase of immigration over emigration. In the decade 1930-39, the average natural increase in the population of Western Australia was approximately 4,500, and that represents 1 per cent. of the population. A country barely maintains its population on that basis. In the 15 years from 1901 to 1915, the increase per thousand in the population of Western Australia by natural increase was 18, but at the present day it is only ten, so that there has been a fall in the natural increase from 1915 to the present time of nearly 50 per cent. It is interesting to compare the rate of natural increase of Western Australia with some of the Asiatic and European countries in that period. In the period 1901-15, as I have said, the natural increase in Western Australia was 18.5 per thousand. In the period 1909-13, which is within the same period, the increase in the Russian birthrate was 15.8 per thousand, and that of Japan 13.1 per thousand. So that from the beginning of this century to 1915, Western Australia had an increase of 18.5 as against 15.8 for Russia and 13.1 for Japan. We were at that time increasing faster than were those countries. In 1937, the Japanese rate was 13.6—only a slight variation from its former rate—but Western Australia had come down to ten, so that we had dropped by 1937 from 18 per thousand to ten, as against the Japanese, who had increased from 13.1 to 13.6.

I will now quote from the Commonwealth "Year Book" for 1940. At page 531, is a table headed—"Natural Increase of Population of Various Countries." Curiously enough, in the period 1926-30, the Russian birthrate had risen from 15.8 to 17.4. They are the last statistics available from Russia, and at that time our birthrate had declined from 18 to 10. The last figures for Japan, in 1938, showed that that country was still maintaining a birthrate of 13.6. We are not holding our own in natural increase by birthrate. Of course, the Government might say, "Surely you are not going to put that responsibility on the Government." But I think the Government is responsible, in this way, that the people of this State have ceased to have large families because of the difficulty in maintaining them in a decent standard of living. I have heard people say that they were not justified in having large

families; that they could see no social security or decent standard of living for children, and so were not taking the responsibility of having families and leaving them to poverty and degradation. Of course, the only body which could put an end to that state of affairs is the Government of the day. Those in Opposition cannot do it. The natural consequences of the conditions under which the people have had to live have been such as to depress the birthrate to the extent that we are left open to attacks from outside, and in a very poor state of development.

On the 30th June, 1940, we had a population of almost 500,000 in Western Australia; a country which, in the last 30 years, could I think have accommodated not that number but at least 5,000,000, to give a conservative estimate. When we come to the problem of losses of population by emigration, the position is alarming. I will now quote from the same Commonwealth "Year Book," at page 533, and take the decade 1930-39. In seven years out of ten, there has been a loss of population in Western Australia by net migration. In 1930 we had a loss of 453 people; in 1931 a loss of 2,792; in 1932, a loss of 1,616; in 1933, a loss of 140; in 1934, a loss of 1,379. In 1935 we had an increase of 1,134, and in 1936 again a loss of 437. In 1937, we had an increase of 1,010, and an increase in 1938 of 443, but we had a loss of 1,245 in 1939. During the same decade, New South Wales had an increase in population in seven years out of ten. Whereas we had an increase in only three years, they had losses in only three years.

In the year 1939, whereas we lost 1,245 people by net migration, New South Wales garnered 13,465 people, and it did not garner that number all at the expense of the smaller States. In 1939, New South Wales had an increase of 13,465, Victoria an increase of 3,194, and Queensland an increase of 959, but the three smaller States suffered losses to the following extent: South Australia, 1,943, Western Australia, 1,245 and Tasmania 2,409. The three larger States gained about 18,000 increase in population against a loss of 6,000 from the smaller States, showing that there must have come from overseas an increase of population in Australia of 12,000 people, of which the large majority went to New South Wales and a smaller proportion to Victoria.

We are sadly losing population but, worse than that, we are not increasing our population. I say that is the responsibility of the Government. It is the duty of the Government to see that we get population for this country. I have not seen any plans enunciated by the Government in the last 18 years, during which various members of the Government have been in a position to tackle the problem, for getting additional people into Western Australia. Those people are badly needed for two purposes, firstly to enable us to build up a solid defensive organisation against external enemies, and secondly to enable us to get a population quota equal to that of the Eastern States. If we could get 7,000,000 people into Western Australia, we would then have 7,000,000 voters for the Commonwealth elections and, under the present Constitution, we would have half the total strength of the House of Representatives. Then, instead of always whining that the Eastern States would not do this and that for us, we could stand on our own feet and so direct by our voting strength the policy of any Commonwealth Government. The Eastern States think we are always whining; they believe that we will not do anything for ourselves. When we want anything done, we say to the Eastern States, "Why do not you do it?"

Surely the Government has failed lamentably to carry out the first functions of government when it allows such a major problem as that of populating the State, which is vital and necessary, not to be made even a question of political importance. I have not heard of any plan for the development of this State on population lines. Apparently the Government is quite happy to continue year after year allowing the State's population to dwindle away. So we will always be a little village, complaining that the Eastern States will not do this and that for us, and we will always be going cap-in-hand begging to the Eastern States, instead of developing a robust community in this State. Instead of getting a lead from the Government to develop this community, we lack the energy, initiative and self-reliance to organise the State and stand on our own feet. It is of no use to cry about the past. The past has gone and cannot be recalled. But what of the future?

We are in the midst of a war which we know will be followed by post-war pro-

blems. We know that the question of developing and populating this State is going to be a major problem after the war. Has the Government done anything to that end? Has the Government one suggestion for tackling the problem? It has been raised in this House from time to time, but I have not heard one suggestion from the Government or of any lead given by the Government to any section of the community to the end that the Government has a plan for populating and developing the State after the war. So far as I can judge, the Government is simply allowing things to drift on and on so that, if the war suddenly ended tomorrow, there would be chaos in Western Australia. There is no plan for the rehabilitation of the men who went away to fight. At the end of this war there will be many people in Europe who will have lived through two major wars, and seen their homes devastated and their countryside ruined. Surely there will be hundreds of thousands of people who will be anxious to get away from central and southern Europe to a country like Western Australia where they can build up homes in peace! Surely now is the time to be ready with a plan so that, when the war ends, we can say to those people, "Here is a country where you may come and get a good living, where numbers of your compatriots have already settled, have made a good living and become good citizens." It is the responsibility of the Government to have some plan, but it has no plan. At least, if it has a plan, nobody has heard of it.

I say the Country Party is no longer justified in continuing to support the Government as it has done and in refusing to support anyone who moves a vote of no-confidence in the Government for failure to carry out the essence of government. Responsibility rests upon the Country Party. It has a responsibility to endeavour to force the position. The very basis of democracy is a healthy, independent Opposition. Democracy cannot function successfully if the Opposition merely inflicts dorsal lacerations on the Government. When we have a healthy, vigorous Opposition, we will get good government. This pact, or whatever it is, that says, "You must not criticise the Government; if you dare do so you will be committing an outrage," is wrong. The function of the Opposition is to criticise the Government and not swallow everything the Government does,

not bow down and say, "Yes, that is right." The Opposition must bear its share of the responsibility for the things that have happened in Western Australia and are the subject of grievous public concern. The Opposition must take its share of responsibility for a state of affairs that would not have existed had it tackled the proposition. Had the position been reversed, I venture to say the Opposition would have been virile and very active. I do not think we can afford to allow this to continue any longer. It is the duty of every member of the Opposition to point out the things that are being left undone and indicate the necessities for the future. The future is more important than the past. We can only profit in the future by drawing attention to past experiences. Even if I am the only member who thinks the Government is not everything a Government should be, I have a right and duty to say so. So I say we ought to have today a definite plan for the development and population of this State.

We ought to have a plan to ensure that the people are given a high standard of living. When I speak of a high standard of living, I mean a standard commensurate with the potentialities and resources of the State. I say the Government has failed to do that. This is the first ground upon which I base my complaint of the Government's lack of activity. The second ground deals with the basic wage and has been traversed in this Chamber on various occasions, but there is one point that has not been stressed in any of the debates. One of the disabilities of merely raising the basic wage in a vicious, endless chase after the cost of living is that, as the basic wage increases, so the value of the margin that a tradesman receives decreases. For instance, if a tramway man is receiving 6s. a week margin above the basic wage and the basic wage is raised from 85s. to 95s. a week, the purchasing power of the 6s. margin declines by 11 per cent. Thus, instead of receiving 72d. purchasing power, he gets only 65d.

This endless chase takes the benefit from the skilled worker and other workers who receive a margin over the basic wage and destroys the margin for them. Therefore it is to their interest to give up this endless chase and to work from the other angle saying, "We are going to organise the affairs of the State so that the margin will purchase more; instead of 72d. purchasing 65d. worth of

commodities, it will purchase 80d. worth of commodities." Then the margin will be of greater value and we shall be raising the standard of living of the tradesmen and of other people fortunate enough to get something over and above the basic wage. I base the second paragraph of my complaint on those grounds. I say this is the responsibility of the Government. Nobody else can attend to that matter. No member of the Opposition can do anything at all other than by way of suggestion to remedy the position. It is in the hands of the Government, and the Government has failed to attend to it. Therefore we are justified in saying that the Government has failed to carry out the functions for which it primarily exists.

In the third paragraph I claim that the Government has failed to maintain the integrity and impartiality of the administration of law and public affairs. I do not propose to dwell on that. I shall not weary the House with a repetition of arguments produced on other occasions, because I am happy to believe that even my humble efforts are bearing fruit. On Monday night at a public meeting I pointed out that in your electorate, Mr. Speaker, the judicial glands of certain justices function only on Monday, because one of them felt the urge to attend the bench and discharge his official duties on that day only. On Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday the magistrate sat alone. I am happy to say that one of those justices was in the Fremantle court this morning. For the first time, I think, his judicial glands worked on Wednesday. So once again I have suffered defeat. The justice in question, who is notorious for imposing light penalties, has proved me wrong because he was functioning judicially today. Unfortunately I was not able to get my client's case disposed of in the light penalty period. Even that is some return for my efforts in that direction.

I have used the words "Failed to maintain the integrity and impartiality of the administration of law and public affairs." One of the worst things I think the present Government has ever done is to establish the precedent that in the Public Service preference is given to political views rather than to qualifications and ability. In numbers of important appointments to the Public Service the positions have gone to men who have been well-connected politically, over the heads of those who have had higher

qualifications for the job. Let me take one particular branch concerning which I am able to speak from my own personal observations—I refer to the Crown Law branch. There were a number of boys in the Faculty of Law when I was doing my law course. Some of them made the grade and took their degree, thus becoming L.L.B.s, while others failed to make the grade and did not get their degrees. Those who got their degree acquired experience in practice and demonstrated that they were young fellows of outstanding ability. I think I can say with safety that one or two were brilliant at their particular calling.

When positions have been made available in the Crown Law Department and some of these L.L.B. applicants have applied for them, they have never succeeded. They have always been beaten for the job by those who have not had a University degree, and in some cases by those who were at the University at the same time as the other applicants but failed to make the grade. Of what use is it to spend public money to enable persons to get a University degree when such a state of affairs exists? I do not know how much the University costs the State, but I think the Government gives it £20,000 a year, so that students may be trained at the institution. I am not going to say they are any better University students than are found in other parts of Australia. I do not think that is so. Neither do I hold that the Western Australian University is any better than that at Oxford or Cambridge, but I do not think it is behind either of those institutions. I do not subscribe to the idea that the Oxford and Cambridge degrees are an indication of a higher standard of education than is afforded by a Western Australian University degree. The Western Australian courses are based on the Eastern States University courses which, in turn, were based on the Oxford and Cambridge standard. The text books at the Western Australian University are in many cases the text books drawn from the Oxford and Cambridge Universities.

Whilst I do not say that our University is of a higher standard, I do not think it is of an inferior standard to that associated with the older universities. The State has spent a lot of money in enabling its citizens to obtain University degrees, which they could not have obtained without a system of free education. I suppose half the students

at our University would be wiped out if we had a system of fees such as is in vogue at universities in the Eastern States. Unfortunately, it seems that this is the one country where the local University degree is not recognised. It appears that if there is a position vacant in the Crown Law Department or even a judicial position vacant, a degree is not worth anything. A man who went to the University but failed to get his degree is in a better position to fill the vacancy than is the man who succeeded in getting a degree. That is not fair. If these young fellows work, as they do work, and become fully qualified, surely it is wrong that when positions for which they are specially qualified and for which they are specially adapted, they should be overlooked, and set aside as if they had no qualifications and the positions given to other applicants because of their political connections.

It may be said that the successful applicant, although not in possession of educational qualifications of the same standard as others, had experience and natural ability which offset the lack of educational qualifications; but that is not so in many instances. The non-degree man did not have the experience nor the ability of the man who had a degree. So a position has grown up which I think is very deplorable in that the Government has made the Public Service a Government service. It is not a Public Service any longer. It is a Government service and that is bad. One of the traditions that has won approval throughout the world for the British Civil Service is that it is a public service. The public servant performs his duties irrespective of the political colour of the reigning Government. I have read eulogistic references to the German Civil Service before the war of 1914-18. Writers on these topics have drawn attention to the German civil service. One thing made clear was that it was a public service in those days irrespective of Government, and the public servant did his job as a public servant. When I joined the Commonwealth Public Service as a lad the same traditions prevailed. The position was that it did not matter what Government was in power, we were public servants.

We served the public courteously and to the best of our ability. It was never thought that we were doing our job because of the political colour of the Government. I admit

we were regulation-bound and that we acted according to the regulations. When a vacancy occurred we put in our applications, feeling that all we had to do was to show that we had the qualifications for the job and had done good service to back up our applications. That is not so in Western Australia today, and has not been so for many years. It does not matter what the qualifications are or what the degrees are. If someone has applied who is well-connected politically, others are not in the race. We see from the reports of the Public Service Commissioner that references back to him have been made two or three times so that he may put forward a fresh recommendation and the right man politically be selected. That has had a bad effect upon the Public Service. It is a bad thing to put into the minds of young public servants that they are serving the Government and not the public, and their conduct is to be oriented for that purpose.

Let me take the last appointments to the Licensing Court. Can anyone say that qualifications were considered? Did anyone get the chance to apply for those positions? When a position becomes vacant in the Public Service I submit that it should be thrown open to the public at large for two reasons. The first reason is that there may be outside the State, if not within it, some person of outstanding ability capable of filling the position better than could anyone within the State. If the State is going to pay a large salary for a certain position, as an ordinary business proposition it is entitled to get the best man available. Secondly, if a highly paid position in the Public Service is vacant, every citizen in Western Australia has a right to apply for it and have his case stated. If we want to establish efficiency in the Public Service, when there is a vacancy we ought to let the world know that a certain position is carrying a large salary and invite persons to apply for it. That used to be the practice in the Public Service. If the position were vacant, applications would be invited and every citizen would have the right to apply and state his case.

The State thus had a wide choice in the selection of people to fill responsible offices. That principle no longer applies in Western Australia. Let me instance the recent appointments to the Licensing Court. I think I can say without hesitation that they

were made without any regard for the training, experience or qualifications of the appointees, that men were chosen who had no judicial experience, and no training whatsoever to fill the positions to which they were appointed. Hundreds of men in the State who had the qualifications and training did not even know the positions were vacant. They were not given an opportunity to put in an application and state their cases. The Licensing Court is essentially a political judiciary because an appointee is not eligible unless he holds certain political views. That is the only possible inference to be drawn from the recent appointments to the Licensing Court. What a howling mess has been made of the administration of the licensing laws! We hear everywhere about applicants before the court complaining bitterly of the treatment meted out to them. Legal practitioners do not want to appear in that court because of the treatment they receive.

Some people are getting hotel licenses. I am not going to wash over the hotel business again, but I would like to know the ground for the license being given to the Civic Hotel in Beaufort-street, and who are the real owners. There should be no difficulty in proving that Riley, the applicant was not the real owner, and that he was not the real applicant, but that in the background there were the real owners. I want to know why another hotel was required in Beaufort-street. Unfortunately, another very bad principle has been established and maintained—that the decision of a body like the Licensing Court is free from any appeal. It does not matter whether the court makes a mistake, or how glaring the mistake is, there is no appeal from its decision.

What keeps the judiciary clean and on an even keel, is that, when a judicial decision is given, it is subject to review by a higher tribunal. It is, therefore, known that in the event of a lower court giving a wrong decision or an incorrect one there will probably be a reference to a higher court. The three things that have kept our judiciary on the right path and at a high standard are that our judges are free from any political influence because they have security of tenure; they have a fixed lucrative salary to put them above any physical or economic requirement; and their decisions are always subject to review by a higher court, except in the case of the final court, the Privy

Council. There is never any complaint about the decision of a judiciary under those conditions. If a magistrate gives a decision with which one of the parties does not agree, he can soon have it contested in a higher court. So there would be no point in a magistrate's giving a decision contrary to what he thought. I do not say that magistrates do not give decisions that are wrong. In the intricate questions with which they have to deal they make mistakes which the higher courts correct. Sometimes the magistrate is right and the higher court is wrong! The point is that the decision is subject to correction. Not so with the Licensing Court, which is a law unto itself. There is no appeal from its decisions and consequently no matter what it does, no matter how far away from the evidence is the decision it gives, no matter how outrageous an interpretation is placed on the evidence by the court, and no matter how offensive or restrictive are its actions in determining a case, there is no appeal. The court simply says, "We are giving a license to Brown because he is Brown." And that is the end of it. That has a bad effect. It destroys confidence in a tribunal of that kind. One of the worst practices the present Government has developed and maintained is the destruction of the Public Service as a public service and the conversion of it into a Government service, rendering it almost impossible for a man or woman to obtain an appointment unless he or she has a certain political viewpoint. That is why I have included in my motion the statement that the integrity and impartiality of public affairs have not been maintained.

The fourth paragraph in my motion is to the effect that so far as the State Government is concerned there has been no leadership in respect of the war effort. I should have thought the State Government would say, "We are going to back the war effort 100 per cent." When the call went out for economy I should have thought the Government would immediately have set about discovering where economies could be effected in administration, labour and expenditure in furtherance of the war effort. But I do not think any of us has seen any evidence of the Government's anxiety to lead the people in the march of economy and in a war effort. I should have thought the Government would lay it down as a hard-and-fast rule that no exemption

would be sought for any man eligible for military service under Section 60 of the Defence Act. It does not matter how important a man in the employ of a private employer may be, as soon as he turns 18 he has to go into the Army. It does not matter what his position is. If he is a young fellow who has worked hard and has studied, and is qualifying himself for a position by working during the day and studying at night, at the age of 18 he has to join the Forces. There is no suggestion of his being granted exemption.

I should have liked to secure definite figures on this matter to submit to the House. I tried to ascertain from Mr. Stitfold, the Director of Manpower, the names of the people in the State Public Service who have been exempted from service in the Military Forces, in order to enable them to continue in the Public Service, but unfortunately Mr. Stitfold would not give them to me. I think he was entirely wrong in not giving me the information, and had I applied to Mr. Curtin, the Prime Minister, he would have made the facts available because this is a matter of major public importance. I take it that we as members of Parliament have public duties to perform in a national way quite apart from the ordinary local matters that concern our constituencies. I object strongly to boys and men in my electorate being called on to leave their homes and join the Military Forces where they work for 5s. and 24 hours a day after having previously received £7 a week, and perhaps may have to give up their lives because of the national crisis and in compliance with the Defence Act, when at the same time we can see other men in similar positions who are exempt for no other reason than that they are well-connected politically. It is all rubbish to say that there are men in the Public Service who cannot be released from their jobs to perform their obligations the same as everybody else. One section of the community has to perform its military duties and nobody is going to suggest that it should not have to do so.

I consider there should be more compulsion about the war effort. Nobody should be allowed to please himself as to what he will contribute to the war effort. When a boy of 18, who is working his way up and is struggling to build a future for himself, is told he must go into camp and train himself to be a soldier—and possibly lose his life—

without being able to say whether he will or will not, it is ridiculous that those of us who happen to be a few years older and, I hope, a little wiser, can say what we shall do. We can please ourselves what we offer. There are many people over the military age who could render efficient service in different branches of the Fighting Forces. We should not be allowed to say that we will select what we will do. We should be told, "You are suitable for certain duties. Go and do them." Moreover, they should be done at 5s. a day. It is reprehensible that because a man is over 30 he has to be made a colonel or a major so that he may obtain a certain rate of pay. I know young fellows who were earning £7 a week in their professions and trades, and they were told that they must join up at 5s. a day just as privates. Yet other men who are older have to be made majors or colonels because they must be paid at a higher rate.

The State Government has no control over that, but it has control over those who are eligible for military service and who are being manpowered for the Public Service. I submit that if the Government is going to give a lead to people in that direction, it should say that it is not going to ask for one man in the Public Service to be manpowered, no matter what position he holds or what inconvenience might be placed on a Minister of the Crown. Ministers should carry their departments without asking for men to be kept out of the Army. The Government should say that its employees are going to be placed on the same basis as anybody else. I wanted to obtain from Mr. Stifford a list of the men in the Public Service who were exempt from military duty, but all I could get from him was that there was not a large number, anyhow. There should not be any! In the absence of a detailed list we can only come to the conclusion that certain men are being exempt, particularly when we visit Government departments and see men of military age who are still carrying on while private employers are denuded of all their employees. So long as it has one man exempt from the provisions of Section 60 of the Defence Act, the State Government is not giving the people a lead.

So far as can be ascertained, the Government has made no attempt to effect economies in the Public Service in order to further the war effort and conserve our

funds. One economy that could be effected comes readily to mind. Why do we want a Licensing Court during the war? Surely we are not going to give anybody an additional hotel license during the war period! Surely the Government could have immediately introduced a Bill to do away with the Licensing Court! It could have abolished the court for the time being, and certain periodical functions could have devolved on the Magistracy throughout the State. In that way the Government would have shown the people that it was anxious to effect economies and give a backing to the Commonwealth Government. There has, however, been no such suggestion. If the court had been abolished, and it was considered advisable to re-establish it in the post-war period under the same or improved conditions, that could very easily be done.

Many boards are functioning, restrictive of the free disposal of commodities. There is no need for the Onion Board; we are short of onions. There is no need to approve of anybody dealing in onions and the board should be abolished. There is difficulty in securing deliveries of milk, and we could wipe out the Milk Board altogether. There could have been a comprehensive purge, though not in the sense of a European purge. The time is ripe for a purge of useless Government functionaries and excess civil servants. That would have a double-barrelled advantage. It would show to the people that the Government was prepared to give a lead in economy, that it was in earnest in its desire to support the Commonwealth Government and do everything it could to concentrate upon the war effort. The second great advantage it would have would be that in the post-war period after the war planning could be started anew. We would not be hampered with vested interests created by these boards nor by the interests of those holding privileged positions in connection with them. All those vested interests would be wiped out, and we would have an opportunity to build a new society on ground already cleared of the debris of the old order.

If we were to commence building anew tomorrow, we would be confronted with all the existing vested interests and those associated with them, who are of no importance and perform no useful function whatever. Despite all this, the Government has

not lifted a finger to give the people a lead in that direction. I do not know if it is that the State Government will not help the Commonwealth Government, or that the Commonwealth Government will not allow the State Government to do so. I have noticed ever since the commencement of the war that a large number of Commonwealth departments have been established in Western Australia where already existed similar departments which were quite capable of carrying out the necessary work. I shall give a few illustrations to lend point to that remark. The Commonwealth Government established some time back a department to deal with manpower problems and the organisation of labour. We already had in this State a Department of Labour controlled by a Minister for Labour. It seemed to me that the natural institution to handle such problems was the Department of Labour that already existed here.

Why is it that the Commonwealth Government persisted in setting up a rival organisation, duplicating a department that already existed? Why could not the State department have handled all problems connected with manpower and the organisation of labour throughout the State—in co-operation with the Commonwealth? At the corner of King-street and Wellington-street there is the office of the Department of Labour, yet the Commonwealth Government went 20 yards or so further down the road and set up its rival organisation. Why is it? Is it that the State would not co-operate with the Commonwealth, or that the Commonwealth would not allow the State to co-operate? For many years we have had in Western Australia the Department of Public Works with its trained officers and all the machinery necessary for carrying out important public works. Recently there was established in Murray-street another new department called, I think, the Works Council, which apparently so far as I can gather, has been set up to do work that would normally be the function of the State Public Works Department. Why could not that department, in co-operation with the Commonwealth, have handled all matters relating to that section of war activity? Why does the Commonwealth insist on duplicating a function already undertaken by a State department? Is it that the Public Works Department would not co-operate with the Commonwealth, or that the Commonwealth would not

allow the department to co-operate? The same position applies in the legal sphere.

The State Crown Law Department has been in existence for many years. Associated with it are officials quite capable of handling all the law business of the Commonwealth. Despite that fact, the Commonwealth has set up another department with a trained staff that carries out work which could have been undertaken by the officials of the Crown Law Department. Why is that? Again I ask: Was it because the State would not co-operate, or was it that the Commonwealth would not co-operate with the State? The same position arises in connection with transport matters. Although we have the necessary legislation and our railways, we find set up in our midst a separate entity in the form of the Liquid Fuel Control Board. I would have expected some vigorous protest from the State Government against the attitude of the Commonwealth in duplicating services and wasting manpower and material, seeing that the State has services that could be placed at the disposal of the Commonwealth. I have not heard of any such protest. The general public notices these things. One phase to which attention is frequently drawn by businessmen and taxpayers in the city is indicated in the queries: Why is it necessary to duplicate public services? Why cannot there be some co-operation between the State and Commonwealth Governments? Why must we have a commissioner for this and a commissioner for that, when we already have Ministers with trained official staffs able to carry out the work involved?

Unfortunately, people are inclined to attribute the blame mainly to the State Government, and say they do not want the State Government to function any more. They point out that the Commonwealth Government can fulfil the requirements and therefore there is no necessity for the State Government or the State Parliament. In all these circumstances, I submit that the State Government has not given the people the leadership that is necessary to achieve a vigorous war effort. It has not pointed out to the Commonwealth Government where excessive wastage has been going on, and how it could be avoided. The people have looked in vain for a lead from the State Government in connection with the war effort. There is one branch of defence work where the Government has had a



completely free hand, and what a sorry spectacle we have seen! The State Government was entrusted with the organisation of civil defence against air raids. If ever there has been an instance of unwarranted waste and endless and useless duplication, it is in connection with the civil defence organisation.

Notwithstanding all the statements that appear in the Press indicating how successful air-raid precaution practices have been, I assert that if an air-raid should take place, the city would be converted into a shambles. Everything that is done in connection with air-raids is written down three or four times. The waste of paper alone would, I am sure, if conserved, provide the wings for many aeroplanes. There is the perennial argument between local authorities and the Government. I do not propose to traverse the dispute between the Perth City Council and the Government as to the responsibility for the provision of efficient air-raid precaution services; but surely the Government is responsible for providing the people with adequate protection against air-raids! The Government has spent most of its time trying to pass the responsibility on to the City Council. People who have given their services voluntarily and have trained themselves in connection with air-raid precaution work have met with nothing but discouragement, and cold water has been thrown on their efforts. They are short of equipment, yet they are asked to train themselves in the task of handling casualties in the event of a raid. That is not possible without adequate equipment.

We have the deplorable spectacle at present of people going from door to door edging money from citizens in order to procure funds for the purchase of equipment, whereas that responsibility should attach to the Government itself. Right throughout, notwithstanding that people are prepared to devote their time to training in order to make themselves efficient, they are expected either to provide themselves with bandages and other equipment that is essential for the work, or to edge money with which to provide those necessities to enable the work to proceed. I submit that this shows a complete indifference on the part of the Government to our war effort in the one phase of which it has had sole control. I do not desire to refer in detail to the black-out fiasco or to what has taken place in connection with the light-

ing regulations. I am convinced that if an actual air-raid occurred, the city would be nothing but a shambles. The air-raid position is this: In each suburb and each large ward of a municipality there is the air-raid organisation. Take the position in East Perth! There is the head warden with his first-aid parties and such equipment as he can get, together with people trained to the degree of efficiency that is possible. In each of the nine sectors there is a senior warden who has been supplied with a telephone. There is what is described as central control.

If an air-raid occurred tomorrow and there were a number of casualties in East Perth—say it occurred in sector No. 1—the senior warden there would telephone to the central control, where those receiving the message would write out the details in triplicate. They would thus have a record of what had taken place in sector No. 1, according to the details telephoned to them. Then one of the officers would telephone back to the headquarters in East Perth, and someone who took the telephone message would again record the details in triplicate. Then people in East Perth would notify some of their employees to go down and get on with the job. Why is it that if an air-raid should take place tomorrow and casualties occurred in sector No. 1 in East Perth, somebody associated with the work in sector No. 1 should not be allowed to telephone to the senior warden where the first-aid parties are established, so that they could immediately proceed to do what was required? Why is it necessary to have to telephone messages and record them in triplicate twice? If there was an air-raid involving a large number of casualties, from all over the place where casualties occurred telephone messages would be coming to central control and recorded in triplicate and then telephoned back to headquarters in the sector concerned. Unless the patients were good enough to go on living until all this red tape was observed, the aid parties would arrive too late.

Consider the fire brigades system as analogous to the first-aid organisation of the A.R.P.! The fire brigades have been functioning all over the world for many years. There is a central station in the metropolitan area and each of the suburbs has a station. If a fire occurs at Victoria Park, the Victoria Park station attends to the job. If a second fire breaks out while the first is

being dealt with, or if the first fire cannot be coped with by the equipment of the local station, the central station is informed that local resources are being exhausted and requested to send aid. That seems to be so eminently sensible that one marvels at anybody suggesting any other system. The civil defence organisation, however, works on precisely the reverse process. If a casualty happened in Victoria Park, instead of the local branch being notified and allowed to deal with it so long as its resources were adequate to the task, it is not permitted to do so. The central control has to be informed, the message has to be recorded in triplicate and central then has to telephone back to Victoria Park. One system or the other is wrong. Either the fire brigades, with their hundreds of years of experience, are wrong, or the A.R.P. organisation is wrong. How stupid it would be if every time a fire occurred in a suburb, before a fireman could attend to it, he had to telephone to the central station and the central station had to telephone back to the suburb.

If we try to point out to the people in charge of the A.R.P. organisation that this sort of thing is causing endless duplication, they will not listen. There is only one reason I can see for not adopting the simple efficient system of the fire brigades and saying, "If an air raid comes to East Perth, use all your equipment and forces to deal with the casualties, but as soon as you find that your resources are exhausted or the raid is too big for you to handle, telephone to central and ask for reinforcements to be sent, say, from Mt. Hawthorn." That would be a sensible thing to do. But no, the suburb is not allowed to do that. Theoretically, if a casualty happened in the East Perth A.R.P. centre, nobody could lift a finger to help until the information was telephoned to central and recorded in triplicate and a reply received. I cannot understand why this should be necessary. The only reason I can suggest for it is that somebody who feels very important says, "I am the centre of the A.R.P. and everything must pass through me." In the Civil Service at times we find men who want to draw everything to themselves, to be the source of everything. They get the idea that nothing will function without them. What would happen under the existing A.R.P. arrangements if, in the course of an air raid, the central control station that receives

all these messages was wiped out? Suppose a bomb wiped out this High Panjandrum at central control; the whole service would be disorganised! The people at East Perth, West Perth and Mt. Hawthorn could not function because they could not get their messages through to central control.

[Resolved: That motions be continued.]

Mr. HUGHES: Another enormous waste is occurring in connection with A.R.P. organisation. In some suburbs there is any number of motorears. People in a position to provide motorears have offered their vehicles and their services. In the poorer suburbs like East Perth and Victoria Park, where there are few if any rich people, the number of motorcar owners is very small compared with the number in suburbs like Mt. Lawley and West Perth. The result is that Victoria Park and East Perth are short of motor transport while other suburbs have plenty. Therefore it would be sensible to say to a person who had offered his motorcar and services as driver to the A.R.P., "We will transfer you to a suburb where motorears are in short supply." If an air raid occurred in one of the suburbs with insufficient motorears, what would be the use of saying that if it had occurred elsewhere, there would have been plenty of motorears? I cannot imagine that motorcar owners would raise any difficulty. Any person willing to offer his motorcar and services would not be much concerned if he were asked to serve in some other suburb. Much waste could be eliminated and a much more efficient service could be established if this aspect was taken into consideration. I do not know what the Civil Defence Council does, or is supposed to do; but I do not think that under it anything like the standard of efficiency necessary in connection with A.R.P. has yet been reached. Assuredly there is grave deficiency in material and equipment. Therefore I complain that this branch of defence, which has been peculiarly under the control of the State Government, is highly inefficient and wasteful, and that the Government should look into the question of every message being dragged into central control. The Government should consider whether the fire brigade system is not the right system for A.R.P. also. Indeed, it might not be a bad plan to put the A.R.P. organisation under the Fire Brigades Board, because its service is analogous to the fire brigade service. Had that course been

adopted, much waste and inefficiency might have been avoided. However, the State Government must take responsibility for the position. The Government's first business is to govern the country, and the civil government which has obtained here shows that our Government does not want to take the responsibility but is willing to pass it on to the Perth City Council or some other agency.

My final categorical complaint is that the Government has not maintained the status of Western Australia as a sovereign State. I referred previously to its failure to deal with business through its own existing departments and to its allowing the Commonwealth Government to step in and establish services where they exist already, thus bringing about a public feeling that the State Government cannot manage the State's affairs and must allow the Commonwealth Government to manage them in its place. At this present juncture, when the Commonwealth Government is definitely making an onslaught on the power and prestige of State Governments, this Western Australian Government not only has done nothing to counteract that Commonwealth move but has been in the forefront as regards encouraging the Commonwealth Government in its policy. Our Western Australian Government has co-operated with the Commonwealth Government in its attack on the sovereignty of States and State Parliaments. I do not wish to refer in detail to the use of Commonwealth regulations by our State Government, but I hold that as a general principle the State Government should have adopted a rigid stand and said, "We will not take advantage of Commonwealth regulations at all. If we want to do anything for the State, we should do it through the legislative machinery of the State. This Government will stand on its powers and its responsibilities under the State Parliament, and will not do anything by means of Commonwealth regulations. Instead of adopting Commonwealth regulations, in doing which we shall be simply encouraging the encroachments of the Commonwealth, we shall employ the authority and machinery and legislation of the State."

Unfortunately, however, our State Government, shortsightedly, merely to gain an immediate advantage or for the sake of expediency, has co-operated with the Commonwealth Government by using Commonwealth regulations. The Premier and his

Ministers have promulgated regulations under powers delegated to them by the Commonwealth Government. It is quite an open question whether the exercise of Commonwealth power by a State Minister as a subdelegated power has any validity. There is a recognised constitutional rule that a delegate cannot delegate his authority. One of these days, when some one with plenty of money is involved, the exercising of Commonwealth powers by State Ministers will be challenged; and I would not be surprised if it were challenged successfully on the ground that the Governor General cannot, under National Security Regulations, delegate power to anyone other than the Minister named in the particular Act. But the poor people have to submit, because it would cost a great deal of money to test the question in the Federal High Court. Still, one of these days somebody with a fistful of money will arise and want to do something, and very likely his challenge will be successful.

From the aspect of defending the State Government's powers and duties and the powers and duties of this Parliament, our State Government should never at any time have purported to exercise Commonwealth powers. Western Australia's State Government should have said to the Commonwealth Parliament, "Whatever we want to do in furtherance of the war effort we will do by virtue of our own Parliament, which will pass the necessary legislation." The one man in Western Australia who has placed himself in the forefront as regards inviting the Commonwealth Government to step in is the Premier. I consider that the Premier gave that Government a very bad lead in a statement he made through "The West Australian" quite recently—unfortunately I have not the exact date. I quote from the statement—

If the Commonwealth were to seek amendments of the Constitution to enable it to deal with repatriation, and if, in contradistinction to its attitude after the last war, the Commonwealth was prepared to undertake after this war full responsibility for repatriation, it would be a very welcome move from the States' viewpoint.

I emphasise the words "a very welcome move from the States' viewpoint." There is an invitation to the Commonwealth to step in and take full control. After all, in connection with repatriation and post-war reconstruction, the whole gamut of Government responsibility and Government activi-

ties would come into play. I contend that the Premier should have said, "Very well; we don't want you to undertake these matters. You have the responsibility of the defence of Australia; and when the war is over, the State Government, which is the local governing authority, which knows more about the State's problems in land settlement and repatriation, will undertake the responsibility. We do not want you to take from us any responsibility in that regard. We will stand up to all our responsibilities. The State Government and the State Parliament are quite able and willing to tackle the problem of post-war reconstruction, and will perform their duty." However, the first thing our Premier does is to yield to the Commonwealth Government, saying, "If you want the power and are willing to take the responsibility, do so. It is from the State's point of view a very welcome departure." The Commonwealth Government, of course, must have the power if it is to bear the responsibility.

I cannot understand how anybody could fail to vote at the proposed forthcoming referendum for additional powers to be granted to the Commonwealth, if he believes that the Commonwealth should have full responsibility.

Almost immediately following that, Dr. Evatt promulgated a comprehensive scheme for re-aligning the powers as between the Commonwealth and the States. I have not seen the Bill, but from published details it seems to me that if the Commonwealth takes unto itself the additional powers set out by Dr. Evatt, there will not be any need for a State Parliament or a State Government. When the Commonwealth enters into all the comprehensive activities that Dr. Evatt sets out in his preliminaries, nothing will be left for a State Parliament to do. State Parliaments and State Governments would not have the responsibilities or functions of a country road board. The Premier did not invite Dr. Evatt to do that. I do not think Dr. Evatt needed inviting. I think he had it in mind and now he is able to say, "The Premier of Western Australia thinks it will be a good thing if we have these additional powers." Then the Premier, with inconsistency, said that this is not the time to hold a referendum, but he had invited the Commonwealth to take over these responsibilities. If the Commonwealth accepts them, it must have the power. If the Commonwealth

Government is to be made responsible for the solving of post-war problems and all the problems connected with repatriation and the development of the States, then, to be consistent, I must vote to give the Commonwealth that additional power. I suggest, in conclusion, that the Government has not protected the sovereignty of this State. There are many other matters I could deal with, in respect of which I submit the Government has failed.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is there a seconder? The motion lapses for want of a seconder.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I second it.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in her seat.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: Yes, I am.  
Motion lapsed.

### **BILL—SUPREME COURT ACT AMENDMENT ACT.**

#### *Second Reading.*

MR. HUGHES (East Perth) [4.40] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is designed to extend the grounds for divorce under the Supreme Court Act. That Act sets out in detail the grounds upon which a divorce may be secured in this State. One of those grounds is where a party, without just cause or excuse, has deserted the other party for three years or upwards. Where a spouse, without just cause or excuse, has deserted the other party and has continued to desert him or her for three years or upwards, the injured party can get a release from the matrimonial obligations. In addition, we have the Married Women's Protection Act, under which a married woman who has certain complaints against her husband may apply for protection to a court of summary jurisdiction. If she can show that her husband has committed adultery or has been guilty of cruelty to her, or has deserted her without providing reasonable maintenance for herself and her children, she can obtain an order for separation which will release her from the obligation to cohabit and live with her husband. She can also obtain an order against the husband for the payment of so much per week maintenance for herself and their children and she can obtain the legal custody of the children of the marriage. There is, of course, no married man's protection Act. No matter how badly the woman may treat her husband, so long as she does not transgress any of the

grounds set out in the Supreme Court Act, the husband has no redress whatever.

The Married Women's Protection Act gives no protection whatever to an injured husband. It was found that when an order was made for the payment of maintenance against a husband, he frequently did not pay it. There is a provision in the Justices Act under which, if he does not pay the maintenance, he may be sent to prison for three days for every pound that he is in arrears. That appears to be a very salutary remedy for a wife who has not got her maintenance; but unfortunately in practice it is not much use. When a woman gets an order for separation and maintenance, if the husband is determined that he will not pay, the machinery of the law is not very powerful to make him pay. The first thing he does is to put on his hat and disappear, and the State, through the Child Welfare Department, is obliged to keep the wife and children. Frequently, when the defaulting husband is located, he is so much in arrear that it is impossible for him to pay, and he can then be put in gaol.

Parliament recognised that it was very unfair to allow a man not to pay his maintenance instalments. Previously the wife could get no relief unless the man committed adultery, and she was able to prove it; so Parliament decided that where a maintenance order is in existence against a man and he fails to pay or habitually fails to pay for three years or more, that is an additional ground for divorce. The position today is that if an order is obtained against a man and he does not pay regularly, at the end of three years the wife can sue for divorce, and she will get her divorce; and immediately she does so, the defaulting husband is free to re-marry and do what he did previously. The present position is all in favour of the defaulting husband. All he has to do is not to pay his maintenance, or to pay it irregularly, for three years, and at the end of that time his wife will obtain a divorce, leaving him free to do the same thing again.

On the other hand, there is the man who, through various causes, cannot get along with his wife, and she has to take him to court for a maintenance order, and if he honourably abides by the maintenance order, taking the attitude that, having brought children into the world, he is going to stand up to his obligations and maintain his children and wife, there is no chance of either himself

or his wife obtaining a divorce. No matter how much they might want to re-marry, they cannot obtain a divorce unless one of them is prepared to commit adultery. A woman with a husband from whom she is separated and who has a decent code and wants to stand up to his obligations, can never get free from him. So far as I can see, marriage is a sort of three-part contract. There is a sentimental side, a contractual side, and a biological side. It so happens that marriages are often contracted in a state of emotionalism and frequently without mature consideration, and the parties find after marriage that they are quite incompatible—that although there is nothing particularly wrong with either of them, they just cannot get along together, because they are unsuited. But we have not recognised, as have other people, the ground of incompatibility. Probably through faults on both sides, faults over which they have no control, a marriage is not a success, and eventually the wife takes action and obtains a separation and a maintenance order. After she has been living apart from her husband for some considerable time, she comes to the conclusion that a reconciliation is impossible. Sometimes after people have been separated under the Married Women's Protection Act, they come together again and are reconciled and live in their former matrimonial state.

But it frequently happens that reconciliation is impossible, and the woman comes to the conclusion that, so far as that man is concerned, temperamentally she is unsuited to continue life with him, and she does not want a reconciliation. As time goes on, she finds that after all there is another male in the world, just as attractive as the first one. Frequently she is young. She has a life to live and an undeniable right to have children, which is a function most women want to exercise. However, she finds herself in the unfortunate position that she made a marriage that has not turned out successfully. Being young, she wants to live her life in the way Nature intended, but she is married to a decent man who says he made a contract and will stand up to it, that he will maintain his children. Consequently she finds she is cut off from the things that belong to a woman. She feels there is another man whom she could marry and with whom she could settle down and live happily, but the first man she married has stood up to his obligations and is willing

to keep her and her children, and she has no release. She is condemned to be a wife without a husband, a married woman who cannot go and enjoy herself. If she seeks male companionship and goes to the pictures with somebody else, she wonders if there is a private detective pursuing her, waiting to see if she transgresses with somebody else.

She lives a horrible life, afraid to enjoy herself for fear her actions might be misconstrued. She is cut off from the friendship of males, almost hermetically sealed up from social enjoyment and intercourse for no other crime than that she married a decent man. If she had married a waster, she would be all right because the waster would not pay maintenance and, when he was in arrear, she would be able to obtain a divorce. If she is unlucky enough to have married a decent man, she is cut off from all the things that are a woman's birthright. At present, if she wants a divorce she cannot get it unless her husband is prepared to commit adultery or pretend that he committed adultery. Invariably the husband has to do it because 99 men out of 100, if it is necessary that adultery be committed, or that it appear to be committed, say, "I cannot have the wife committing adultery: I will do it myself." So, to give the woman a chance to live her life in a normal way, the husband has to undertake to commit adultery, or give the appearance of having committed adultery so that a divorce can be procured. That is the penalty he pays for being a decent man—a man willing to stand up to his obligations. If he were a rotter there would be no trouble because he would go off and probably not pay, and at the end of three years the wife could get her separation.

It is not fair to penalise decent men and yet say to the rotter, "After three years you will be free to marry again because your wife can divorce you," and at the same time to say to the decent man, "Because you are standing up to your obligations your wife has no chance to get a divorce, except you are willing to do certain things that you do not want to do." Many men are placed in that dilemma, and some of them, to give a woman her freedom, will comply with the requirements of the law. But some men feel that they do not want to do that. Although they would be willing to let the wife have her freedom if she has found another man with whom she thinks she could

live happily, they do not think it is right that they should be submitted to the public indignity of committing a matrimonial offence which they either did not or do not want to commit.

When two people have reached the adult stage and have been allowed to contract a marriage and select for themselves—sometimes when they are under 21 years of age—a partner, surely in their more mature years, having come to the conclusion that they cannot rub along together without recriminations, they should be allowed to put an end to that unsatisfactory state of affairs. Surely they have that individual right of freedom to say, "Well, we cannot get along together." The husband may say to his wife, "I do not want to keep you tied to me. If there is a man with whom you would like to embark again on the matrimonial sea, I do not object to your getting a divorce, and I will still maintain the children of the marriage, as in the past." It is not asking too much to allow those two people that much right to dispose of their lives and their own affairs.

Notwithstanding a lot of publicity about divorce, there are not so many divorcees in Western Australia. For the year 1938, which I took at random, there were 255 divorcees in this State as against 4,153 marriages. That is a very small percentage. It means that only 5 per cent. of the marriages have gone astray. Members need not be alarmed that we shall be increasing divorce by extending this section. With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I will give an illustration, which comes from your own end of the metropolitan area, of the terrible hardship that this present law places on a woman. A young woman, well under 21 years of age, married a foreigner. She was carried away and married him. She found that they could not get along together. It was not that there was anything wrong with him or with her, but they were poles apart in their outlook upon life, and without any transgressions on either side they were not able to live in peace and happiness. She had a child and after the birth she thought they might be able to get along better, but unfortunately the position did not improve. Ultimately they started quarrelling and she left her husband. She sued him for maintenance in the Fremantle Court, and did a foolish thing. She applied to the court for an order for separation from her husband,

and in a moment of anger, told the court, "I do not want my husband to keep me; I will keep myself. I will work. I do not want a man to keep me!"

The court made an order for separation and the payment of 12s. 6d. a week for the child, but no maintenance for the wife. That was all right. This girl, who was then about 21 years of age, did not realise the things to come. She went back to work and her husband regularly paid the 12s. 6d. per week for the child. Time went on and she arrived at the age of about 27 or 28 years of age, and had virtually been a shadow wife for something like eight years. She then met a man about her own age and became attracted to him. They felt they would like to get married. But she then thought she could not get married unless she got a divorce, so she went along to her husband and asked him, in view of the fact that they had been apart for eight years, would he give her grounds for divorce. He said no, that if he could not have her no other man would and she would have to remain single for the rest of her life. After all, he was entitled to say, "No, I am not going to pretend to commit a matrimonial offence to allow this woman to marry another man." He regularly paid the 12s. 6d. a week for the child, so there was no question of failing to pay maintenance. Here she is today, really a single woman and working for a living. The husband has not paid a penny piece for her keep in nine years. He has certainly made the contributions for the child. The law allows her no redress today.

Surely it is a hard penalty to place on that girl to say, "You made a mistake when you were 20 years of age and married a man with whom you could not live in compatibility, and because of that you are going to be doomed for the rest of your life—another 40 years; you are going to be denied the rights of a woman; the rights of motherhood and a home and all those things a woman holds dear." At present there is no way out for that girl. All she can do is to live with the man she loves unmarried, but neither he nor she is anxious to do that. Surely we are putting a harsh penalty on that girl if she is to be subjected to condemnation for 40 years for something she did when young! This Bill would afford relief to the girl. In giving her relief it would not release the husband from his obligation for the maintenance of the

children. If the husband committed adultery, this girl-wife could get a divorce, but he is obstinate, and I submit that it is unreasonable to deny that girl the right that other women in the community enjoy.

Attempts have been made to amend the law to provide that married persons who have been living apart for a certain number of years may get a divorce. I would not agree to legislation of that kind. When the Bill came before the House, I gave notice of some amendments because I wanted to ensure that a guilty party would not have the right to a divorce without the consent of the other party. That is what I have guarded against in this Bill; I have incorporated the amendments that were proposed to the previous Bill. This measure provides that if the parties are living apart for over three years, either one may apply to the court for a divorce and, if the other raises no objection, the court may grant the petition for divorce. If the other party raises an objection, however, the court is not empowered to grant a divorce in the event of the petitioner being in default. If the young woman I mentioned applied to the court for a divorce the husband could object, but because the husband was in default, seeing that she got the separation, the court could grant her a divorce. If the court was satisfied that it could grant a divorce, it could tell the man that he was unreasonable.

This Bill provides that if the applicant was the defaulting party, the court may not grant the divorce, but provision is made for the court to investigate the question whether he was the defaulting party. When there is a dispute between a married couple the wife generally sues for separation and maintenance, and the husband, without admitting he is in the wrong, but in order to save publicity, may consent to an order being made. If the Supreme Court was bound to follow that finding and say, "You were the defaulting party and therefore cannot get a divorce," a man who had consented probably out of goodwill, because he was a decent fellow and did not want to drag his wife through the court, would be unduly penalised. Therefore the court should be permitted to review the matter and decide whether the man was in default.

The Bill provides also that any petition granted will not in any way affect an order as to maintenance made in the previous court. If a woman applies to the court for a divorce

under this measure and it is opposed by the husband, and if she can show that the husband was the defaulting party, the court may grant a divorce and at the same time the order for maintenance against the husband will remain intact. If she has an order for the payment of maintenance for herself and children, she may get a divorce from the husband and her order for maintenance will continue and the husband will be liable to pay, notwithstanding the divorce. He would continue to be liable to pay until the wife remarried. When she remarried he would still be liable to pay the portion of the order relating to the maintenance of the children.

I admit that this Bill is a little hard on the male side and is giving further privileges under our divorce laws. Still, I can justify the granting of this advantage to women over men in this matter because generally the man is in a better position than is the woman when a marriage is broken up. We ought to safeguard beyond any danger the liability of the husband to continue maintenance payments for the wife and children without condemning the wife to remain married to him. If the husband wants a divorce and the wife does not wish to oppose the petition, the husband may get a divorce. This is primarily a Bill to give relief to women who find themselves in an unfortunate position. It proposes to give them the right to a divorce without having to subject their husbands to the ignominy of a charge of adultery.

Mr. McDonald: Or conspiracy!

Mr. HUGHES: If the Bill passes, the wife would not have to go to the husband and say, "Well, Bill, you realise that we will never get along. There is Jack, the fisherman. What about getting me a release?" The husband will say, "What can I do?" The wife will reply, "Well, you can commit adultery, or fake an act of adultery." The Bill would relieve the wife of the degrading necessity of asking her husband to proceed in that way. The measure would enable her, after three years, to go to the court and make her application, and the husband could come in and be heard. Then, if the judge were satisfied that to grant the divorce would be in the interests of both parties, he could grant it. The woman is well protected in this respect also, that when a husband sues for divorce, as soon as his petition is lodged, if the wife wishes to resist it, she gets an

order from the court for payment of her costs to the date of the answer to the petition; and the husband is compelled to put up security for any costs awarded later. Thus a husband who sues a guilty wife for divorce is obliged to make provision for her legal costs; and even if his petition is granted he has to pay the wife's costs as set out, in addition to his own.

Mr. Marshall: This is something of a lawyers' Bill!

Mr. HUGHES: Yes. On the other hand, if the wife sues the husband for divorce, he can enter a defence; and then he must immediately put up the wife's costs to a certain small amount. But he must put up the amount of those costs; and he is then ordered to give security for payment of the wife's further costs. If he loses, he has to pay the whole of the wife's other costs. So the happy position of a Western Australian husband is that if he gets a divorce he has to pay his own costs and a lot of the wife's costs, and if she gets a divorce from him, he has to pay his own costs and all hers. That is so today, and the Bill does not touch that aspect of the divorce laws. I do not believe that the passing of the measure will produce ten divorces here during the next ten years.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Then why bother about it?

Mr. HUGHES: Why should a penalty be put on a decent man? Why should we deny to a wife whose husband is not prepared, perhaps, to enter into a conspiracy, the opportunity to obtain her freedom without that indignity? A divorce can be obtained today if a husband is willing to do certain things; but I say we should not force a man wishing to give a woman relief into such a position as described. I know that women do not like asking men to pursue that course. The object of the Bill is to allow the doing of what is being done today, but without unpleasant features. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion of Mrs. Cardell-Oliver, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—WATER BOARDS ACT AMENDMENT.**

Returned from the Council without amendment.



**BILL (2)—FIRST READING.**

1, Justices Act Amendment.

2, Criminal Code Amendment (No. 1).

Received from the Council, Mr. McDonald in charge.

**MOTION—STATE CIVIL REQUIREMENTS.**

*To Inquire by Select Committee.*

Debate resumed from the 9th September on the following motion by Mr. McDonald—

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.

**THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT** [5.23]: There are already operating in Western Australia committees and authorities charged with the responsibility of doing that which this motion suggests should be done by a Select Committee to be appointed from amongst the members of this Chamber. The most important existing committee in this respect is the Emergency Reserve Stocks Committee. That committee consists of Government nominees and representatives of the manufacturers and retailers in the State. It will be seen that the personnel of the committee is widely representative of the main interests concerned. It was set up many months ago, after consultation with the Commonwealth Government, which, as members may recollect, was responsible for initiating in every State of Australia a scheme for the storage of emergency reserve stocks of goods and foodstuffs, so that the Australian people might be assured of supplies of foodstuffs and other essentials in the event of an emergency arising at any time. Reserve stocks of non-perishable goods have been built up to an extent which would allow people in the various districts, in the event of emergency arising, being reasonably supplied with such foodstuffs and other necessities of life for a period of at least 12 weeks.

I propose to give members information regarding the various classes of non-perishable goods that have been stored in country districts on the basis I have just described. The goods are, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda, candles, cocoa, condensed milk, cream

of tartar substitute, honey, jam, matches, salt, self-raising flour, laundry soap, sand-soap, soap flakes, sugar, tea (in the North-West districts only), canned fruits, rice and split peas. In addition to these goods, we have also stored under the scheme a quantity of perishable goods sufficient for the needs of the people in the districts concerned for a period of at least six weeks. These perishable goods are: Dried vine fruits, biscuits, infants' food, oatmeal, pearl barley and dried milk. The total value of the perishable and non-perishable goods so stored is £115,000.

It was realised a few months ago that this storage scheme would be insufficient to meet the needs of the people concerned if an emergency, serious in character, were to arise and hold up the transport of essential goods for a period longer than six weeks in the case of perishable goods and longer than 12 weeks in the case of non-perishable goods. The Commonwealth, therefore, decided to establish in the various States what is known as a secondary storage scheme; that is, a scheme supplemental to the one I have already mentioned, for the storage of essential goods, so that these would be available should an emergency extend for a period longer than three months. Under this secondary storage scheme—which is a big one—the Commonwealth Government has purchased and paid for the goods. It has also financed the cost of the transport of the goods to the secondary storage centres. The State Government has co-operated to the extent of paying the cost of all storage of these goods and also the cost of supervision of each secondary storage depot. Eight of such secondary storage depots have been established in the country districts of this State, and a huge quantity of stores has been placed at each depot. The goods so stored are: Jam, canned fruits, condensed milk, canned meats, dried milk, tea, Horlick's malted milk, candles, bar soap, salt, sugar, matches, cocoa and canned vegetables. It is estimated that such goods are sufficient to meet the reasonable needs of 150,000 people for a period of three months.

Mr. Patrick: Has any flour been stored?

The **MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT**: I will deal with flour a little later. I emphasise that the goods in the secondary storage depots are additional to the goods to which I referred earlier as having been stored in country districts

under the original emergency storage supply scheme. I now come to the question raised by the member for Greenough. A quantity of 787 tons of flour has been stored at 18 different country centres. Those centres were chosen because they are situated strategically from the points of view of transport and of reaching smaller centres in the particular districts. This quantity of flour is, of course, not kept continuously at the storage depots. As flour is currently required in country districts it is taken from the storage depots and new flour is sent up to be placed in the depots in lieu of that taken out. Therefore, the quality of the flour is protected, because the flour at the depots is being changed at regular intervals. All bakers in the districts are carrying reserve stocks of dry yeast or hops, the reserve stocks so carried being estimated to meet all requirements in the event of an emergency and other supplies being cut off for a period of at least six weeks.

In my opinion, the Commonwealth Controller of Emergency Supplies, Mr. Critchley, is undoubtedly, of all Commonwealth officers I have met, the most sympathetic to Western Australia. Right from the commencement of this scheme, following his appointment by the Commonwealth Government to ensure that the scheme would be thoroughly organised in all parts of Australia, he has been extremely helpful to this State. He has been to this State on a number of occasions and has remained here not only for a day, as some Commonwealth officers do, but for a week, and sometimes longer. He has consulted with manufacturers, wholesalers, retailers, and every organisation and individual likely to be of assistance to him in making available useful information and advice regarding the requirements of emergency reserve stocks and the best methods to build up such stocks to an adequate level. In addition, Mr. Critchley, when in eastern Australia, where his headquarters are, has made effective efforts to ensure that shipping space is available for emergency stocks which must be brought from eastern Australia to this State, and that such goods are shipped with the least possible delay. Because of his co-operation in this matter, our reserve stocks per head of population at least equal the reserve stocks of any other State; in some cases our reserve stocks are even better than

are those of some of the other States. When I was in Canberra recently I had an opportunity to discuss this matter with the Minister for Agriculture from Queensland, Mr. Bulcock. He was worried almost to a standstill at the position in Northern Queensland. He found that the reserve stocks that had been built up in Northern Queensland had been more or less raided in a legal way by large numbers of Military Forces which had been concentrated in that part of Australia, and he was at his wits' end to know not just how reserve stocks could be built up in Northern Queensland to meet an emergency, but how sufficient stocks could be made available to meet the current requirements of the civil population.

So it can be said with every justification that the position in regard to the storage of emergency reserve stocks in Western Australia is very good in the country districts, and I wish to pay a compliment for the position that has been reached in that regard to Mr. Critchley, the Commonwealth Director, and also to our own State committee, of which Mr. Smith is chairman. Special steps have been taken in regard to the North-West district of the State. Members will easily realise that the problem of making current supplies of essential goods available in the North-West is very difficult. There is no need for me to stress the point that the question of transport to the North-West from Perth or Fremantle has been a very difficult and ugly one. Even when it has been possible to get essential goods, or any goods for that matter, transported safely from the metropolitan area to the North-West, there has been the additional problem, particularly during the rainy season in the North-West, of having those goods transported inland to the storage depots that have been established in various parts of the North-West. This is a problem which did for quite a while offer a good many headaches to those trying to grapple with it, but it has been overcome to a very large extent, and special reserves of emergency and essential goods have been established in that part of the State. In this respect it is but right to say that the Minister for the North-West, the Minister for Agriculture, and other members representing North-West districts have been able to make available specialised knowledge and to give very great help in the endeavour to have this problem, as it affects the North-West, overcome in a

suitable, effective way. Because of that it can be said that many problems which appeared to be insuperable some weeks and months ago have been largely overcome, and the position of the people in the North-West, from the point of view of obtaining necessary supplies of essential goods in the event of an emergency, will be reasonably good, and they will be able to carry on for many weeks, even though supplies from outside sources may for a fairly long period be absolutely cut off from them.

There is a special committee operating under the chairmanship of the Minister for Agriculture, which is dealing with the production and the proper distribution of primary products of a food nature. That committee has been operating for some time and has done very good work, when consideration is given to the fact that many manufacturing problems have to be met with in this question of trying to maintain the production of foodstuffs from the land, and if possible even to increase that production so that adequate supplies of foodstuffs from the land might be available for all the Fighting Forces and also the whole civil population. There is a link between this committee dealing with the production of primary products by way of foodstuffs from the land and our Emergency Reserve Stocks Committee, inasmuch as the chairman of that committee is also a member of the committee of which the Minister for Agriculture is chairman. There is also another link between the fighting services and those two committees inasmuch as the special officer of the fighting services responsible for obtaining foodstuffs for the services, is also a member of the committees.

It will be seen, therefore, that the whole organisation set up to deal with those problems has been established in a well-organised and co-ordinated fashion, with the idea of eliminating as much as possible duplication of effort and waste of time, thought and energy in dealing with the problems to which I have made reference. The important question of establishing reserve stocks of emergency supplies for the population of the metropolitan area is also receiving consideration. Active steps have been taken for the purpose of establishing sufficient reserve stocks for the people in the metropolitan area, so that in the event of some emergency arising, which would force people therein to call upon what was already in the State, there will be sufficient for them by way of

specially stored essential goods to enable the population down here to have its wants met for a period of from 10 to 12 weeks.

I come now to a consideration of the position in respect of essential clothing and footwear requirements. It is realised that although the provision of foodstuffs is of first importance, nevertheless some clothing is required to enable the community to carry on its activities in a reasonable way, and this problem of obtaining sufficient essentially-required clothing and footwear, is one that has also been dealt with in the best way possible under existing conditions. First of all we have to remember in this regard that we have in Western Australia only a few clothing factories and footwear factories, and practically the whole of those factories operate only on a small scale. They have not in the past been able to expand their operations to the extent of building any larger factories and putting in more and better machinery, because of the force of the competition to which they have always been subjected from manufactured clothing and footwear that have poured into this State from the other States of the Commonwealth. In addition, the local clothing and footwear factories are under contract to the various fighting services to supply clothing and footwear for the fighting men and women. That means that very little of the manufacturing capacity of local clothing and footwear factories is available to manufacture clothing and footwear requirements for our civil population. In that regard, therefore, we become largely dependent upon what can be made available to us by the clothing and footwear factories in the Eastern States. In the majority of instances these factories also are under contract to the Fighting Forces to supply clothing and footwear. Nevertheless the factories in the Eastern States are turning out a fair amount of goods for civilian use.

Members will know that a rationing commission was set up by the Commonwealth Government some months ago to deal with the question of attempting equitably to distribute the clothing and footwear available for the civil population in Australia. A branch of that commission operates in this State under the control of Mr. Anderson who, until he was appointed to the commission, was secretary of the Metropolitan Market Trust and I think at one stage of his career he occupied the very important posi-

tion of Town Clerk to the Bunbury Municipal Council.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is no recommendation.

**THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT:** Mr. Anderson is a man of considerable administrative capacity and driving force, and he has not spared himself in any way in trying to obtain the utmost amount of clothing and footwear for the civil population of this State since being appointed to the position of Deputy Commissioner for Rationing in Western Australia. Because of our past dependency upon the other States for clothing and footwear our problem in this regard is probably more difficult than it is in the remaining States of the Commonwealth. We have, first of all, the problem of obtaining from the clothing and footwear factories in the Eastern States the necessary supplies for Western Australia. When we have obtained those supplies we are still up against the problem of having them transported either by sea or by rail to Western Australia. There is this point, too, which has operated against us to quite an extent: When the women-folk of Western Australia panicked into the shops on the threat of rationing in respect of clothing and footwear most of those stocks were quickly bought up. Probably the same thing happened in the other States too, but the retail shops in those States, by virtue of being close to the factories, were able quickly to replenish their stocks so that when rationing was introduced and the coupon system brought into use those retail stores had very much more in the way of stocks available for sale to the public under the coupon system than we did in our State where the stocks available in our shops and warehouses were not at all large. As a result, we started from scratch from the inception of the coupon system in respect of clothing and footwear.

We have strongly represented that special phase of the position to the Commonwealth authorities, and I am pleased to be able to say that they have recognised the legitimate character of the point of view we have put to them. Every effort has been made by the Commonwealth Government, through its special authority, the Rationing Commission, to build up to the greatest degree possible the stocks in this State of essentially required clothing and footwear. It might very well be that it is not possible today to

buy certain articles of clothing in Western Australia. It might be that it is also impossible from time to time to buy certain sizes or classes of footwear in this State, but generally speaking our position has been considerably improved as a result of the efforts put forward by Mr. Anderson in his capacity as Deputy Commissioner for Rationing, and also because of the special representations which have been made from time to time by the State Government to the Commonwealth Government.

Not so long ago the Deputy Commissioner for Rationing was able to have released a considerable quantity of working clothes and military boots for sale to the civilian population. This clothing and footwear were to have been shipped from Australia to India but because of a change in the war situation—a fortunate one for the allied powers and particularly for the working men of this State—those supplies were not required in India as it was thought they would be, and they were released by the military authorities for sale to the civilian population of Western Australia. That, too, was a great help and had the effect at the time of overcoming what appeared likely to be a serious situation here so far as the obtaining of working boots and other working clothes was concerned. So I submit that if there is one question or problem which has received the concentrated, detailed and continuous attention of the State Government, and of the special authorities set up under the control of the Commonwealth and State Governments, it is the one of organising supplies of essential goods such as foodstuffs, clothing and footwear, in order that the interests of the civilian population might be protected as much as possible under existing conditions.

We know that the capacity of factories to manufacture goods is limited. That capacity is limited on the one hand by the number of factories available and the equipment within them, and on the other hand by the manpower question. We know too that the fighting services make what might reasonably be described as "terrific demands" upon the factories for foodstuffs, for clothing and for footwear; and these demands are not always regular. When the Americans came here the demand made by our fighting services upon the factories for foodstuffs went up

to a great extent, almost overnight, and the position of the civilian population was to a considerable extent rendered worse because of that development. The position now, however, seems to be more normal, and it is possible at the moment to estimate ahead with a fair degree of reliability regarding the demands of the fighting services for foodstuffs, clothing and footwear. The position a year ago was very worrying, but as the months have passed and as the special authorities have been able to develop their plans and as the Commonwealth and State Governments have been able to co-operate more fully, the position has improved and today is such as to cause us to believe that, if a serious emergency arose here, we would be able to provide the reasonable clothing, footwear and foodstuff needs of our people for periods of eight to 12 weeks.

Mr. Marshall: I cannot get any boot polish.

**THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT:** If a member has any special problem regarding inability to obtain some necessary article, we would be pleased to hear about it and, if we considered the article to be a necessity and not a comfort or luxury, we would have steps taken to help him. I submit that the appointment of a Select Committee to deal with the questions on which I have spoken is unnecessary. The organisation has been expanded; it is working smoothly and effectively; and any information required by any member can easily be obtained. The chairman of the Emergency Reserve Stocks Committee is available at any time for consultation with any member; the Deputy Commissioner of Rationing in respect of clothing and footwear is also available at any time for a similar purpose, and I am always ready and willing to meet any member to give him detailed information regarding his own district or general information regarding the whole State.

I suggest, therefore, that while there would have been every justification for the appointment of a Select Committee 18 or even 12 months ago, there is no necessity for it today, and the appointment of such a committee would, I feel, use the time of members of the committee unnecessarily and would, to some extent, unnecessarily use the valuable time of those officers who have been appointed to handle the problem and who are handling it very effectively. I suggest

that the House do not agree to the motion, but be prepared to accept the brief history and explanation I have given, and take advantage of the opportunity of consulting with the chairman of any of the committees and seeking any further information required from the records available.

**HON. W. D. JOHNSON** (Guildford-Midland): The Minister has given a good deal of information, but I do not think he has reached the crux of the motion even now. True, there are reserve stocks and, provided the goods are in the State, those reserve stocks will be maintained and the committees will function to ensure that what is in the State is distributed on the basis directed by the authorities at Canberra. But that is not the problem raised by the member for West Perth. The difficulty is that we have still to rely upon Eastern States' manufactures to supply most of the current needs. Those who are on the spot and close to the manufacturers are getting an undue proportion of what is manufactured to the exclusion of a fair distribution from an Australia-wide point of view.

The member for West Perth read a letter to the effect that the manufacturer of an essential commodity that had been on order for Western Australia for some time excused his company from supplying on the ground that shipping space was not procurable. Those interested in Western Australia arranged for the shipping and, when the manufacturer was told that space was available, he had to admit that he had not the commodity because he had sold it elsewhere. That is the problem. We do not want committees functioning here unless they have commodities to function with, and the object of the motion is to ascertain whether we cannot make a better arrangement than we have at present to get essential commodities for distribution. The trouble is that companies or firms in Eastern Australia with branches in this State can look after their needs. They are on the spot where the commodity is manufactured and, because they have branches in Western Australia, they can buy also from Western Australia. We, however, want to look after our own established firms, companies and individuals operating purely from a Western Australian point of view, and those are the people who are being penalised under existing conditions.

Unless one is on the spot in Melbourne with the cash ready to purchase direct from the manufacturer, one is left. The trouble is that when orders are sent to manufacturers in the Eastern States and a bank draft is arranged for payment, the manufacturer has to do the packing and attend to the shipping. "Under existing conditions," the manufacturers say, "we are not going to be bothered about it." They do not admit it, but that is the actual position. Eastern States manufacturers will not bother about a Western Australian order because there is another buyer right on the spot, who purchases goods immediately they come from the machine.

Mr. Marshall: The Eastern States manufacturer has a ready local market.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Yes; and that market, being available, excludes us from obtaining that flow—which is the problem—of commodities so essential to the people's needs. It is useless to talk about reserve stocks and committees functioning and all that kind of thing if the commodities are not flowing into Western Australia up to the requirements of our people. It is that aspect of the subject in which I am interested. I know from experience that we are not getting the even flow we need, and that the difficulties are not being overcome but are accumulating; that the conditions are getting worse instead of better. It is true that organisations have been created, but those organisations are being side-stepped by reason of the circumstances of the local market, as already pointed out. That is the aspect that needs examining. Personally I would like it to be examined by some committee or some authority, so that we shall not have these constant worries as to whether this commodity or that commodity will be short soon, or whether it is possible for us to maintain reserve stocks. I repeat, reserve stocks are not the problem at all.

Current stocks represent the problem to the people of the State. It is the current stocks we are always anxious about. If we could secure a guarantee of the flow that we want, the flow that one usually does in business receive, if that flow could be organised and maintained, our difficulties would be overcome. But until that is done, there is no use in talking about all those things the Minister has spoken about today. They do not come into the picture. What we have to do is to discover means of obtaining a regular

flow for current needs from manufacturers in other parts of Australia, a flow up to the full needs of the people of Western Australia, so that we shall not have a surplus for the moment and a deficiency the next day. That kind of thing increases prices and disorganises conditions generally. I hope the member for West Perth will move for an investigation into that side of the subject, to see whether we cannot improve the opportunities for Western Australia to purchase in the Eastern States when we have the money available and everything is in order except that Eastern States buyers, being on the spot, get the first supplies and we get, if anything, what they have left—which, generally speaking, is not sufficient for the needs of this State. I would rather a committee went into that phase than let it drift any further. That phase is not fair to our people in this State.

On motion by the Minister for Lands, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 6.9 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

*Thursday, 15th October, 1942.*

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

### QUESTION—TAXATION.

*As to Departmental Staff.*

Hon. A. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary: 1, How many State officials were employed by the Taxation Department before the introduction of uniform taxation by the Commonwealth Government—(a) males; (b) females? 2, How many of these State officials respectively have been retained by the Commonwealth Government in the Taxation Department? 3, How many respectively have been transferred to Commonwealth Government activities and to what departments? 4, How many have been released