

# Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 12th August, 1943.

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

## QUESTIONS (3).

### TIMBER.

#### (A) As to Departmental Charges and Pegged Prices.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Forests: 1, Is the Minister aware that by fixing a comparatively high minimum upset price for the right to remove logs from Crown forests within a 15-mile radius of the metropolitan area, the cost of sawn timber to metropolitan consumers should be increased? 2, Will he consult the Deputy Price-Fixing Commissioner regarding the justice, or otherwise, of adding a special impost of this nature on saw-millers that cannot be passed on to consumers owing to the maximum price of timber being pegged? 3, Is he aware that producers of sawn timber are appealing for some relief on the grounds that existing forestry charges are out of proportion to the fixed maximum value of sawn timber? 4, If it is correct, as claimed, that the previous fixed cutting rates were too high, what justification can be advanced in support of an increase?

The MINISTER replied: 1, Having regard to the proximity of such log supplies to the metropolitan market and the advantages mills operating close to Perth have over more distant mills it is not considered that the upset prices fixed are high. 2, There appears no necessity for such action. 3, No. 4, It is not correct.

#### (B) As to Safeguarding Millers' Interests.

Mr. SAMPSON (without notice) asked the Minister for Forests: Will the Minister take the necessary steps to ensure that be-

fore district timber rights are sacrificed in unfair discrimination against rural workers and millers, consideration is extended to those already engaged in timber and mill work in bush areas?

The Premier: That is not a question; it is a comment.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not permitted to indulge in comments when asking a question. I shall not accept the question.

## VERMIN DESTRUCTION.

### As to Strychnine Supplies.

Mr. WATTS (without notice) asked the Minister for the North-West: With regard to the question dealing with strychnine supplies for vermin destruction which appeared on the notice paper and the answering of which the Minister postponed, will he make the required information available before the House meets again, seeing that the matter is of some importance?

The MINISTER replied: I shall make the information available as soon as possible. The officers concerned are at present attending conferences dealing with this subject, and that is why I asked for the questions to be postponed.

## CHAIRMEN (TEMPORARY) OF COMMITTEES.

Mr. SPEAKER: I desire to announce that I have appointed Mr. Withers, Mr. J. Hegney and Mr. Sampson to be temporary Chairmen of Committees for the session.

## SITTING DAYS AND HOURS.

On motion by the Premier, resolved—

That the House, unless otherwise ordered, shall meet for the despatch of business on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays at 4.30 p.m., and shall sit until 6.15 p.m. if necessary, and, if requisite, from 7.30 p.m. onwards.

## LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. North, leave of absence for two weeks granted to Mr. J. H. Smith (Nelson) on the ground of ill-health.

## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

### Fourth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. PERKINS (York) [2.21]: All members can applaud the references in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech to the success that

has attended the operations of our Armed Forces in recent months, and I think we are also justified in sharing the hope expressed by His Excellency that, as time goes on, that success will be repeated and that the period is not too far distant when the enemies of the democratic countries will be overthrown. Having said that, I imagine I would need considerable stimulant to wax as enthusiastic over the Lieut.-Governor's Speech as did the member for Bunbury. There was quite a lot in what that hon. member stated respecting which all of us will be in agreement. For example, he said that in his opinion it was desirable that railway finance should be regarded from a national point of view. That is a matter which people in the country areas have been urging upon Governments for a long time. The Government that the member for Bunbury supports has had many opportunities to give effect to that principle. The Labour Government has been in power continuously for almost 10 years. Yet it has made no effort to apply that principle to the finances of the Railway Department. Rather has its attitude been applied in an entirely contrary direction.

Take the position of the refreshment services: Rather than being regarded from the point of view of providing a national service to people using them, they are looked upon as a means by which to recoup the Treasury to the extent of the maximum amount possible. I refer particularly to the rental being charged on the Chidlows refreshment-rooms. The whole of the refreshment-room services provided on our railway system up to the present leave much indeed to be desired. In fact, I believe that much stronger language would be justified. We find that even as regards the dining-car services travellers refuse to avail themselves of them and carry refreshments of their own in preference. I am not aware of the rental charged in respect of dining-cars, but the Chidlows service I understand is bringing in something more than £1,100 a year; and Chidlows is only a small centre. The Chidlows services, I repeat, are wholly inadequate. The building itself is inadequate, and the services given to the travelling public are anything but a credit to the State of Western Australia. One only has to travel on the transcontinental and Eastern Goldfields line to hear adverse comments not only from people of our own State but also from

Eastern States travellers regarding the service provided here in that respect.

The same principle of looking at the finances of Government services from a national point of view may well be adopted in regard to water supplies. We have had some statements as to the Government viewpoint on water supplies. I have no quarrel whatever with the statements which have been made as to the need for those water supplies in the development of the State. As a matter of fact, I believe that water schemes are a fundamental necessity in the development of our agricultural areas. In no agricultural district in Australia has settlement been stable and satisfactory unless permanent water supplies have been secured. We cannot expect any decentralisation unless we provide water supplies adequate to the needs of the particular district. For instance, if we are not going to have an adequate water supply we can expect that a tendency existing for a very long while for people to make whatever money they can in agricultural pursuits and then leave the country districts entirely, going away to the cities to live, will become intensified. It may even be said that we have developed a practically migratory population. On the other hand if water supplies were provided throughout the agricultural areas, it is reasonable to expect that the people concerned would make their permanent homes there.

On the farms, if congenial surroundings are available, it is only natural to develop the homes and to establish a tendency to make such homes permanent residences rather than places just to live in until the occupants have achieved competencies enabling them to retire to the cities. In fact, even though there is a desire to leave the farms, instances should be common where a man and his wife have reared a family on the farm and the family has grown up and become able to carry on actual farming operations. Then no doubt such people would retire to live in the country towns; but if satisfactory services and the usual city amenities are not available in country towns as well, as in agricultural areas generally, it is only natural that such people will by-pass the country towns and get right away to the city areas. We do notice a contrast in this respect between Western Australia and some of the more thickly populated Australian States. No-one who has

travelled through Victoria or New South Wales, especially the inner areas of those States, can help being struck by the pride which is being taken in the life of the country towns. Indeed, there are cases where avenues of trees have been planted from one town to another, and where the gardens seem well kept and luxuriant even in summertime. None of those things would be possible without satisfactory water supplies. Therefore we can applaud all that has been said in regard to the need for water supplies.

Now, apparently, even this Government is inclined to make some alteration of policy in this respect. We have the statement made by the Minister for Works and Local Government to the Road Board Conference now sitting in Perth. The hon. gentleman said that the agricultural user of water could not pay 6d. per acre for water, and that means must be found to bring the charge for water within his ability to pay. I am indeed pleased to observe that change of heart on the part of the Government. We have been bringing to Perth deputations from country areas which have been rated at 6d. per acre for many years, and each time the reply to those deputations has been that the schemes cost a lot of money to put in and must be expected to provide their own debt services. Now the Government declares that it recognises that schemes rated on 6d. per acre cannot be expected to provide the whole cost. There have been efforts to do it in the past, but it has been an uphill fight for the people concerned. I am indeed sorry that in the past the Government has not seen fit to grant some concession in regard to certain schemes.

I could speak of one scheme, running south from Merredin, where no decrease was asked for in the 6d. per acre charge; or I might say 5d. per acre, there being a discount of 1d. allowed from the 6d. for prompt payment. All that the deputation from this particular scheme asked for was that after the rates had been paid and the amount of rebate calculated on 4s. per 1,000 gallons divided into the total amount of rates paid—which, of course, is the basis on which the rebate is arrived at—the excess water used by any individual settler should then be charged at the same rate as charged to other settlers along the main pipe-line, namely 2s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons where the water is pumped about the same distance. In the past those reasonable requests have been refused by the department, whose reply has

been that when the water schemes were put in the department allowed for some profit on the water used over and above that representing the actual amount collected by way of rates. That has always seemed to us settlers something of a pin-prick added to the generally excessive costs charged even on the rate per acre basis in all our areas situated at some distance from the main pipe.

The time has arrived when the Government should not only make some statement as to the schemes—by which I mean the actual areas in which the Government contemplates extending water supplies—but should also declare the charges contemplated to be made in those particular areas. I quite agree that the schemes are necessary throughout the more easterly areas; in fact, they should serve all the areas that have not permanent water supplies at present, but it is not much use drawing blue prints showing where the schemes are to be installed unless the prices to be charged for water per acre and per 1,000 gallons are satisfactory; otherwise the Government, when it has actually prepared concrete plants and is about to proceed with the work, will find that many of the farmers in the areas will not be able to assume the responsibility of saying that they can meet charges based on the present level. However, from the statements made at the Road Board Conference we have hopes that the Government is about to change its policy and put the water out on a much cheaper basis than in the past.

There will also be a difficulty in those areas where no water schemes exist at the present time and where farmers have spent a good deal of money in putting in permanent supplies of their own. That will be a difficulty, but in most cases, if water is put out at a reasonably cheap rate per acre and per thousand gallons, those farmers will be only too anxious to link up with a public scheme reticulating water from reservoirs in the hills, in order to have a supply which is certain to be adequate in dry seasons.

Another matter in the Speech is causing me some misgivings, and that is the reference to houses being made available on a low rental basis. I thought it was the objective of every political party in Western Australia to devise a scheme whereby people would own their own homes rather than merely rent houses.

The Minister for Mines: That scheme is in existence now.

Mr. PERKINS: Why not extend it?

The Minister for Mines: It is being extended all the time.

Mr. PERKINS: There may be some provision in the Bill, when it is introduced, which will cause us to alter our opinion in regard to it but, speaking on the matter generally, I think the Government is adopting a thoroughly bad principle if it proposes to build houses to be made available on a rental basis rather than on an ownership basis.

The Premier: We will have both schemes.

Mr. PERKINS: If houses can be made available on a rental basis, I see no reason why they should not be made available on an ownership basis.

The Premier: Unfortunately, many people have not settled jobs, and consequently they are not able to live for years in one town or suburb.

Mr. PERKINS: There may be special cases, but the principle is thoroughly bad. One has only to go around Perth to note the contrast between homes that people own and those that are merely rented. One of the greatest reforms that could be introduced in Australia would be to provide for people to own their own homes rather than rent them. Such a policy would enable them to live in more congenial surroundings and to have an incentive to improve the places in which they live, and it would also develop a more responsible attitude towards public affairs generally. One is always struck by the different attitude adopted towards public affairs by people who have some stake in the country, something to lose, compared with that displayed by those who have little to lose and who display a certain amount of irresponsibility.

Mr. Cross: Do you know that people in York have asked for houses to be built for renting purposes?

Mr. PERKINS: I do not know that and I am very doubtful whether it is true. I know it is not in accordance with recommendations that were made by the York Municipal Council, which is a responsible local governing authority. I understand the council has given a lot of information in answer to questions asked by a Government committee dealing with housing, and I cannot believe that any responsible body would

advocate houses on a rental basis rather than houses owned by the people living in them.

Mr. Cross: If men cannot afford to buy houses, are you opposed to houses being built for them to live in, or do you favour their going without any?

Mr. PERKINS: Dealing with some of the other Government activities, I wish to make some reference to the State trading concerns. We have heard quite a lot over the air since the Federal election campaign started in regard to monopolies, and what evil things they are. I quite agree that monopolies can be very dangerous indeed. I do not know that we have many big private monopolies in Western Australia, but we certainly have some Government monopolies which have many undesirable features. The State trading concerns are amongst the worst offenders. I refer particularly to the State hotels. One would think that a service being provided by the Government would be looked upon by the Government from a national point of view, but it seems to me that it is using the State trading concerns as a means of taxing the people who patronise them.

The Minister for Mines: We do not get much out of them.

Mr. PERKINS: In many instances these concerns are operated where there is no fear of competition from any other body. There is a State hotel in Bruce Rock. At one time an effort was made to set up a club in Bruce Rock on a similar basis to clubs in Merredin and Kellerberrin, but without success, because, I believe, of the existence of a State hotel in Bruce Rock. The local co-operative company, run on a co-operative basis by town and district citizens, tried to get a gallon license in Bruce Rock, again without success. I believe that was because we have a State hotel in that centre.

The Premier: The Licensing Court deals with that.

Mr. PERKINS: I think some influence is brought to bear.

The Premier: On the Licensing Court? That is a pretty rotten thing to say.

Mr. PERKINS: No, I did not say on the Licensing Court. However, I do not wish to go into those aspects. Where a State hotel has no competition, and main-

tains a service solely on its own account, one would think that the service would be made available to the public on the best possible terms. Instead of that, as much is charged as the market will stand. This is done in quite as irresponsible a manner as by any private concern. For instance, the charge for bottled beer in Bruce Rock is 2s. 1d. a bottle, whereas in Perth it is 1s. 9d. The cost of transporting the beer from Perth to Bruce Rock is 1½d. a bottle. That leaves 2½d. a bottle margin of profit for the State hotel in Bruce Rock over and above anything obtained by the Perth hotels.

The Premier: What is the charge at Corrigin?

Mr. PERKINS: I do not know. I have not checked that. In Merredin the private hotels charge 1s. 10d., which is 3d. less per bottle than is charged in Bruce Rock. That is not giving a fair service to the people. The Government is using a State trading concern in this instance as a means of taxing the people. I asked questions in the House in regard to these beer prices. The answer I received was that the Prices Commissioner fixes the price. But the price fixed by the Commissioner is only the maximum price. The State hotels could charge less if they wanted to. I do not want it to be thought that I am attacking any officer of the State Hotels; I get on quite well with them and they are giving a good service so far as it comes within the policy of the Government. But I believe the policy of the Government is wrong. It is employing a State trading concern as a machine for taxing a particular class of people using it.

I am afraid that most of my speech so far has been somewhat destructive, but I do not wish to continue right through in that vein. There is a constructive angle that I would like to put forward in regard to the position in the country districts. Those of us who live in the rural areas cannot help but be struck by the critical stage that has been reached there. When the war started the improvements on farms were in a reasonably satisfactory state, but with the increasing shortage of manpower and the difficulties associated with securing materials, the improvements have deteriorated in a serious manner. The acreage under wheat shows an additional decrease this year compared with last year—over and above the one-third cut.

When the returns of fallow are obtained by the Government Statistician, it will be found that the fallow area will be down considerably on last year's figures, and that the area under wheat will show an even greater decrease next year.

Fortunately the stocks of wheat in Australia, including Western Australia, are very large and there is consequently no danger of an actual shortage of wheat. In fact, we hope that we will have considerable surpluses that can be made available to devastated countries when the war finishes. But the lack of cropping is having a bad effect on the amount of feed that will be available for the running of stock, in the wheat areas particularly. This will vitally affect the meat position. In a recent statement to the Press the Prime Minister foreshadowed that we would have rationing of meat in order to keep our supplies going forward to Great Britain. If the information I have obtained is correct that rationing will be on a more severe scale than the ordinary man in the street realises. If we cannot improve the position in the rural areas it appears to me that it will get worse instead of better. Something can probably be done by raising the contract prices of mutton and lamb so as to give more encouragement to people to produce meat rather than cereals. However one looks at the position, one must realise that matters have drifted to such an extent in the rural areas that we are going to be in a difficult position regarding meat supplies.

I will now refer to another aspect which I think is even more serious. This is the third good season that we have had throughout the larger part of our agricultural districts. In some areas things are not as satisfactory as they should be, but for the major part the season is a good one this year. During these three years there has been a big change-over from cropping grain to stock-raising. I have not the actual figures, but the number of sheep being depastured in the agricultural areas now must show a large increase on those held in the first year of the war. Now, what will happen if next year is a bad one? That is worrying many of us. There have been quite good reserves of fodder carried through from the early years of the war but, with the uncertain labour conditions that prevailed in the hay districts at the time of hay-cutting last year,

a much smaller quantity of hay was cut in the inner districts than usual, with the result that it has been necessary for cutters to go out into the eastern areas in order to fulfil the chaff contracts to the military authorities, and to provide for the ordinary civil demand.

In the last few weeks two chaffcutters have been operating through the Bruce Rock and South Merredin districts. It is most unusual for any great quantity of chaff supplies to come from those areas. Because of that, and due to the prevalence of large numbers of mice, few growers see much hope of holding or replacing their reserves. The mice have damaged most of the stocks. In the majority of cases the growers have sold these reserves to the cutters and that hay is now being used as chaff. As a result, the reserves of hay in the eastern districts will be much depleted, and the hay remaining will be much damaged by vermin. I am afraid that if we get a bad season next year there will be but a very small reserve of old hay to meet the position.

Mr. Warner: Most of their troubles in the past have been due to overstocking.

Mr. PERKINS: If that is so, I do not know how the position can be described now, because a lot more stock is being carried today. This year the crops are likely to be excellent in the eastern areas. The potential reserves of fodder are there provided manpower can be made available to handle them. I understand that the manpower office contemplates taking some action concerning the hay districts proper but, so far as I can gather, little is being done to deal with the other districts. If something is not done there is little hope that much fodder will be conserved from the growing crops, because at present manpower simply is not available to handle the hay. Hay garnering is work that is additional to ordinary farm work. It takes the labour available in the various districts all its time to cope with the ordinary farm work, so that an additional demand such as this has very little chance of being handled by local labour. Unless labour is in sight even those who have crops available will hesitate to cut them for hay.

I know of one individual case in these areas. A man last year had a very good crop. His reserves were not particularly

good, and he cut approximately 200 tons of excellent hay. He applied to the manpower office, and tried his best to get labour locally but without success. He carted portion of his hay almost entirely on his own, though he did have an old man to help him with some of it. The old chap did not last long because the job was too hard for him. The result was that, of the 200 tons, that man carted barely 100 tons. The remaining 100 tons is still lying in his paddocks, rotten and black! The same position will recur this year, but it will be accentuated by reason of the fact that the reserves will have been further depleted. I suggest that the Government make representations to the military authorities to co-operate with the producers in some manner similar to that done in New South Wales last year. I understand that in that State certain military units, as such, were used to do some of this hay work and help in the handling of this conserved fodder. I do not see any insuperable difficulty against the same thing being done here.

Many of our military units are not actively employed at the present time. They are fairly well trained and the time taken in handling our hay crop would not be sufficient to interfere with their training. If we do nothing about it we will waste the present great opportunity to safeguard our fodder position, and by safeguarding our fodder position we will be safeguarding the meat supplies, not only of Australia, but those which we are in duty bound to send to Britain and the Allied Forces throughout the world who are dependent on what Australia should be providing for them.

Mr. Marshall: Who footed the bill for that military labour in New South Wales?

Mr. PERKINS: The farmers paid on some agreed basis. There would be no difficulty in that regard. The labour we get in the agricultural areas at present is dear enough, so there would be no quarrel about the payment. The main thing is to get the work done. We did have hopes that some amelioration of the labour position existing in the agricultural areas would be forthcoming from the prisoners of war scheme, but unfortunately those who applied for prisoners of war—and there were some hundreds of them, and the applications pointed to the urgent need for manpower through-

out the rural districts—are being informed by the manpower office that it is unable to go on with the scheme. Apparently there is some hitch, because of the uncertain military position regarding Italy. As a result of the international complications that might accrue if we used Italians as prisoners of war, or whatever the trouble is, the authorities are not able to make available prisoners of war at the present time. Of course we hope it will not be long before the Italians are knocked out of the conflict. The position is a serious one indeed and I feel I cannot too strongly urge the Government to make some plans in regard to it. If the position is allowed to drift the farmers will have little heart to do this extra work.

Mr. Marshall: Did the farmers ever contemplate direct action?

Mr. PERKINS: If the hon. member can suggest any useful action there are many farmers who will support it. This is a desperate case and most of the farmers are prepared to do the best they possibly can to provide the supplies which Australia and Britain so urgently need. They will do it if they can get any co-operation from the Government. But if they are left to battle along entirely on their own, under the present manpower shortage, we will face the dangerous possibility of having a shortage of feed next year with which to carry our stock. That position will be made worse by the fact that with the reduction in crop there will be less grain stubbles than usual. The ordinary grass that grows in most of these eastern areas does not stand particularly well as dry feed. A lot of it is barley grass and has little value as dry feed. In the past it has been the practice to depend on grain stubbles to a large extent for summer feed, in addition to the conserved fodder.

Another thing that is affecting the situation is that owing to the shortage of super and lack of cropping, many of the natural pastures are going back. The effect might not be felt to a great extent in the immediate future, but it will gradually become worse. One can see paddocks in the eastern areas that will carry anything up to 1,000 sheep on 300 or 400 acres through the greater portion of the growing season, and now they would carry probably not more than 200 or 300 sheep for the same period. With lack of cropping and lack of super, the feed available even in the growing period is con-

siderably reduced, and the position is worse in the dry part of the year because the barley grass has a very limited food value when it runs to ear.

The position of the farmers was aggravated to some extent by the severe storm experienced in portion of the agricultural areas in the early part of the year. Considerable damage was done to many improvements, and generally conditions have been made more difficult for the settlers. I should like to pay a tribute to the military authorities for the great help they gave immediately after the storm. I do not know how the farmers in the York district would have fared but for the very prompt assistance given to them. They made available the services of men for clearing roads and re-roofing houses and, in some cases, sheds. All the people are grateful for the assistance thus given. In the town of York the damage was more severe than in almost any other centre in the track of the storm.

I take this opportunity of thanking the Premier and the Minister for Works for their assistance and advice to a deputation from the York Municipal Council on the matter of helping indigent cases suffering from the effects of damage by the storm. As a result of their advice and help, we approached the Lotteries Commission, which was good enough to grant £950 for assisting difficult cases, so that homes might be restored. I take this opportunity of thanking also the Lotteries Commission for its generous help.

The matter of the price fixed for the hiring of two-stand shearing plants was brought before the Deputy Prices Commissioner, who, I understand, was originally the State Prices Commissioner, and is now Deputy Commissioner under the Federal regulations. The object was to curb the activities of owners of these plants who charged what were generally considered in the agricultural areas to be entirely unreasonable prices for the hire of those plants. It is the custom to pay a rate additional to the sheep-shearing award rate when a man owns the plant as well as the labour. For several years a maximum of 10s. per 1,000 sheep above the State shearing award rate was considered to be a reasonable amount, but the Deputy Prices Commissioner adopted what one can only describe as an extraordinary set of figures in arriving at an amount of £1 as additional loading to the award rate. I have a copy

of the figures—some of which were modified in later discussions with farmers' representatives—on which the award was based. The details are:—

**OPERATING COSTS FOR TWO-STAND PORTABLE SHEARING PLANT.**

Fixed Costs—	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Depreciation:						
List Price	140	5	0			
Freight	1	15	0			
				142	5	0
Interest at 5 per cent. reducible on £140 5s. over 10 years				56	6	6
Maintenance at 50 per cent. of List Price of Plant				71	2	6
Total Fixed Costs over 10 years (10 years—On average of 25 operating weeks per year, including 7 weeks crutching and 16 weeks shearing)				£269	14	0
Total Fixed Costs per week of 44 hours				1	8	5
Variable Costs—	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Fuel, Petrol—7 gals. at 3s. per week	1	1	0			
Oil, 2 gal. at 7s. 8d. per week	0	5	9			
Emery Cloth, 4 sheets at 2s. 7d. per week	0	10	6			
Glue, 1 x 8 in. oz. tin at 1s. 3d. per week	0	0	9			
Grease, 1 lb. tin at 1s. 9d. per week	0	0	11			
Total Variable Costs per week				1	18	11
Total Costs per week				3	1	81

**COSTS OF SHEARING 1,000 SHEEP WITH A TWO-STAND PORTABLE PLANT BASED ON AVERAGE OF 1,000 SHEEP PER WEEK.**

Wages at 36s. 3d. per 100 (Rate 37s. per 100 from 1st March, 1913)	£	s.	d.
Plant at £3 1s. 6d. per week	18	2	6
Machinery Breakdown Indemnity Fund	3	1	6
Insurance at 45s. on wages	0	2	0
Pay Roll Tax at 21 per cent. on total wages (less 10 per cent. exempt), say	0	8	0
Transport, 20 miles at 6d.	0	10	0
Telephone and Telegrams	0	10	0
Organisation Expenses and Wages	0	10	0
Exchange on Cheques	0	1	0
Advertising	0	1	0
Stationery, Postage Stamps, and Revenue	0	2	0
Exporting at 2s. per 100	1	0	0
Provision for Income Tax			
Total Costs per 1,000	24	16	6
Total Costs per 100	2	9	71

Income—	£	s.	d.
1,000 sheep at, say, 50s. 3d. per 100 without keep	28	2	6
Less Total Costs	24	16	6
Profit per 100—40s. 71	£3	6	0

1st July till 31st October—16 weeks (1 season)—

16 weeks at 1,000 sheep per week	16,000
16,000 sheep at £3 8s. per 1,000	£53 2s.
10 seasons at £53 2s.	£531

I should explain that the rate for shearing was later raised from 36s. 3d. to 37s. per 1,000. By way of comment on some of the items, I point out that the amount of £269 14s. was an extremely inflated value. A majority of the men in a position to express an opinion say that, if an allowance of £160 had been made, it would have been nearer to a reasonable basis. Even the total cost per week of £3 1s. 6d. was very inflated. Exception is taken to the allowance for telephone and telegrams. The experience is that most growers are waiting on the doorstep of the farmer where the

plant is working in order to find out when it will be available. I have referred to the handling of 1,000 sheep per week. From the 1st July to the 31st October represents 16 weeks—that is, in a reasonable shearing season without allowing at all for the use of the plant for crutching. These 16,000 sheep at £3 6s. per 1,000 represent £52 2s., which is profit over and above any cost of shearing the sheep at all. Thus in ten seasons the contractor may receive a total of £531 profit, in addition to his remuneration for shearing the sheep. Such will be the results from a plant which originally cost £142. The figures taken were absolutely unreasonable. Deputations from the growers to the Prices Commissioner were arranged for the purpose of arriving at a more reasonable basis; but a recent statement in the Press is to the effect that the Prices Commissioner refuses to do anything now because the season has been started. He declares that the farmers will have to wait until next year. The prices fixed are maximum prices, but the constant tendency is for the maximum to become the minimum. I believe that this price of 56s. 3d. per 100—which is the maximum price fixed by the Prices Commissioner—is being charged generally throughout the agricultural areas. Certainly it is causing much dissatisfaction.

Then there is the question of an award for farm labour which is at present before the Industrial Arbitration Court, and which represents an advance of 6d. per hour on last year's award. The net result is a very difficult situation indeed for the farming community. We farmers have had some small increases on the very low returns that we had been getting for most of our produce previous to the war; but when costs such as these are loaded on the industry, the producers find themselves in an increasingly difficult position. As regards industrial awards, I believe that the farmers as a whole have no objection to the making of a reasonable award for the industry. Many charges have been made that farmers want labour at cheap rates. In my opinion the majority of farmers do not want labour at cheap rates. They want efficient labour, and for efficient labour are prepared to pay reasonable rates.

If inquiry is made over the years it will be found that the majority of reasonable employers in the farming industry have been prepared to pay at least the basic



wage, and probably something above it, to their regular farm hands. Had they not been prepared to pay such rates the labour would have drifted away to other industries. Any man having a first-class farm worker simply cannot afford to lose him as he necessarily knows more about the property than would any new man coming in. It is only reasonable to expect that the farmer will have brains enough to appreciate that, if he wants to keep his experienced worker, he must pay him reasonably. The responsible section of the farmers has always been prepared to pay a reasonable wage to farm workers.

We do not oppose an industrial award because we want cheap labour; but if we get an award we expect it to be on a reasonable basis. If we do get a reasonable award, it will do the industry much more good than harm, for it will tend to keep good men who are working in the farming industry within that industry, and thus maintain the efficiency of farm labour. The point is that in the past the farming industry in far too many cases has had to absorb labour that other industries did not want. The awards made last year for the harvest period, and the log which has been served this year, take no cognisance whatever of the efficiency or otherwise of the labour available. In far too many cases farmers are paying very high rates for labour that is not entirely efficient. I am aware that in bringing this matter up I am advancing something over which this Parliament has little control. We can hardly blame the State Government for this particular development. However, to state the case does help to explain some of the difficulties facing the rural community.

The only other rural matter I wish to refer to is the Wheat Stabilisation Scheme which has worked reasonably well, thanks to the very good management of the Stabilisation Board in this State. I understand the position here is immeasurably better than that existing in some of the Eastern States. But one reform which I consider should be made, and as to which our State Agricultural Department may be able to make some representations to the appropriate Federal authority, relates to the minimum acreage allotted. The genuine farmer, one who is getting the major portion of his income from wheatgrowing, should not be cut below an acreage that is capable of giving him 3,000 bushels in an average year. I

know of some men who, while farming on not very good land and not being in a very big way, when they have had their third cut taken off their average acreages are so placed that they cannot make reasonable incomes from their farms.

Thus they find themselves in a position that is far from equitable. As to the farmers who depend but slightly on wheatgrowing, if their cases are treated in exactly the same way, there is a grave danger of bringing down the whole Wheat Stabilisation Scheme. For such growers would be tempted, when wheat is stabilised, to make wheatgrowing their principal vocation. And that would affect the genuine wheatgrower. So far as he is concerned, his acreage should not be cut to such a level that he is not able to produce 3,000 bushels a year. If he does not get 3,000 bushels he has not much chance of making a profit. I trust the Agricultural Department of this State will be able to make representations to the appropriate Federal authority which will ensure the bringing about of some such reform as that.

I also wish to refer to our education facilities. The time was when Australia rightfully prided itself on being in the forefront of the world as regards education; but I think many of the older generation could say that the education policy we are pursuing at present differs very little from the policy under which they received their schooling. My belief is that, educationally, Australia has stood still while the rest of the world has gone forward. If we speak to oversea visitors who possess intimate knowledge of educational matters in other countries, we cannot but be struck by the improvements and refinements which have been effected in the educational systems of those countries, improvements and refinements about which we in Australia know nothing.

I wish to make reference to a booklet which I presume most members have received and which I hope they have read. It has been prepared by the Australian Council for Educational Research, the members of which are—

President: H. T. Lovell, Professor of Psychology, University of Sydney.

Vice-President: J. D. G. Medley, Vice-Chancellor, University of Melbourne.

Members:

C. R. McRae, Prof. of Education, University of Sydney.

P. R. Cole, Vice-Principal, Teachers' College, Sydney.

G. S. Browne, Prof. of Education, University of Melbourne.

J. A. Robinson, Principal, Teachers' College, Brisbane.

A. J. Schulz, Principal, Teachers' College, Adelaide.

R. G. Cameron, Prof. of Education, University of Western Australia.

C. E. Fletcher, Secretary of Education, Tasmania.

There are one or two brief passages I wish to quote from the introduction—

It cannot be expected that the objectives outlined herein will immediately win general approval. Some of the issues are highly contentious. They represent, however, matters on which decision cannot be indefinitely delayed.

Because this document is produced by the Australian Council for Educational Research it is not implied that each of the nine members of that body approves in detail of each proposal contained therein. The statement has been drafted by the staff at the headquarters of the Council as the result of study of accepted practices and recent tendencies in other English-speaking countries. Each recommendation could be matched by precedents which are in actual operation. The various proposals could therefore be classified as Utopian only in ignorance of what is happening elsewhere.

The original draft was submitted to members of the Council and has been modified—though not always to the extent desired by individuals—in the light of discussion and comment. No point is included which was not acceptable to a majority of members.

There are also some points where emphasis is placed more on an end to be achieved than on the means whereby this end should or could be attained. This is due partly to the desire to keep the statement within reasonable length, but chiefly to the fact that much discussion and some experimentation would be needed before anyone could say what particular form of organisation would best achieve the desired end.

I also desire to quote some of the recommendations made by the council; they are of a far-reaching nature and I believe will sooner or later have to be faced by the Government of this State—

#### PROPOSALS FOR FEDERAL ACTIVITY IN EDUCATION.

The Federal Government should establish the necessary machinery, perhaps under the title of "Office of Education," to carry out the functions indicated below. It will be noted that while some of these functions are administrative in character, they would not involve the taking over of control of primary and secondary education. Education at these levels would as at present remain the responsibility of the State Governments. The Federal agency would, however, enter into co-operation with State and municipal authorities in educational affairs and would be in a position to assist and encourage progressive action.

The Federal Government should—

1. Develop and maintain an adult education service. It would be desirable for such a service to operate through the establishment of community centres. These could be financed and staffed by the Federal administration, but, where practicable, use could be made of State educational facilities. As part of this policy the Federal Government should subsidise the erection of school buildings and the provision of equipment where such buildings and equipment, having been approved by the Federal authority, are made available to it for purposes of adult education. The establishment of community centres or any other form of adult education would, of course, be carried out in such a way as to give full encouragement and scope to local effort.

2. Stimulate and subsidise the development by State and local authorities of public library facilities as an important form of adult education.

3. Finance the universities. Such financial aid as the universities now receive from Government funds comes in the main from the State Governments. The taking over of this responsibility by the Federal Government would release State funds for other educational purposes.

4. Subsidise technical education in tertiary (i.e. Senior Technical) institutions.

5. Extend the present Federal activity with regard to health and physical education.

6. Initiate and carry out educational research, train research workers, collect and disseminate information relating to educational matters, provide an advisory service for the States, act as the liaison between the Commonwealth and other countries in matters relating to education.

7. Develop the use of the film and radio for educational purposes.

8. Stimulate new developments in education by subsidising approved educational experiments initiated by State or local administrative authorities.

9. Lady Gowrie Pre-School Child Centres.

#### FUNCTIONS OF STATE AND MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES.

The State authorities should:

1. Continue to administer primary and secondary education in their areas.

2. Undertake an active programme for the provision of informal education for children from 2 to 6 years on the model of the present Lady Gowrie Pre-School Child Development Centres. The Lady Gowrie centres could be used in connection with the training of the new personnel required.

3. Modify the present State administrative machinery so as to secure long-term educational planning, greater freedom of action, and criticism on the part of professional officers, a less immediate form of dependence on ministerial and parliamentary approval, a clear recognition of the primary importance of stimulating public interest in education, avoidance of seniority as a basis for appointment to the chief administrative posts.

4. Modify the present inspectorial system in such a way that the inspector can give practically undivided attention to organising his district and ensuring the professional growth of his teachers. Similarly the inspector's own professional progress should be provided for by travel, by reading and by periodical attendances at lectures and discussions.

5. Convert the present inspectorial districts or certain groupings of them into relatively autonomous administrative units. The inspector (or "education officer") in charge of such a unit would then become in effect, and possibly in name, a local superintendent of education.

6. Provide such unit of administration with the assistance of an advisory body of citizens.

7. Encourage steadily increasing participation in education by local authorities such as municipalities.

Those are merely headings, but they open up a very wide range of thought. Some of the recommendations could not be adopted by us under our present Constitution; some of them, in the opinion of the majority of members, may not be desirable, but the ends which these reforms seek to achieve are eminently desirable.

Recommendation No. 2 deals with the provision of public libraries, a question in which I am particularly interested. I addressed myself to it on the first occasion when I spoke in this Chamber and I believe it is essential for the extension of our adult education system. Since then I have made many inquiries in city and country areas into the possibility of introducing some such reform on a small scale immediately and at least getting the organisation set up. I have at present a proposal before the Premier which I know he is considering and which I hope he will be able to finance, so that we may extend a free lending library system to country centres as a start, previous to establishing the system on a State-wide basis. The facilities we have are very limited, but it is inevitable that something will be done after the war.

Recommendations such as these by a body which has gone into the position very thoroughly make it plain that this is necessary. There is very strong support, both in the city and throughout country areas, for an extension of the system. If we have a proper sense of our responsibilities, we shall do all in our power to bring to our people the thoughts of the most eminent authorities in the world today, who have given careful consideration to all the great questions that are facing the world. If we do not do that, we shall leave our people in ignorance of what

is happening in the rest of the world. In such circumstances, can we wonder if short-sighted policies are adopted? I believe our educational system is the foundation of all the progress that we can make. Unless we have knowledge we cannot have progress. That is why I attach so much importance to improving the foundations of our educational system. It will have repercussions throughout Western Australia.

I give the department full credit for the good work being done in connection with area schools. If we can improve the facilities in the country and develop the area schools, we will give a greater proportion of country children a chance to obtain a secondary school education and also enter the civil service. Because of the improved facilities enjoyed by children in the city areas they have many added advantages compared with children in the country, and a greater proportion of them are recruited for the civil service. If that service were recruited on a broad basis from the whole population it is only reasonable to expect that all the officers concerned, by reason of the early environment in which they had been bred, would have a better grip of the problems facing the administration of Australian affairs today. An officer who was closer in touch with conditions throughout the agricultural areas would not have made such a stupid award in regard to two-stand shearing plants as was made recently by the gentleman appointed to do that particular job. It is fundamental that we should try to improve the whole of our educational system. These recommendations should be given very serious consideration by all members and I am hopeful that the time will come when we shall be able to extend our primary, secondary and adult educational services to a level at which all our people, and not just some of them, will have the benefits of the latest developments in educational research throughout the world.

**MR. TRIAT** (Mt. Magnet): I am very pleased that the opening of Parliament this session found us in a much better position than 12 months ago so far as the war situation is concerned. I think this is the first time since the war began that we have been able to view the prospects with a feeling of some confidence. I believe a glimmer of victory has shown through the clouds, and I hope that when we assemble next year—that is to say, those of us who come

back from the hustings—we will do so with the knowledge that victory has been achieved and that this country is ready for development. It is my intention this afternoon to address myself to the development of the industries of Western Australia rather than to go back over the history of what has not been done in the past. I agree with other speakers that there are many things that have not been done, not only in this State but in the Commonwealth as a whole. If we go far enough back we shall find that no country is able to say that it has not made mistakes, and that it has done full and plenty for its people.

There is an opportunity before a young country such as this to make advance. If the war clouds disappear from Australia during next year, we shall be facing the future with some brightness of outlook, and it will be possible for us to make plans to benefit the people in the country. The member for York spoke of the position of people on the land. I agree with what he said. The people on the land are having a bad time and they have had a bad time in the past. The cause I do not know at the present time, but I know that when I was farming I could not make a living, and got out of it; not because the Government did not give me any assistance but because the prices were not good enough. The crops I grew were not sufficiently valuable, and I had to get off the property. That is why I got out, and I presume that many other people in business activities had to do the same. However, there were other farmers who made good. I presume that when it is all boiled down the fact was that my capabilities were not sufficient to earn me a living on the land. Good farmers ought to be able to make a living.

One thing certain is that any man who goes on the land and tries to make a livelihood at farming or station work or anything else should not be over-burdened with a terrific amount of debt. That is the big bugbear with most people. The properties are over-capitalised. Interest is the curse in many cases. There is no man who can get sufficient out of his land if it is over-capitalised. One of the great functions of this Government is to see that when people go on the land they go on it with a low capital value, and have a chance of meeting their commitments and being able to afford to pay a reasonable wage to those who work

for them and yet retain a profit to provide a good living for themselves. No man, whether he be a farmer, a labourer, or a business man, should do for nothing the work he is called upon to do. He should be remunerated for his services no matter what they may be, provided he is a worker. Any man who goes on the land is a worker. He toils long hours, in many instances for seven days a week. The future of Western Australia will have to be shaped differently in the coming years.

Large amounts of money will not be paid out to people irrespective of whether or not they can make good. Before money is granted to people to go on the land, they will have to show aptitude for that class of work, and the land will have to be suitable for their purpose. Given such conditions, men would be able to look to the future with some security and to the possibility of making a living. I heard a statement made from the Ministerial bench that millions of money had been written off in respect of the South-West. If millions of pounds were spent, millions of pounds should have been earned. Obviously there was bad judgment somewhere. I heard of settlers being placed at Southern Cross. That was a shocking thing. They should never have been settled there. That district will not grow more than one crop in every six years. Can it be said that the officer who was responsible for sending men there was a capable man? He should have been dismissed immediately from the service of the Government, and his place filled by a man with some sense of responsibility who was not prepared to sacrifice men and to utilise the capital of the people to support men on such holdings.

We cannot make progress without some foundation on which to work. As the member for York said, what we require is education and correct methods of training. If rehabilitation schemes are to be undertaken without education and special training, we shall get nowhere. After this war Australia will require a much bigger population than it has had in the past. We cannot hold this coastline forever against an aggressor nation unless we have a larger population. Next time we are in a war—and I presume we will be in one again because wars seem to come round like other evils—we may not have an America to call upon for assistance. We might have to fight with our own resources. If that is the case we will need

a population much greater than has previously been anticipated.

A population of 30,000,000 will not be sufficient if the hordes to the north attack us. The countries immediately north of Australia have a population of 750,000,000 inhabitants. In physique many of them are equal to our people. I have seen numbers of Chinese with physique as good as that possessed by any Australian. Many of the Indians are the same. The intelligence of these people is not far behind that of the white people. They have proved that, with sufficient education, they are capable of doing the things we do. I can remember telling members in 1939 or 1940 when war broke out between England and Germany that Japan was a danger to Australia, and I can recall the House bursting into laughter and telling me I did not know what I was talking about, and informing me that I had never heard of the "boys of the bulldog breed."

Mr. Thorn: We have always realised that Japan was a menace.

Mr. TRIAT: This House can no longer maintain the quiescent attitude it adopted in the past. Without the assistance of powerful allies, Australia would now be dominated by Japanese. It is because of countries like America and Britain that we have not suffered invasion from the Japanese, and are today free from their control. Let us not blind ourselves and think that things will always be so in the future. Let us not be too sure that next time Japan, or some other oriental nation, attacks us it will not be better prepared.

The Minister for Mines: We are just as liable to be told three months after this war to be pacifists again.

Mr. TRIAT: That may be so, but we must build up our population. If we cannot increase it naturally, we must encourage immigration and bring people into this country.

Mr. Berry: Whom would you bring?

Mr. TRIAT: Anyone decent enough to come in and work, so long as he is a European and not an Asiatic. We must do as America has done. That country consists of every type of European, and today it is a nation second to none. Its people are not a true breed, but they have proved to be very capable. Also, America is a country of many resources, and so is Australia.

All we require is manpower to utilise our resources.

The Minister for Justice: And we can carry as big a population as America has.

Mr. TRIAT: I hope so. We have not the wonderful waterways of that country, but we have wonderful wheat, fruit, and grazing lands, and everything that goes to make a wealthy and prosperous nation. What have we done with all these things? Nothing, except settle a miserable 7,000,000 people. That is the population with which we have to work a country of the extent of Australia! I have heard people say it is a desert. I have been over most of Western Australia but have seen no desert in it. I have been in the worst portions of the north-west of this State but have not seen any desert. On one occasion I met a man travelling down from Leonora. He happened to be a station owner from that locality, and I know the district well. This man had bought a station property there and he had some wool in little boxes. He took it out and looked at what he called the "crimp" in the wool and told me what wonderful wool it was. He said, "I have bought a wonderful property in Leonora. I have running water." I began to think he was not too good in the head. I said, "Where is the property?" He said, "Seventeen miles out." I said, "I have never seen running water there; you must have looked at it after a thunderstorm." He said "There is water only 50 ft. deep; to me that is running water." I began to realise that that man was not far out. He told me that in South Australia they had bores going down to 1,500 ft. to get sub-artesian water. The deepest well on his property at Leonora was 60 to 70 ft. down. There is not a portion of the north-west of this State, through which I have travelled, where water for domestic use or garden purposes could not be obtained by sinking a well up to 100 ft. deep.

So, we have an abundance of water in the back country that is called a desert. There is no desert. The only part of the State without water is in the Eastern Goldfields, where the water is salt. From Menzies north to the Kimberleys the water is fresh, and there is plenty of fresh water also in the southern portion of the State. All this talk of desert country in Western Australia is so much hooley. There is hardship and dryness, but there is abundance of water,

good land and timber, and if we put the work into the country it produces an abundance of feed.

Mr. Doney: There is an oasis in every desert, but the desert is there just the same.

Mr. TRIAT: Where is the desert in this country?

Mr. Doney: I was not talking of Western Australia.

Mr. McLarty: Can you always get fresh water?

Mr. TRIAT: Yes, and the country will grow anything—the best of vegetables, fruit and feed. It is not a desert, but it is deserted because it has no population. In order to get people to go there, something must be done for them. Nowadays we cannot ask people to go out with a waterbag in one hand, a billy in the other and, as I have heard said, a pick in the other. I have not yet struck a chap with three hands. People now have an idea that they must live at the mouth of a sugar bag, where there are plenty of picture-shows, dances and amusements every night. The people want to go out to the beaches; they do not want to go into the back country. I do not say they are not prepared to work; they are, but they want to work under the best conditions. They must be given facilities if they are to be induced to go into our hinterland. They must be provided with homes.

Every man who is married and prepared to raise a family is entitled to possess his own home, but the cost should not be so terrific as to be a burden round his neck for the next 30 years. The home should be equipped with decent conveniences and not be a bush shack. Today married men working on the Western Australian Government railway line north of Mullewa live in houses made of sleepers standing on end with iron across the top. In those dwellings and under those conditions they rear families. Is that right? Even though water is only 50 feet down it is still a hard country. These men live in homes with walls 7 ft. high. If I were asked to do that I would decline, because now I have too much sense. At one time I did live in a tent out in the bush, but I would not do it again. This country is filled with possibilities and people who are prepared to go out into the bush if given proper conditions under which to live. Give them decent homes built of Western Australian materials. We

have plenty of timber for the walls, plenty of asbestos for the roofs, plenty of plaster boards for the lining, plenty of fly-wire for windows. We ought to provide decent conveniences in the kitchens. Why should a woman have to put up with a bush cooler and put food in a hole in the ground in order to keep it cool?

Before the middlemen came into the business, kelvinators could be provided for £17 10s. each. Why not instal a kelvinator in the house before asking a family to go there and live? A kelvinator is as necessary in a kitchen in the back country as is a stove. People will not go into the back country to live unless we provide them with homes that are properly equipped and unless they are given decent conditions. We shall not be able to build up this State by merely enhancing the metropolitan area. The wealth of the State is produced in the back country, whether it be on the timber lands of the South-West, the stations of the North-West, or the farms in the agricultural areas. Those are the wealth producing centres. What wealth is produced in the metropolitan area would be of little use without the back country. All that the people of the metropolitan area do is to live on salaries provided by the earnings of people in the country.

The Premier: About 20,000 people are employed in factories.

Mr. TRIAT: They do not manufacture for other than the metropolitan area.

Mr. Seward: Manufacturers have to sell their wares in the country.

Mr. TRIAT: But the point is that we must have people in the country to produce the raw materials required to enable the factories to operate. If the whole of the population were concentrated in the metropolitan area the State could not make any progress. If we provide opportunities for people to settle in the country and give them decent conditions, they will go there. Consider the squatters in the back country! According to some people, all squatters are wealthy. I know many who are not. They work very hard, and they have big overdrafts at the banks. After the war broke out many of the properties had to be neglected. The squatters were unable to continue their fencing programmes. If fences were broken down, they could not be restored. A fire went through one property and destroyed most of

the fences, and the squatter lost the feed in those paddocks because he had no means of restoring the fencing. Homesteads and wind-mills have been neglected because of the lack of labour, spare parts and other material.

When the war is over, the first duty of the Government should be to rehabilitate the man on the land. It would be a simple matter to ascertain from the Pastoralists' Association how many fences would be needed and what material would be required to build them. A statement of the manpower and the number of man-weeks necessary to do the job could easily be compiled. Every opportunity should be afforded the men on the land to rehabilitate their properties as they should be. This work would probably occupy three or four years. It would be futile for the Government to lend them the requisite money and then charge five or six per cent. interest. The Government should provide the money at a low rate of interest. Why not say, "We will lend you the money at a rate that will be just sufficient to cover handling charges in order to rehabilitate your property"? The charge should not exceed one per cent. No repayment should be required during the first twelve months, but after that 10 per cent. of the money advanced could be repaid each year. Under those conditions men would have an opportunity to make good. No man can possibly be successful if he has to borrow money at five or six per cent., because it would take him all his time to pay the interest without being able to reduce the principal. A man had a property valued at £10,000 and it was sold for £3,500. I am afraid that if I were in that man's position I would become a bolshevist.

Mr. Seward: That man left the place years ago.

Mr. TRIAT: It is of no use thinking that we can help these people if we are going to charge them a high rate of interest on money lent to them. So I say we must help in this way to rehabilitate the squatter. We must also help to rehabilitate the goldmining industry. We must do whatever is needed to provide homes in the back country and induce people to settle there. No industry has suffered more than has the goldmining industry in this State. Undoubtedly the farmers have had a bad time, but the goldmining industry has been almost abolished. With the exception of two or three mines at Kalgoorlie, most of our goldmines have been

closed down and some are not likely to reopen. Some of those mines contained a fair amount of material, too. I have a report that a certain mine is likely to close down because there are insufficient men to break the ore required on one shift. Yet hundreds of thousands of pounds have been sunk in that mine.

Mr. Marshall: Are you referring to Hill 50?

Mr. TRIAT: Yes. I have recently spent two months in my electorate and was on the Hill 50 property six weeks ago. I moved about amongst the men working there; they were very old men. One whose age was 73 was working on the battery. Men working on the surface had given up their old-age pensions and had returned to the mine in order to try to keep it going. They had no desire to return to work, but the people wished them to do so in order to keep the town going. It is not right that aged men should have to return to the industry.

The best of the men recruited for the Fighting Forces in Western Australia came from the goldmining industry. Some of them were earning £40 or £50 a fortnight, but they turned up their jobs and enlisted in the A.I.F. Even now when the strain of the war is easing, there is still a drain of manpower from the goldfields. The authorities are still seeking men from the goldfields. Now that the Army does not need more, the Works Council wants them. Whenever men are drawn from the goldfields in this way we can take it for granted that another mine is being closed down. It is disgraceful that the goldmining industry of the State should have been reduced to such a condition. This is due to the fact that people devoid of any vision at all consider that gold will have no value after the war. I have heard it stated repeatedly that after the war gold will be of no value. Of course it will be of value. A conference was held in the Eastern States recently in the hope of accomplishing something for the industry and, although the conference did get somewhere, it could not do enough.

What is the opinion of the world regarding the future of gold? Is there any talk of gold being without value after the war? On the 27th July we were informed by the Press that in Bombay gold was bringing the equivalent of £25 per ounce in Australian currency. This is sufficient to show that gold must be of value. In my opinion gold

will be the most valuable commodity that Western Australia will produce after the war is over.

Mr. Cross: Platinum is worth £8 an ounce.

Mr. TRIAT: Western Australia can compute its gold not in ounces but in tons. We can produce it in tons and, even if the price remains at £10 7s. an ounce, Western Australia will have no cause to look back. If the price of gold declines, however, the prosperity of the State will immediately be affected. Yet some people would have us believe that if all our men are taken out of the industry, it will not make any difference. The State is feeling seriously the effects of Federal policy on the goldmining industry.

Mr. Kelly: If there were a few men like Mr. Christie, we would have no industry at all.

Mr. TRIAT: That is so. Much powerful machinery has been removed from the mines. The moment a mine closes down, the Works Council takes the best engine it has. From a little mine at Evanston only a fortnight ago that authority took an engine valued at £4,000 and sent it to the Eastern States. Our difficulty after the war will be to rehabilitate our goldmining industry with machinery that is absolutely essential to its progress. We shall not be able to get back the engines and machinery that are now being sold to the Eastern States. We must recognise that for some time after the war goldmining will not be flourishing. The necessary machinery is not in the State. It should never have left the State. Even dynamos are taken by the military authorities out of mines operating—and taken without any compunction. The military authorities have numbers of dynamos in store, unused.

I sincerely hope the time is not far distant when authorities will realise that goldmining is so essential to the welfare of Australia that they will permit some of the men who have completed their military training and are walking about doing nothing, fed up, to return to the mines and keep them in operation. Many of those are excellent men, and their services would be of immense value to the goldmining industry. They are trained to arms and manoeuvres, but are simply walking about and, as I say, absolutely fed up. They say, "Let us be given leave to go back to the mines for three

months, and we shall be only too glad to do so."

The plain fact is that we have to restore our people to the back country. But, as pointed out by the member for York, they cannot be taken there unless education facilities are afforded. The hon. member gave very valuable information to the House. He read from booklet No. 2. I have here No. 1 of the series of booklets, and I propose to read some extracts from it, if only for my own pleasure and satisfaction. This booklet deals not with higher education, but with ordinary education. I remember saying in this Chamber some three years ago that the Western Australian boy or girl was the least educated in Australia. That observation brought me numerous adverse criticisms. However, I mentioned that in the whole of my electorate there was only one centre where children could be brought up to the standard of the leaving certificate. I also pointed out that pupils of the schools at Menzies and Lawlers could not gain the leaving certificate. Now, when war broke out, what occurred? The best of our young men and young women were called up for war service; and, with all the education they had, not one per cent. of them were able to take up their new work without going through a special course of three months in the particular line allotted to them; for instance, navigation. And these were especially selected young men and young women. The case shows that 12 months' special education given to a boy or a girl at school would be of immense advantage to the child. The idea of a boy or girl being qualified at 14 years of age to leave school with sufficient education is simply absurd.

The Leader of the Opposition brought up something I had no knowledge of—the Report of the Select Committee on the Educational System of the State which sat in 1938. I regret I was not a member of the House at that time. Had I been, there would have been one more vote in favour of adopting the Select Committee's report.

Mr. Doney: We did get the support of one Government member.

Mr. TRIAT: I will take a few items that I have gone through myself. There is recommendation No. 1—

That shortages in essential school equipment be provided without delay.

Ever since I have been a member of Parliament, at every centre I have visited in my



electorate the teacher has said to me, "Look at our desks. They are shocking. The children cannot sit at them. Books fall off them. The desks are no good."

Mr. Doney: That equipment shortage did not obtain down here in the city!

Mr. TRIAT: No, certainly not. However, I am dealing with the country districts. The Select Committee's recommendation No. 2 is as follows:—

That immediate attention be given the question of providing fly-proof doors, fly-proof windows, and sun blinds at schools where these facilities are lacking.

As for such facilities, there is the fact that not even shelter sheds are available in many of our outback schools for children to get into away from the sun! Shelter sheds used to be there, but they have been blown away.

Mr. Marshall: Thank Heaven the old peppertrees have not been blown away!

Mr. TRIAT: I had a look at the remnants of one shelter shed which had been blown away. Should not flies and other insect pests be kept out of the school-room while children are learning their lessons? I support the immediate provision of necessary supplies to schools, whether there is a shortage of money or not! Recommendation No. 5 reads—

That technical education be extended to rural districts on the lines suggested in evidence given by the Superintendent (Mr. J. F. Lynch).

That is a matter about which I was speaking a few minutes ago, the provision of a higher standard of education in country districts than has been available hitherto. Is it to be suggested that men and women should go out into the country and rear a family with the knowledge that when their children have finished their education there, they will not be educated? Of course not! I suggest that the higher class of education for country children is essential. I do not say that every school, no matter how small it is, can have the highest qualified teachers; but we can have central places of education and a scheme by which children can receive higher training.

Mr. Doney: That was the most timely of all the recommendations.

Mr. TRIAT: The next recommendation is No. 9—

That the school-leaving age be raised to 15 years, and that the last year be devoted to vocational training, and that existing buildings be utilised in the evenings for the furtherance of continuation classes for such training.

I presume that after this year the lowest age at which a child will be able to leave school will be 15 in any part of the Commonwealth. In some States I think the school-leaving age will be still higher. I have no doubt in my mind that a child of 15 is not old enough to grasp the important facts of life. A child up to the age of 14 or 15 can be taught to repeat things in parrot-fashion and to repeat them well, but it is only when a child attains 14 years of age that the adult mind begins to function and he is able to grasp, understand and analyse the things he is taught.

Mr. Marshall: Children do not value education until they attain that age.

Mr. TRIAT: Of course they do not.

Mr. Mann: The period from 14 years onwards is far more important than the period from six years to 14 years.

Mr. TRIAT: Yes. The higher we can raise the school-leaving age, the better. There are some children who at 14 years of age are not fit to leave school. Others at that age may have passed the eighth standard and possibly the sub-junior examination, and from then on these should go to the University.

Mr. J. Hegney: Some may have been crammed in those early years.

Mr. TRIAT: I strongly favour the school age being raised to 15 years and higher, and I am pleased that this Government is giving consideration to the matter. I should fix it at 15 plus; they should go on until they attain 16 or 17 years. Recommendation No. 17 is the last one I shall quote from the report. It reads—

That as the Junior University standard of education required for the Public Service practically restricts selection to the Metropolitan Area, a quota be fixed for the country, and selections be made at approved country centres.

My friend the member for York has been talking about the same thing. This recommendation should be carried out. A young man or young woman who enters the Civil Service and who knows nothing of the State beyond the Darling Range has no familiarity with our back country or with the real conditions of the State. All they know is that the Swan River runs past Perth into the Indian Ocean, and that they can go to Scarborough and the City Beach, as well as to dance-halls. That is all they care about. The conditions under which people live in the back country are unknown to them. We

should have in our Public Service a larger number of young people who have been brought up in the country. In my opinion, the men and women of ability in our State come from the country districts.

Mr. Doney: If they have lived all their days in Perth, they are not true Western Australians, anyhow.

Mr. TRIAT: I am strongly in favour of the recommendation I have just read. The standard of education suggested should be extended to such places as Meekatharra and Leonora. Already such facilities are available at Kalgoorlie and Wiluna, and now at Norseman, where a School of Mines has been established. There are still other schemes for giving boys and girls a better education. I shall quote from page 16, paragraph (D) of a pamphlet entitled "The Future of Education," by J. D. G. Medley, M.A., Vice-Chancellor of the University of Melbourne—

(d) More attention to the fact that the State cannot afford to allow any citizen to drop out of the educational process before he has received all the education of which he is capable.

That is what I laid stress on a few moments ago. The school-leaving age should be not less than 15 years. A child should receive all the education which he is capable of absorbing. That means finance, I grant. The paragraph continues—

The present leaving age is 14. I am not in favour of its indiscriminate raising to more at any rate than 15. There are considerable numbers of children who have by that time finished with all the formal school education that is likely to be of use to them.

To those children further education may not be useful; but we must bear in mind that many children of that age are sent into the world because of economic conditions—the parents need the money which the children can earn. The paragraph continues—

It must be the business of the State to see to it that they do continue—to High school, Technical school and, if desirable, University and to provide all necessary fees and living expenses.

The latter is the important part. Children capable of absorbing higher education should be selected and sent on for additional training. The objection may be raised that the parents cannot afford to pay for that training; but the money should be provided by the State, because the State will ultimately reap the benefit of the additional training which these children will receive. The

recommendation well warrants thought. The paragraph continues—

This is so obvious a corollary of any sane educational plan for the future that I need not elaborate it at this stage. But it should be mentioned that any such plan would of necessity involve a much more serious attention to the study of psychological tests of intelligence and aptitude than we have been inclined to pay in the past.

Of course, in the selection of children for higher education, corruption may creep in. Some parents will try to get the benefit of such education for their children by wrong methods. Shady practices cannot be prevented altogether.

Mr. Marshall: Most teachers could give a reliable opinion on the intelligence and aptitude of their scholars.

Mr. TRIAT: Yes. They should make the selection. The paragraph continues—

It should be perfectly possible to select by such tests at the age of 14/15 and rely on the results with a large measure of confidence.

Paragraph (e) reads—

More attention to the fact that you cannot expect an ordinary person with no particular gifts—and they do exist in large quantities and will under any system of education—to become a co-operative citizen unless you help him to. To leave school at 14, just as the adult mind begins to awaken, and to plunge into full-time daily employment, is to make the learning of citizenship a haphazard affair which too often comes to nothing. My own view is that the State should prohibit employment for more than half time—say 20 hours a week—until the age of 19, and that there should be a compulsory continuation of their education for the other 20 hours for all who leave school before that age.

That suggestion is well worth consideration. If a child works only 20 hours, he should be compelled to attend classes for another 20 hours, thus carrying on his education from where he left it off at school. Such a system would not prevent the employment of some children at the age of 14 years, but some people deliberately put their children to work at that age in order to benefit from their earnings. I now quote from page 19 of the pamphlet—

But quite briefly my own view is as follows: There should be at school-leaving age—say 15 (plus)—a leaving certificate examination based on five main divisions—English, elementary mathematics, social science, general science and one other containing a wide variety of options.

That is an excellent suggestion. The student would have the choice of one subject. If he desired to become a lawyer, he could take

a course of law; if he desired to become a doctor, he could study medicine. If he showed aptitude, he could afterwards attend the University. That is the lowest standard of education that this writer considers young people should possess before they leave school, and certainly it is quite low enough. It is a pity that many of us did not have such an opportunity, for it would have assisted us in our work of considering the various problems that arise. The writer proceeded—

After it there should be retained in the educational system, at the expense of the State wherever necessary, all those who have any possibility of benefiting from higher education, and they should undergo a two-years' course of the kind which the Americans describe as "orientation" or "foundational"—(say) 50 per cent. general subjects of a background character, 40 per cent. preliminary specialist or technical training.

I cordially support the suggestion submitted by this writer. I know it is easy to say that I support it because I have not the opportunity to do very much to give effect to what is proposed. I shall at all times assist with my voice; I consider I should do no less. I shall certainly help the Government to pass any vote of funds considered possible, even to the extent of enabling the educational facilities offered in Western Australia to be improved 100 per cent. In my opinion those facilities could easily be improved to that degree, and the State would reap the consequent benefit. The effect would be that boys and girls possessing brilliant minds would develop into assets of value to the State. Some would become industrial chemists, and we shall certainly require young people in that category in the future. We shall want many to instruct our people in matters that will require attention in connection with industrial expansion and in other directions.

If Western Australia is to make the great strides predicted in the development of secondary industries, industrial chemists will be of great value to those concerned. With the exception of about 20 young people who are undergoing instruction at present—I do not know that we have even that number—we have no industrial chemists available to participate in the work that is predicted. Such people will be in great demand in the years to come, whether it be in connection with the manufacture of foodstuffs, the processing of soaps, or other activities.

Certainly the work of the industrial chemist will be absolutely essential and a most important factor in our future development, which will be undertaken in competition with efforts made in the Eastern States and elsewhere. Our chemists will have to compete with men of science in other parts of the world, and if they are trained here we should certainly have the first call upon their services.

It is by such means that we will be able to rehabilitate Western Australia in the post-war period, so that it will no longer be referred to as the Cinderella State, but will be recognised as one achieving material progress. We have all the natural resources that are essential for that development. For instance, since the outbreak of war scheelite has been in great demand in the United States of America and has been required in large quantities by the Broken Hill Proprietary Co. of Australia. It is used for the special tempering and hardening of steel for armour-plate piercing purposes, for tool-cutting machines, and such like. Scheelite occurs in many places in Western Australia and most of the outcrops have been examined by experienced experts and declared of no value. An exception was the deposit at Yalgoo, which was declared to be valuable and available in such quantities as to make its development a commercial proposition. On analysis it was found to attain a standard of 70 W.O.3, which is a very high grade, with tungsten acid of a value of £550 a ton. Members will therefore see that the scheelite deposit is one of great importance.

The man who has the mine is an ordinary working man, who had a store from which he did not make much money. At times he went out prospecting and procured supplies of scheelite. He sent a ton of the ore down to Perth for testing at the Government Laboratory, with the result that it proved to have the high value I have already indicated. The trouble was, however, that the man could not sell his scheelite. The Broken Hill Proprietary was prepared to take scheelite, but the man had to send his ore to the Eastern States to be treated at Newcastle. When that was accomplished, perhaps in six months time, the man would be paid in accordance with the assessed value. Obviously, the man could starve while he was waiting for his deferred payment. It took me three months before I could secure an agreement with the representatives of the

company in Perth to make an advance to the prospector of 50 per cent. of the estimated value of the scheelite. Eventually an agreement was reached on the basis I have indicated. The outstanding fact is that the man could not dispose of his commodity in Western Australia, but no trouble was experienced in the Eastern States in getting rid of it.

During the course of the debate one member referred to someone who had to dispose of rabbit skins at 60d. per lb., whereas skins exactly the same type and quality were sold in the Eastern States at 130d. per lb. What is wrong with us? Why cannot our people secure the proper prices for their articles? We have the goods but we do not seem to be able to market them properly. Something is radically wrong. Why is it possible for such payments to be readily procurable in the Eastern States and not available for our own people in Western Australia? If we want to sell a ton of scheelite, we must send it to the Eastern States before we can do so. If we desire to sell anything we are forced to go to the Eastern States to secure a fair market. Obviously something is wrong in the state of Denmark.

Our people are being robbed. If a man can get only 60d. per lb. for his skins in this State, whereas if he sent them to the Eastern States he could get 130d. per lb., then the purchase at such a price here is sheer robbery. I assume it would be regarded as legitimate commercial thieving, but nevertheless it is thieving. Why do we sit down and take this sort of thing? Why does not the Government say to these people, "We will not allow this sort of thing to continue. We insist that a commodity that is worth so much shall be purchased only at that price." By that means the Government would protect the people who are producing the goods in Western Australia.

Mr. North: You do not believe in cartels?

Mr. TRIAT: I do not believe in robbery. Every man is entitled to fair remuneration for the work he does or the goods he produces. If a buyer, he is entitled to a fair price; if a seller, he is entitled to a fair profit. I do not believe in trading in rabbit skins that would allow 60d. per lb. to be paid in Western Australia and 130d. per lb. for skins of the same type and similar quality in the Eastern States.

Mr. Doney: That case can well be authenticated.

Mr. TRIAT: I do not doubt that for one moment. I do not think some people have been playing the game fairly with Western Australian producers. Our people do not get a fair go.

Mr. Berry: They never have had a fair go.

Mr. TRIAT: I hope that will cease. Let us see to it that they have a better deal in the future. If it resolves itself into a question of legislation to secure to our people the right to a better deal, I am sure that those sitting on the Government side of the House will be prepared to do what is necessary. I certainly hope some such attempt will be made. The matters that have been referred to could be investigated by the Ministers concerned and if it can be proved that our people have not received a fair deal—I refer to such cases as the man at Yalgoo and the man who sold the rabbit skins—then we should do everything possible to secure to them and to those similarly situated, better conditions. Such an endeavour is essential if we are to encourage the successful establishment of secondary industries and so make Western Australia a State worth living in.

On motion by Mr. Berry, debate adjourned.

### ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE PREMIER: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 4.30 p.m. on Tuesday, the 24th August.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 4.30 p.m.*