

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 23rd August, 1944.

Questions :		PAGE
Civil defence, as to disbanding organisation, etc.	208	208
Pig Compensation Fund	208	208
Leave of absence	208	208
Address-in-reply, ninth day	208	208

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

QUESTIONS (2).

CIVIL DEFENCE.

As to Disbanding Organisation, etc.

Mr. RODOREDA asked the Minister for Mines:

(1) When is it proposed to remove the air raid shelters which obstruct traffic in the vicinity of Forrest Place and the Railway Station?

(2) Is it proposed to disband the Civil Defence organisation in the near future?

(3) What was the cost to the State of this department for the last financial year?

(4) What privileges in the way of petrol, tyres, etc., are allowed to members of this organisation?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The States act on advice from the Commonwealth Defence Committee relative to relaxations in precautions against enemy action, and these shelters will be dismantled when such advice is in agreement.

(2) The organisation has already been considerably reduced but will not be disbanded until the Defence Committee advises accordingly.

(3) Cost to the State for the financial year 1943-44 was £24,835 4s. 4d. which figure includes expenditure on equipment earlier obtained.

(4) Petrol is only supplied for certain authorised Civil Defence purposes. Only vehicles, which have done over 5,000 miles, or two years' service, on Civil Defence work, are eligible for consideration for tyres, retreads or spare parts by the controlling authorities, and even then the private uses of the vehicles are also taken into account.

PIG COMPENSATION FUND.

Mr. WILLMOTT asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) What is the full amount collected up to the present time towards the Pig Compensation Fund?

(2) Is the amount collected from the producers likely to be reduced or discontinued in the near future?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST replied:

(1) £12,048 16s. 9d. to the 31st July, 1944.

(2) It is unlikely that the present rate of 2d. in the £1 will be reduced for some time, as the compensation fund still has a debit balance of £6,274 16s. 9d.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. North, leave of absence for the remainder of the session granted to Mr. Abbott (North Perth) on the ground of service with the R.A.A.F.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Ninth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. SHEARN (Maylands) [4.35]: Although my remarks are somewhat belated, I nevertheless sincerely associate myself with the congratulations conveyed to you, Sir, on your re-appointment as Speaker of this House. I take this opportunity to express my appreciation of your many acts of kindness to me and many other members of the House. So long as the state of the parties in this Chamber remains as at present, I trust you will continue to occupy that office, and that your term will be as pleasurable as in the past. May I also be permitted to express my congratulations to the newly-appointed Minister for Education? I believe I express the opinion of all members when I say that because of the intimate knowledge he has garnered over the years in his close association in another capacity with that department's activities, he should—and I am sure will—prove to be peculiarly suited for the tremendous tasks that will confront the department in the not too distant future. I am positive we wish him all the success he could wish for himself.

The Minister for Industrial Development has had added to his portfolio that of Minister for Works. That is an office carrying very heavy responsibilities at any time but,

in view of the circumstances under which we are living, it is likely to entail added responsibilities in the near future. I trust that he will have a very successful term of office. I can hardly mention that without paying a personal tribute to the former occupant of that position. By virtue of my association with a local authority, I have had a peculiar opportunity to judge the sterling qualities of the member for Mt. Hawthorn. I say unhesitatingly, and equally sincerely, that he did an excellent job, and I hope that now, with lessened responsibility, he will have an opportunity completely to recuperate from his recent serious illness. I join in the congratulations extended to the new members of this Chamber. They have made very able contributions to the debate in this House, and their expressed desire to co-operate in all measures for the promotion of the best interests of the community must meet with the approval of every member. It augurs well for the success we hope this particular session will achieve.

Mention has been made of the war position. I suppose we all realise that the increasing momentum of the success of the Allied Forces on all fronts should not only be a matter for pride and gratitude, but should also serve to inspire us on the home front to exert every energy towards speeding up plans devised for the post-war period. Whether it be in regard to our own particular plans or in co-operation with the Federal authorities, I suggest—and I believe that most, if not all, members will readily agree—that there should be no further undue delay.

A suggestion was made by one member that the large "No" majority in the Referendum had raised the prestige of State Parliaments. I venture the opinion that the result rather constitutes a challenge to State Parliaments and incidentally an opportunity for them to prove whether or not they are prepared to assume those responsibilities of which we have heard so much in recent days. I hope that whatever may have been our attitude in the past, we will now be fully conscious of the responsibilities the rejection of the Referendum proposals has cast upon us in Western Australia, and indeed upon every State in the Commonwealth. Whether in connection with our own plans or in co-operation with the national Government and Parliament, I hope we shall spare no effort in collaborating for the common

good and in making sure that the things that are so essential in the post-war years shall be brought to early fruition.

I think I am expressing the general view and, as it were, epitomising the situation when I say it is our duty to translate into action as soon as possible the sentiment expressed so well by Mr. Winston Churchill in 1940 when he said, "Let there be no recriminations; let us go forward together." One could not more aptly describe the necessities of the situation that confronts everyone of us today. What is the use of long discussions about what we ought or ought not to have done? What is important is what we should do now. Let us go about it quickly, and do what is necessary as soon as possible. The war has provided us with an excellent example in the collaboration and co-operation so effectively demonstrated by the various branches of the Fighting Forces, and it is up to us on the home front to do our part, side by side with them, for the preservation of those liberties and rights we enjoy and for which those in the Fighting Forces are shedding their blood.

I believe that the recent Referendum applied the acid test to us as members of the State Parliament and the result of the people's decision calls upon State Governments and Opposition members—I say "Governments" because every State is involved in the task of dealing with post-war problems—to subordinate party considerations, which beyond all doubt have in the past played all too important a part in our deliberations, and to approach matters that make for the common good in a spirit of closest co-operation in the interests of the future welfare of Australia generally and of Western Australia in particular. This, too, might well be followed in the Federal political arena. As one of the essential preliminary steps towards this goal I would again commend the suggestion which, I think, emanated from the member for West Perth and was mentioned again yesterday by the member for Murray-Wellington. I refer to the appointment of parliamentary committees. I think we might very well say that those committees should be set up at once.

In my opinion there is no need to disguise the purpose of the committees and we might term the principal one the "Committee of Post-war Reconstruction in Relation to Western Australia." I suggest that

the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and representatives of all political parties in this House should appoint a committee that would represent all interests in Parliament. The committee in turn could split itself into sub-committees and in the selection of the personnel of those sub-committees particular attention could be paid to the peculiar qualifications of the respective members to deal with the several matters concerned. Much has been said by the public and by the Press regarding the fact that this and other Parliaments meet all too rarely and in the interim have nothing to do. I for one and you, Mr. Speaker, also know that that is not correct. Members have a considerable volume of work to carry out between sessions. Notwithstanding that fact, I suggest with all sincerity that if we are to display in practice the co-operative spirit I have indicated and if we are to achieve any appreciable results, we must utilise every possible resource with a view to securing the desired ends.

Mr. North: That applies in South Australia.

Mr. SHEARN: I am not quite sure about that. I believe that the sub-committees to be set up should visit the various parts of the State wherever and whenever necessary, accompanied by the members representing the respective districts concerned. I suggest that step regarding metropolitan members particularly because I confess there are many portions of the State with which I am not familiar. I assert that there are quite probably some members representing outer suburban areas that know little of my electorate. The same applies to many other members. Each one of us should have first-hand information, and the method I suggest is the way by which it may be secured. We have in our midst members who have been closely associated with mining activities, commerce, the production of wheat, wool growing and various other interests.

If all our resources of knowledge and experience were pooled and advantage taken of them during the deliberations of these co-operative committees, suggestions could be advanced to the Government and ultimately to Parliament with the result that we would then have before us something concrete. We would be assured that the representations would be in accordance with the best possible thought of Parliament and that any suggestions advanced would be free of any sectional party or

political consideration. It may be suggested that what I have put forward represents an idealistic attitude. My experience gained during years of association with local government matters prompts me to make the suggestion. I agree that for many reasons local government cannot be regarded as a parallel. I realise that party politics will remain with us for many years to come, but the test that is being applied to our sincerity has reached the point at which we must subordinate some of our party ideas in order to promote the interests of the State as a whole. Such a course is both practicable and possible and is in the interests of the promotion of the well-being of the people of Western Australia and of the Commonwealth generally. I commend the suggestion most wholeheartedly to the Government.

It may be retorted that such a proposal means taking the reins of government out of the hands of the Government. It does not mean anything of the sort. In fact, we have for it a precedent in the Commonwealth Parliament itself. We know how it works out with regard to the Federal Public Works Committee and other committees, and certainly it has never been suggested that those bodies take the administration out of the hands of the Commonwealth Government. That being so, why should there be any suggestion here that the proposal would work out differently? We in Western Australia are the same type of people as those elsewhere in Australia. I assure the House that we are not expressing mere platitudes when we refer to this proposal, respecting which we are in earnest. We have passed beyond the necessity for platitudes and we must face up to the needs of the post-war period. If we do not worthily cope with the task at hand, we will assuredly deserve what would have been our experience had the Referendum vote been in the affirmative. As it is, the electors have thrown the responsibility on the State Parliament to prove that its members are capable of co-operating amongst themselves and with the Commonwealth Parliament.

Here is an opportunity to prove the extent to which our sincerity will go. War conditions will still demand much interlocking of State and Commonwealth activities—in this regard I notice that in His Excellency's Speech there are references to the fact that Ministers have a large field of co-

operation within the direct province of this Parliament, which is vital to our State—and I trust we will approach the task in an attitude of full co-operation. Here I would like to express the hope that the satisfactory experience arising from the war-time use made of various State departments in carrying out important tasks of a national character and the collaboration in matters affecting the post-war period may result in the continuance of this desirable inter-Government arrangement.

I believe, as far as my experience serves to show, much has been done along those lines and there has been evidence of much acceleration and desirable results achieved in consequence of the co-operation and collaboration both in regard to work performed and to plans laid down for the post-war period. I hope that whatever may be done with regard to the proposed appointment of parliamentary committees, we will do all we possibly can to preserve the interlocking system between the State and Commonwealth departments so that we will serve the national interests to the greatest degree and at the same time do what is necessary. We should make it clear—it is not so very easy 2,000 miles away from the locale of the central Government—to members of the Commonwealth Public Service that there are certain circumstances in Western Australia that are peculiar to this State and that in any post-war scheme this State must receive particular consideration in that respect. This is one of the most satisfactory means by which the end can be attained.

One of the most important matters touched upon in the Speech is that of housing. I do not intend to weary members with any figures, because I should say every member is well aware of figures which have already been presented, both from government and other sources, to this Chamber. However, since the Speech makes mention of acquisition of land, I would like quite humbly to suggest that a prerequisite to any worthwhile housing scheme is the provision of adequate areas of land. Personally I am delighted to notice that it is proposed to introduce legislation to this end. Whilst war conditions have undoubtedly accentuated the difficulties of the housing problem, I feel that one has only to remind members of the fact that the situation was anything but satisfactory even prior to the war. It may not be amiss to mention—in view of there being some new members in the House—that in 1936 I en-

deavoured, by a motion submitted to the Chamber, to have the housing question in all its aspects thoroughly investigated. Unfortunately, at that time the situation, in the opinion of the Government, had not developed to the extent that I suggested; and therefore my motion did not meet with any material success.

I want to be quite fair, and therefore I say that in the reply which the then Minister for Works, representing the Cabinet, delivered, he did admit that there were housing shortages and did make some complimentary references regarding the motion. He went on to say, however, that he felt, doubtless on the advice of his officers, that the entire housing situation was well known and that certain plans were in hand for effectively dealing with the subject. I would like to suggest, and I am sure the ex-Minister will readily agree, that subsequent events have proved that after all I and members who supported the motion were not so far astray as was then thought. Perhaps it may be purely coincidental, but it is rather singular, that the housing scheme now submitted to us and to the people of Australia embodies most, if not all, the recommendations that I had humbly submitted to this House. In order that the memory of members may be refreshed upon the subject, I desire to quote the main points I submitted as describing the housing position in Western Australia—

(a) The housing position in Western Australia with special reference to—(i) the metropolitan-suburban area, (ii) the goldfields, (iii) the agricultural and other districts;

(b) residential financing, and the provision of facilities for home ownership;

(c) the special problem of citizens in the lower income groups and the necessity of there being available for their occupation at a rental within their means, a sufficient number of houses which conform with reasonable standards of health, decency, and general amenity;

(d) the adequacy and effectiveness of existing provisions for—(i) the prevention and/or clearance and improvement of unhealthy areas, (ii) the repair or demolition of insanitary houses, and (iii) over-crowding;

(e) co-operation between the State and Federal Governments, local governing bodies, social and welfare organisations, and all interested branches of private enterprise in the solution of housing problems and in the planning, finance, and development of housing projects . . .

I find now that all those points are contemplated for the success of the building programme that has been more or less put for-

ward by the Commonwealth Government. Therefore, while I am delighted to know that the matter is to be tackled now, it is unfortunate that we were not even able in this State to make those investigations at that time, and thus to disclose many of the things now forced upon us at this late stage. Reverting for a moment to the resumption of land, I would mention that in the latter part of 1941 the then Federal Minister for Labour and Social Services made a Press announcement that it was proposed to acquire land for munition workers. I personally wrote to the Minister asking whether it was proposed to acquire land for homes for munition workers in Western Australia, and pointed out that unless that matter preceded the actual establishment of munition works it was inevitable that there would be undue increases in the value of such lands, to the ultimate detriment of those who were going to rent or purchase those homes. I also at that time drew the Minister's attention to the need for providing without delay for the families of service men and other aspects of the problem of housing. This is where one has to be perfectly honest and say that when a Government is being charged with dereliction of duty it is just as well to look around and see what other Governments have done. I have received a very long and effusive letter from Mr. Hill in reply to my communication, but nothing has come out of my proposal so far as Western Australia is concerned.

I could quote instances that have come under my personal notice where people were unquestionably charged higher prices for land because of the added value that had accrued to the land as the result of the erection of munition works. It is therefore imperative, in the interests of the people to whom the houses are to be sold or rented, that there should be early acquisition of land by the Government under resumption, so that values can be controlled. I do not think any member would suggest that this form of purchase and acquisition of land is unfair to vendors. Every possible contingency is taken into consideration, and submitted in evidence to the board charged with the task of acquiring land; and generally the members of such a board are in a position to decide what is the fair value of a property, having regard to all the circumstances involved. Therefore I am glad to know it is

intended to introduce legislation towards this end.

One readily appreciates the fact that it is necessary, first of all, to lay down a plan complete in all details. I feel that it is opportune to suggest principles, and I do this quite sincerely so that we may get rid of what one might characterise as the blue-print mentality of the housing scheme and instead occupy ourselves with some positive action. I say that with all respect to those who are associated with the preparation of these plans; but I think members, as well as a big section of the public, are—to use a vulgarism—fed up with being kept at the blue-print stage of the solution of our problems.

Mr. North: A dangling carrot!

Mr. SHEARN: Yes. I believe sufficient time has elapsed to consider all these blue-prints, especially those in regard to housing. We should take heed of the acceleration of the war situation that is so apparent to us all and for which we are extremely grateful. It is time that we moved ahead of this stage and took definite action to proceed with the building of houses. If we do not, every member knows without my going into details what the position will be when our men return from the front. A glance at the daily Press discloses a distressing position and I feel sure that my own experience is the experience of other members. People come to me and tell me of the deplorable conditions under which they are existing—not living. One can easily visualise what will happen when husbands and relatives in our Fighting Services return if some action is not taken. The position will be that the housing problem will get entirely beyond our control; bad as the position is today, it will be chaotic beyond description if some move is not made immediately. Therefore I suggest we should do something towards getting on with the scheme in order to alleviate the present position.

I hope that as a result of the conferences which are now taking place, or will be taking place, between the Premiers of the States and the Federal authorities, a commencement will be made with the actual building of homes. One is entitled to assume that all the required data has been prepared in regard to the supply of building materials and that some assessment has been made of the availability of manpower. If so, I think it is the duty of every member of Parliament to

insist that there shall be an immediate commencement made with the production of bricks, cement, timber and other essential building material, and that a definite number of artisans and labourers should be set to work to build up depleted stocks and get on with the erection of homes as materials are made available. I am aware some members will suggest that this cannot be done, that there is a war on.

I do not pretend to know much about the food problem, but I have been informed by those who should know that Australia is to be a food arsenal, and undoubtedly labour must be made available for that particular purpose. However, a review of the manpower situation must be made for the purpose of getting on with the housing scheme. I ask members to bear in mind the remarkable achievements, almost overnight, during this war, how the Allied Works Council and kindred organisations with extreme rapidity put up buildings required for war purposes. I suggest that the same energy could be devoted to providing civilian needs. I consequently hope that we shall get beyond the stage of the Promised Land and that in the near future some real start will be made for effectively solving this tremendously important problem.

Before leaving the subject I would like to know whether there is any intention to enlighten members as to what provision is being made for private enterprise to play its part in the building programme. I think members are entitled to this information, because one becomes exercised in one's mind about the subjects of priorities and control of materials and labour. Necessarily the Government will be in a more favourable position than will be the private builder. Should it become advisable to make use of private enterprise, I consider it essential that some clear and unambiguous declaration should be made on this point. Another important aspect is whether or not the Government proposes to free these building programmes from the incidence of sales tax. Large numbers of people will be applying for these homes and in fairness to them the Government should relieve them from the incidence of the sales tax of 12½ per cent. The Government should make a clear statement on this phase at an early date.

Another matter that we, as a Parliament, should address ourselves to is the publicising of our State. I know a great deal has been done by the Minister for Industrial Development in that regard, but it is not sufficient. When I tour the Eastern States I make it a point—and I am sure other members do—to purchase every newspaper I can buy. On perusing them I find the only references to Western Australia are such as one might well wish to forget. I realise that each State naturally gives prominence to its own features; but there is no news at all of Western Australia or only such news as is not to its credit. In South Australia I found a great deal of information of an interesting nature from day to day with regard to all the other States except Western Australia, and that was typical of the various States through which I passed. We must not altogether blame the other States for that; we must bear in mind that their duty is to publicise their own States. The Minister for Industrial Development, very wisely, has established a kind of liaison office in Melbourne in relation to his department. Could not the Government select a suitable type of man, with necessary qualifications, and instal him in that office in Melbourne to publicise our State? Our Tourist Bureau in its earlier stages established an office in Melbourne and it proved a signal success; unfortunately, owing to war conditions, it has had to be closed temporarily. I believe that such action on the part of the Government would prove itself more than justified. Owing to our geographical position we compare unfavourably in this respect with the other States of Australia.

We should also bear in mind that after the war numbers of people will be coming to Australia from overseas. Some of these it would be desirable for us to have in Western Australia for economic and other reasons. Many will probably land in other parts of Australia and, by the time they have assimilated all the advantages that will ensue from their settling there, it will be just too late as far as Western Australia is concerned. I sincerely suggest to the Government the advisability of investigating this matter and adopting my proposal for the selection of a suitable publicity officer. If we have to pay for the publicity, then let us pay for it; it will at least give us an equal opportunity with the other States.

In relation to the housing problem we are reminded of manpower difficulties. Ever since this war began we have been told in this Chamber the many unsatisfactory aspects of the manpower position. The establishment of a manpower office in this State is something for which we have to be extremely thankful and we should feel proud of its achievement. We should also be proud of the fact that this State had contributed between 60,000 and 70,000 persons to the various Fighting Services prior to the establishment of control. But that means a leeway was created which has never yet been made up. Therefore, on a reappraisal of the manpower position by the Commonwealth Government that fact should be taken into consideration. We should draw attention to the disproportion of enlistments as between the States. I suggest very strongly that those in charge of the allocation of released service personnel should consider that this State is entitled to some special consideration. If the matter were placed properly before the authorities and it was explained to them the grave difficulty in which our private and other industries stood, we would get some preferential treatment.

I notice that the Minister for Health is not in the Chamber at the moment, but we have only to remember the plight he was in a few weeks ago with regard to the supply of staff for the Mental Hospital. It makes one realise the position into which this State has drifted so far as manpower is concerned that it should be necessary to walk through city stores and take girls who have been serving out ribbons for five or six years, and place them at work which should be carried out by trained men and women in a mental hospital. We have come to a parlous state so far as manpower is concerned. I would be interested to know whether the same position exists in the other States.

There are other matters to which I would like to refer, but, as some other member has said, the Estimates will very soon be before the House and I therefore propose not to touch upon such matters; but I would like to deal with one question particularly. For some months past I have been approached by old-age and invalid pensioners for assistance to enable them to secure concessions for travelling on trams.

Mr. Cross: Do the private buses propose to do the same?

Mr. SHEARN: I will come to that directly. After having thought the matter out carefully, I decided to write to the General Manager of the Government Tramways. He very naturally asked me if I had any ideas as to how, for a start, this might be implemented. I said that I saw no great difficulty about it, and, as a layman, suggested to him that first of all we had to remember that, with the gradual but sure increase in the cost of living—and these people receive only 27s. per week on which to live—the 3d. single fare, although it did not mean much to him or to me, meant quite a bit to the pensioner. To travel from Maylands to Claremont costs 2s. for a man and his wife, or 1s. for the husband alone. That represents a great deal to the pensioner. I realised the difficulties of the Government in regard to finance and suggested that the single fare be 1d., and that for the purposes of identifying the pensioner, to make the scheme practicable, the pensioner should, on the production of his or her pension certificate, be issued with 1d. chits and that when the pensioner boarded a tram or trolley-bus, the conductor would pull off one of these 1d. chits so that the return fare, instead of being 6d., would be 2d. That involves no difficulty at all. The conductor would simply have to account for so many 1d. chits in lieu of 3d. ones.

I got a reply this morning from the Commissioner of Railways. I drew his attention to the fact that many free passes were already being issued. I think, by the way, that it would be very interesting to members to have a list of all the free passes issued to various people in this country, outside of members of Parliament, placed before them. I make no allegations, but it might be very illuminating to get that list. As a matter of fact, I might ask for it. In the case of the pensioners, I am not asking for something for nothing. Furthermore, anticipating the member for Canning, who is an authority on transport, I particularly emphasised that my request was for the hours outside the peak periods. I suggested, I think, between 9 a.m. and 4.30 p.m. The Commissioner, in his reply, drew my attention to the fact that passes have been issued to the blind and other afflicted people, but that it is a matter for the Premier's Department; that it has always been arranged that way, and that as it is a matter of Government policy he, unfortunately, could do

nothing. That being so, I am submitting it to the Government.

Mr. Cross: Why not give them an increased pension?

Mr. SHEARN: If the member for Canning is as successful in getting into the Federal House as he has been in getting into this one, I shall be pleased to make my representations to him. In the meantime, I am making them to the Government. No loss will be involved, and if we are going to ask the Commonwealth to do something for us, we should be prepared to do something for ourselves. I am fed up with passing the buck all the time. I suggest to the member for Canning that it is of no use asking people to co-operate with us if we will not co-operate with them. Many people want a new order, provided it does not cost them anything. This is something to which the pensioners are entitled. We should issue free passes to the old age pensioners who pioneered the country for us, and perhaps we ought to revise the list of other people who stand in good positions in this community and who enjoy free passes, not only over the trams but the railways too. I therefore suggest that the Government considers the granting of this request, and I inform the Minister in advance that I propose to put these representations in writing in the next few days.

In conclusion, as other members have said, I have not the slightest doubt that, despite all that has been said during the recent Referendum, there is a part to be played by each State Parliament throughout Australia. If that part is played as it should be, then all these promises made during the course of the Referendum can be fulfilled. If we are unprepared to do that and are going to adopt an uncompromising attitude, I say sincerely that not only will this and other State Parliaments have proved themselves impotent, but the people will have a very good reason for saying that the time has arrived—and the circumstances demand—when State Parliaments should be abolished, and the whole responsibility of the future of Australia and its component parts should be entrusted to a central Parliament. I hope members will accept that challenge as I do and that, as a result of our individual and collective efforts, we shall be able to bring about some measure of prosperity for Western Australia in particular, and Australia as a whole.

MR. RODOREDA (Roebourne): A few days ago I accompanied Mr Dumas, the Director of Works, on an inspection of the engineering jobs under construction at Onslow. The inspection took about three hours. We then travelled about a thousand miles, and were in Perth shortly after 4 o'clock in the afternoon. That is symbolic of the age in which we live. It is high time we geared our minds and activities to the spirit of this age. It is time we got away from our horse-and-buggy complex, and realised that we are living in an age when we must do things quickly. The last member who spoke referred to matters still being in the blue-print stage. As far as I can see, the blue-print stage will last for an indefinite period. I see no sign of any actual work being accomplished, or anything being done towards translating those blue-prints into actuality. So I say we have to increase our activities in that direction. I was rather disappointed to know that practically no reference was made to the North-West in His Excellency's Speech. Some slight reference was made to the production of base metals. Other than that, the North-West was ignored.

I hope this is not the criterion of the attitude of the Government towards this important part of the State. It has become doubly important of late years from the point of view of the defence of Australia. Both this Government and the Commonwealth Government must realise that if our North-West is left in its present undeveloped state, it will eventually be taken from us. The North-West portion of this State has lately come into its own in regard to the production of base minerals. That has come about mostly because of war demands, but I have every confidence that these demands will be continued after the war. The principal mineral which has been produced in my electorate is blue asbestos. It has been referred to in this House on more than one occasion during recent years. This has become an established industry. Today there is in operation a plant which cost in the neighbourhood of £200,000. It is producing asbestos and it has created some problems which have to be met. The greatest problem is the transport needs of this industry. Whilst something is being done in this direction by the Government a great deal more needs to be done so that we can foster this first per-

manent industry that has evolved in the North-West. I have seen a great number of industries started there, but they have all petered out. But this one seems to have such a degree of permanency as leads me to believe it will never fail.

Mr. Marshall: It is the best in the world.

Mr. RODOREDA: The quality of the asbestos is as good as any in the world, if not better. The deposits are enormous. The geologists tell us that they count the deposits by the hundreds of millions of tons. This is a valuable industry which needs to be fostered. I therefore hope the Government will do everything in its power to make the way easy for the successful running of this industry. There are two mines, both being developed by companies with substantial capital. I hope the Government will see that this vital industry is kept going. The primary needs, of course, are transport, both by road and sea, and the provision of handling facilities at the North-West ports; more particularly the port of Sampson. Our handling arrangements at all the North-West ports are back in the stone age. Everything is done by manpower. We have no facilities for handling bulk loads or large quantities of stuff. My information leads me to believe that about 200 tons a week of this asbestos will have to be handled very soon. So I suggest to the Minister for Works that some provision be made to mechanise the handling facilities at these ports. The Director of Works has just made a hurried inspection, and no doubt his report will go to the Minister in due course. I suggest that he give very serious consideration to this.

The manpower position is so bad that there are barely sufficient men to work mechanical appliances. To leave it in its present state is hopeless. I have previously mentioned the question of road transport. These deposits are situated about 220 miles from the port. A start has been made on doing up the road with one of the big plants belonging to the Main Roads Department. It is doubtful whether arrangements have been made to do the lot. We must finish the job. While the plant is there the road must be made to the port. To my mind that involves a change in the whole of the road building organisation in the North-West. During the depression days the money for main roads was given to the various road boards to spend. The Main Roads Department, as a

department, did not function at all. This was done in an endeavour to save overhead expenses in the way of engineers and clerks' salaries. The various road boards, in effect, acted as agents for the Main Road Department in supervising the expenditure of the grants. That served us for a while, but as every member must realise, it was an ineffective and costly method of road building. The policy of the State was not to buy plant but to spend all the money we possibly could on paying wages during the depression years. It is to be hoped that we never revert to that policy.

During the years when the road boards were spending the money, public works engineers had to supervise, and there were only two engineers to look after the whole of the North-West. Of course it was simply impossible for them to cope with the task. During the last two or three years, however, there has been only one engineer to supervise all the public works from Shark Bay to Wyndham. What an impossible task that has been! It is futile to expect anyone to do it. The time has come when the Main Roads Department as a department should take control of the roads in the North-West and undertake the construction of them, just as it does elsewhere in the State. The department could utilise the bigger plants now available since the activities of the Allied Works Council have decreased, and in this way some real roads could be provided in the North.

Roads are the essential need of the North. We hear much talk about aeroplanes and what they are likely to do in the realm of transport, but I do not think aeroplanes will be used in our time for transporting heavy bulk loads. Roads are the only means we can envisage of coping with transport problems in the North-West, and they will have to be provided. When the Main Roads Department takes charge of this work the roads should comply with the definition of a straight line, namely, the shortest distance between any two points.

The Minister for Justice: What about the capital cost?

Mr. RODOREDA: The capital cost of a road is nothing as compared with the cost users have to pay if a road is longer than it need be. The distance from the asbestos deposits to Roebourne could be cut by 30 miles, and if hundreds of tons a week were being transported over the distance, year after year, the saving would be well worth

while. An investigation to ascertain the most direct route should be made before the road is built, even if the survey cost £5,000 or £10,000.

We have a spectacle in this State of which we should be ashamed. I refer to the location of our railways, which is deplorable, simply because money was not made available in the first place to enable complete surveys to be made. Parliament begrudged spending £4,000 or £5,000 on the survey of a railway line, and the consequence is that we have the present heavy grades, numerous curves and extra mileage to contend with year after year, for all of which the people have to pay. I hope we do not fall into a similar error when a real road building programme is started in the North. Such a programme will have to be undertaken in the near future. Ever since I have been in Parliament I have been battling for roads for the North-West, and the effect has been practically negligible.

Now, however, it would appear that attention is being focussed on the North and something will certainly have to be done if we do not wish to continue losing population. The shipping position is acute. We have the equivalent of $1\frac{1}{2}$ ships to do the work that required five ships in pre-war years. In spite of all the assurances given by the shipping department and by the Minister controlling the North, I say it is a mathematical impossibility for those ships to carry the goods necessary to keep the North-West going. I have tried by writing to the Commonwealth Minister for Supply and Shipping and by approaching the Federal member for the North-West to get the position rectified. So far as the Federal Department is concerned, however, the North-West does not exist. Rationing was introduced in the North-West in common with other parts of Australia, but the very fact that the shipping service is inadequate effectually rations the people of the North. There is no need for any further rationing; indeed it is farcical, for the people have coupons and can get nothing for them, because the necessities of life cannot be transported there in sufficient quantity.

During last summer perishables of all sorts had to be sent to the North by aeroplane in order that mothers and children might be supplied. They are very grateful for the service. I do not know what we would have done without the intervention of the member for Subiaco; she saved the situa-

tion. This shows the desperate straits into which the North has fallen. The situation will be as bad if not worse during the approaching summer if the Government does not do something in the direction of getting another ship for the coast. I understand that the State ship which the Commonwealth Government commandeered has done practically nothing for the last six or eight months, and steps should be taken to get it returned to the State and put on the trade again. Alternatively, some other ship must be obtained or the situation will once more become desperate.

Mr. Withers: What about the new ship?

Mr. RODOREDA: A wooden ship? If a wooden ship gets a seven-mile-an-hour wind against her, she stops still, because those vessels are only seven-knot boats. Therefore we cannot depend much upon wooden ships. Anyhow, they were not designed for this trade and would not be utilised for it. The existing situation is no joke for the people in the North when they find that the necessities of life cannot be transported to them. No other part of Australia has suffered such disabilities. Even the people of Tasmania have had the necessities of life transported to them. Not so the people of the North, notwithstanding that for the last couple of years they have lived under a constant threat of air raids. Still they have remained there and done their jobs. Something must be done rapidly, especially as the summer is almost upon us. Otherwise there will be a shortage of fresh fruit, dairy produce and vegetables in the North-West. I make this statement, notwithstanding the assurances of the State Shipping Department, because it simply cannot meet the requirements.

Attention has lately been directed to the Kimberleys and the irrigation experiments being made there. Professor Wadham, of the Rural Reconstruction Commission, paid a brief visit there recently and his impressions were reported in "The West Australian." They are very interesting impressions, but this professor, like a lot of other people, will persist in referring to the Kimberleys as the tropics. I do not know where he got that impression. Anybody who has lived in the North knows that is not in the tropics at all. Life in the Kimberleys is more or less similar to that elsewhere in the outback portions of the State. It is definitely not a tropical country. Professor Wadham said we

would have to get people to go there who would live in a tropical country. That statement created an entirely false impression, though it is a very prevalent mistake.

Mr. J. Hegney: What about Marble Bar?

Mr. RODOREDA: Heat alone does not make a country tropical. I commend the Government on having established the research stations and undertaken the experiments in the North, and hope they will be carried on with great vigor. Professor Wadham recommended that at least £25,000 a year should be made available for scientific research work. The men at present there are working under very crude conditions and are being financed by the State Government, but the professor suggested that the State could not possibly cope with this experimental work without Commonwealth aid. I agree with him in that opinion. Whether £25,000 a year would be too much or insufficient, I have no means of telling, but the experiments should be proceeded with until the results, good or bad, have been demonstrated beyond all doubt. This must be done before large amounts are expended on the construction of irrigation head works.

Professor Wadham said there would be no way of dealing with the land or making it productive on a sound basis without some form of irrigation. I believe that everyone who knows the country will agree with him in that statement. There is no question that the water in the Ord, Fitzroy, De Grey and Fortescue Rivers can be dammed without entailing a great deal of expense, but it remains to be proved what can be done with the water. We do not yet know whether it can be used to grow commercial crops or whether it would have to be used for growing fodder crops for stock. I cannot say; it is a matter for expert investigation. Unless we undertake research work of this kind in the North, I say definitely that we may as well give the country back to the blacks.

Mr. Marshall: And apologise for having taken it from them.

Mr. RODOREDA: Erosion is occurring in the Kimberleys to such an extent that, according to a man who knows what he is talking about, the Fitzroy River is in danger of being silted up in 20 or 25 years. The erosion is caused by the cattle tramping down the river valleys in dry seasons and then, when the rains come, the soil is washed away down the watercourses. Un-

less something is done soon to combat the mischief, we shall have a terrific soil erosion problem on our hands in the Kimberleys. To my mind, the only way to prevent this continuing is to make provision in an amendment to the Land Act. The trouble is that there are very few artificial waters in the Kimberleys and most of the cattle use the natural waters. The consequence is that they eat out the country in the vicinity of the waters and cannot get out to other country where there is good feed. They are on the same country year in and year out and thus it is being eroded.

Unless we legislate to compel cattle raisers in the Kimberleys and elsewhere to put in artificial waters and give the natural waters and the feed around them a chance to recuperate, we shall be heading for a tragedy. This applies to a lesser extent to the sheep country. Several years ago the present Minister for Lands, myself and other members representing North-West constituencies tried to get an amendment to the Land Act passed by this House with a view to checking erosion. The idea was to require stock raisers to put in artificial waters to enable all their areas to be used instead of so much of the country being held in idleness. The amendment, however, was defeated, largely through the opposition of the then Minister for Lands (Hon. M. F. Troy) who, though a very estimable Minister for Lands, knew less than nothing about the pastoral industry in the North-West and the Kimberleys. If he were present today, I believe he would agree with that statement. Since the defeat of that amendment, the position has become worse year by year.

Mr. Thorn: If he changed a lot, he might agree with you.

Mr. RODOREDA: He has probably mellowed in the interim.

Mr. Doney: It is to be hoped so, anyhow.

Mr. RODOREDA: That is a problem which has to be attended to. The Government should give serious consideration to the whole situation and endeavour to devise some method of overcoming the difficulties to which I have referred, by a suitable amendment to the Land Act. The Kimberley pastoralists and others may not be able to finance the establishment of the necessary artificial waters. Such facilities would undoubtedly increase the carrying capacity of the country and, if money were advanced,

repayment could be secured by levying a certain amount per head upon the extra stock carried, as a consequence of the improved situation. Some such scheme will have to be devised, otherwise I am sure that the Kimberleys and the North-West generally will gradually deteriorate so far as the feed position is concerned. Moreover, the rivers will go on silting up and the country will become desolate in 20 or 30 years' time.

The whole of the North-West has been suffering intermittently from serious drought conditions, and after a somewhat brighter spell it is now in the middle of another drought. I have never seen the country look worse from the point of view of feed for stock than I have seen it in the Roebourne and Ashburton districts. Sheep were being shorn, and men had to be told off to pick them up as they came out of the pens because they were unable to stand. I do not know how we are to cope with such a position. It all comes back to the question of providing feed, and the only way in which to do that is by a process of irrigation. Mr. Dumas and I went out to look at the proposed site for a dam on the Fortescue River just below Millstream. I gathered from Mr. Dumas' remarks that the site met all requirements so far as water conservation was concerned. It was estimated that 6,000,000 gallons of water a day are flowing into the proposed dam site, and that has been going on ever since man knew anything about that part of the country. Of course that is a mere trickle, but it all helps. Only one decent flood is required in the year and the dam would be filled up. The site in question is 1,000 feet above the country that would be irrigated. I want further research undertaken in this area.

The Government should establish a research station on the lower land, and investigate the possibility as to what can be done with the water when impounded. We want to know whether fodder can be grown there for sheep. I have no doubt it can be grown because I have seen it done on a small scale. Up to the present the people concerned are merely experimenting in the growing of fodder for sheep under crude conditions, but are getting good results. There is no doubt something can be done in this direction; it is principally a matter of money and investigation. I hope the Government will not allow this matter to drop. If it does, there

will be no hope for the North-West. Reverting to Professor Wadham's views, he claims that the soil in the Kimberleys does not appear to be high-class, but it has no inherent vices. What he means by that we can only guess. This again is a matter for research. From my own experience I would say that soil is only material on which it is necessary to pour water and perhaps fertilisers to enable you to grow anything desired. It is possible to make soil out of anything if you put the necessary constituents into it and water it, and such soil will grow anything you like.

Mr. Withers: It is only a base.

Mr. RODOREDA: Yes. The best soil is not worth anything unless there is water to put on it. It is a scandalous thing to allow the water in these rivers to run away to the sea as it does year after year, and to take a portion of the country with it every flood. We have to do something about this or other people will. There are one or two other disabilities of the North upon which I would like to touch. First I would deal with the lack of school facilities in the North, a factor which militates against the settlement of people there. Considerable expense is involved in sending children to the southern areas to school. Apart from that, the sending of the children away deprives the parents of the enjoyment of their children's society. In fact, some people who send their children away do not see them for three or four years. Most people in the North cannot afford to send their children to the metropolitan area in order that they may attend school. This is a question which should receive very serious consideration. I see no means of overcoming the difficulty except by getting back to the irrigation proposition.

We must get many more people into that part of the State. The only way in which to do that is by getting them established on small holdings where they can carry say 3,000 or 4,000 sheep. By that means it will be possible to bring communities together so that educational facilities may more readily be given to the children. It would be idle to ask either the State or Commonwealth Governments to supply educational facilities when the people are so scattered that we could not get more than 15 or 20 children together in a settlement, and sometimes even less than that. We should get the population there more closely

settled, otherwise there is no hope of providing better educational facilities than are now being given. It has been suggested that taxation should be remitted to the extent of the cost of sending children to the city to school. That question is, however, beyond the State Government, and is one for the Commonwealth Government to determine. I merely mention it as one of the suggestions that is offered to assist in keeping people in the North. I would have preferred to stay in the North-West myself, but it became a question of educating my family and getting jobs for the children when they were educated. I therefore had to get out. Scores of other people have had to do the same thing, but would have preferred to work and live up there.

Another big factor militating against the retention of people in the North is lack of social intercourse. Man is a gregarious animal and will not live alone if he can avoid it. When people are living a hundred miles apart and see each other infrequently there is naturally no social intercourse between them, whereas if they could get better conditions of life they would probably prefer to remain. Failing those amenities they seize the first opportunity to get out. Life in the North-West is exactly the same as life anywhere else in the back portion of the country, Wiluna, Kalgoorlie or anywhere else, once the amenities of life are provided. If people can be given electric light, refrigeration, and the other comforts of civilisation then life to them becomes just as comfortable in the Kimberleys as it does on the goldfields or other outback centres. If these problems are solved I do not think people would care very much where they lived. I am sure that if the necessary amenities were provided people would be just as willing to live in the North-West as in any other part of the State, for they would live just as comfortably there as elsewhere.

Mr. North: It is not so hot there as it is New York.

Mr. RODOREDA: Or as hot as it is in many places down here. The hon. member can take that in two ways. These are some of the disabilities under which the North suffers. I hope the Government will give serious consideration to what I have said. Some four or five years have elapsed since I have taken part in an Address-in-reply

debate, but things become intolerable at times and one has to blow off steam.

Since the people have decided that State Parliaments are to endure for a time, we should reconsider the whole set-up of Parliament and consider how it is being conducted. I do not agree that Parliament should meet only for five or six months of the year and go into recess for the remainder of it. We should meet at least three or four times a year for 10 or 11 weeks at a time. I will give my reasons for that opinion. The present set-up is a wonderful thing from the point of view of the Government. It gets rid of Parliament for six, seven or eight months and is on velvet. We have to look at the position from other points of view. The member for Maylands touched upon it briefly. People think that members of Parliament do no work whilst the House is in recess. However erroneous that impression may be, the people are not likely to change their minds unless provided with evidence to the contrary. We would enhance the prestige of Parliament in the eyes of the people if we met at least two or three times a year. In my experience a member of Parliament has an easier job when the House is sitting than when it is in recess.

Mr. Doney: Many of us agree with that.

Mr. RODOREDA: When the House is sitting we can meet all the Ministers on the Government bench three times a week, and are not obliged to chase them all over the place as we have to do when in recess. It is no use telling the people that. They think that we are on a holiday, so-called, when Parliament goes into recess. Our standing in the community has deteriorated considerably during the last 10 or 11 years, and I think we should do all we can to enhance our prestige with the public.

Mr. North: The public say that talk is work.

Mr. RODOREDA: Of course they do. All the talking we can indulge in when trying to persuade the public to the contrary will not alter their point of view. If we met a little more often without so much recess public interest in Parliament would be enhanced and maintained, and that is what we have to endeavour to achieve. We must secure interest in our Parliamentary institutions or else they will collapse.

The Minister for Works: You will have to kill Bing Crosby first.

Mr. RODOREDA: We only know what we can do when we try to do it. If Parlia-

ment were to meet three or four times a year there would always be news in the Press about its activities. From the point of view of private members the whole position would be more satisfactory, particularly in the case of those representing remote electorates. Once Parliament meets we have no chance of getting to our electorates, and we have to leave the people there to their own devices for six or seven months on end. That might be better for them, but we have a job to do and we cannot keep in touch with it as things are. If we had two or three shorter recesses during the year we could keep in closer contact with our constituents, and it is our job to do that. There is another matter in connection with Parliament to which I would like to refer. I notice that the other day the Prime Minister of Canada, Mr. McKenzie King, suggested that the salaries of members of Parliament up to £1,000 should be free of taxation.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. RODOREDA: Evidently this is a popular subject. While I might agree with the Prime Minister of Canada as regards £1,000, I would not agree that all parliamentary salaries should be free of taxation, because that would be inequitable. In that case no account would be taken of a man's domestic and other responsibilities. I consider that the time is long overdue to consider the position of our own allowances in this State. I see no reason why every member of Parliament should be paid the same amount, irrespective of what his commitments are in regard to his electorate. If £600 is enough for Perth or Fremantle or a little electorate near the city, it is not sufficient for a country electorate.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. RODOREDA: I do not see any reason why country electorates should not be graded and a certain allowance—travelling allowance, or whatever it might be called—granted in accordance with the cost incurred by the member in travelling through his district. Such allowances should be free of income tax. I hope some consideration will be given to that matter. I do not think anyone can take exception to it. The member for Canning proved to us that £1 was only worth 15s. now compared with its pre-war value. I do not know the basis of his calculation, but I am certain that money has not the same value now as it had when our present salaries were fixed. Our expenses

have increased out of all proportion. That would be so even if the cost of living had remained the same. We now have added war taxation, which I am not optimistic enough to think will be decreased much in the years ahead of us. That is taking a big slice out of our allowance. On top of that there is our pensions or superannuation fund, which is now taking another bite out of our salaries. The result is that I find it financially impossible to keep in contact with my electorate the way I should. I just cannot do it, and I think it is time some consideration was given to the question of parliamentary allowances.

Mr. Thorn: If the amount were treated as an allowance we would get on much better; but it is treated as salary.

Mr. RODOREDA: I do not know about that.

The Minister for Mines: It is treated as a pool from which donations may be given.

Mr. RODOREDA: It amounts to the same thing in pounds, shillings and pence.

Mr. Thorn: It does; I agree with you.

Mr. RODOREDA: I hope some action will be taken in the matter later in the session and that we shall be able to debate this. I trust that someone will bring up the subject. I have touched on it only briefly, fired the opening round, as it were. I repeat also that I hope the Government will give serious consideration to the question of doing something for the North-West. It has lain dormant for 20 odd years. The population is decreasing rapidly, and unless we do something with that country, unless we populate and develop it, we have no right to hold it, and there is no question that some other nation will take it from us.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison): May I be pardoned for taking this opportunity to make some observations and, in the process, issue a warning? However, I would like to preface my remarks in that regard by joining in the congratulations to you, Sir, on once again assuming that very high and responsible position of Speaker. I would also congratulate the member for North-East Fremantle on attaining to the high and honourable rank of a Minister of the Crown. To new members I offer my heartiest congratulations. Their contributions up to date have been an indication that they will be an acquisition to the debating strength of this Assembly. All their speeches were splendid.

Particularly do I commend the member for Nelson who moved the motion. His was an excellent contribution. Incidentally, I warn the new members that this is an institution of disillusionment. If they have come in the hope that they will institute reforms and do something of importance for the welfare of their electorates they will live to be sad at heart. On the other hand, if they have come here devoid of conscience in the hope that there will be an opportunity for self-progress they will be quite at home!

I would dearly love to be able to share the enthusiasm and optimism of those people who believe that there is a possibility of something worth-while eventuating in the near future in the way of an improvement in the economic and social life of the people of Australia. No doubt these individuals—some of them in public positions, some in semi-public positions, and some high and respected citizens of Australia—conscientiously believe in what they advocate and what they consider will take place. But their decision has been reached without meditation, because there is no evidence whatever to support their contentions. It is true that many promises have been made the world over. They have been made a thousand times by statesmen, by Press-made statesmen and by hypocritical statesmen, but none of the promises has ever matured, none has ever been given effect to. I am not as enthusiastic as a lot of people. Possibly the transference of powers from one authority to another might be responsible for security in the future, but it is equally true that it might not be.

Who can say, for instance, what would have eventuated as the result of the transference of powers from the States to the Commonwealth in this country? What we can say is that there are ample facts to show that in the past it has never been so. I listened attentively to some of the advocates on both sides in connection with the recent Referendum, and I was astounded at the utterances of some conscientious men, well-versed students of economics and potential statesmen. I was astonished at the statements they made. If they made them conscientiously then they gave no thought to the subject and they had no facts to support them. If they made them with the idea of misleading the public, they have now been sadly disillusioned. One speaker advanced the argument that the Government of the

Commonwealth during the last depression had no power to prevent mass dismissals and unemployment. Such a statement is far from true. What are facts? The Federal authorities of the depression period were the very ones that gave legislative effect to the depression and brought it about. They passed legislation effecting an enormous reduction in the purchasing power of the community. The effect was stagnation in industry and in the commercial and economic life of the country, and its lengthened shadow was unemployment.

Mr. Leslie: Now we are getting the facts.

Mr. MARSHALL: To say that the Commonwealth Government had no power to prevent that is to say something far removed from actual truth.

Mr. North: Mr. Scullin asked for money and could not get them.

The Minister for Mines: He was not the only one!

Mr. MARSHALL: Had the Commonwealth Government had the courage to exercise sovereign right over its own monetary policy, had it had the welfare of the community at heart, and had it desired to prevent mass unemployment, it could have done so in the twinkling of an eye. All it had to do was to exercise sovereignty over its own monetary policy and direct the Commonwealth Bank—and take the responsibility of so directing it—to issue credit free to the State Parliaments, local authorities and other semi-public bodies. In that way the unemployed could have been absorbed as fast as industry stagnated. There is nothing at all in the Constitution to prevent the Commonwealth Government from doing that. Any Commonwealth Government, no matter what particular brand of politics it endorses, can alter a position of that kind if it so desires and has the courage. From the period until this day, right through the war, it could have relieved the people of the terrific debt that has accrued. It need not have cost one penny to pay for the war for the development of national works and for the putting into execution of all those things so necessary for the welfare and protection of the people of the Commonwealth.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. MARSHALL: By Section 51 of the Commonwealth Constitution the Commonwealth Government has full and complete legal authority over all credit and currency.

issues. Really, that is legally its sole prerogative and no other institution or organisation has that power or authority. So, when we look back to the period of 1930 and analyse what actually took place we see quite clearly that the Government of that day deserted the authority given to it by its own Constitution, and gave effect to a plan schemed out by a team of international bankers represented by Sir Otto Niemeyer and Professor Guggenheim, sometimes known as Professor Gregory—an insult to Scotsmen!

Mr. Wilson: Hear, hear!

Mr. MARSHALL: In that case there was the spectacle of a Government with full power and authority, and sovereignty over the monetary policy of the Commonwealth, deserting that power and authority and giving effect to the dicta of international banks by slashing into wages, salaries, old-age and invalid pensions, subsidies and grants, and so reducing the purchasing power of the Commonwealth that unemployment became rampant because of the resultant stagnation of industry. It has been said on several occasions that the State Governments were helpless during the depression. Really and truthfully that is a correct statement. The States were in a hopeless position because during a period of depression, when industry has stagnated, it becomes an utter impossibility to raise funds by way of taxation, and that was the only source of revenue open to the State Governments at the time. That state of affairs was brought about by the action of the Commonwealth Government of that period. I visualise the consternation of the wise old men—men of integrity, honesty and vision—who formulated the codicils which later become the sections of the Commonwealth Constitution if they could only have seen what happened in 1930. When they delegated full power and authority over the monetary policy of the Commonwealth to an individual unit, the Commonwealth Government, did they think for a moment that it would ever be possible for that Government to desert the people to the extent it did on that occasion?

Mr. Smith: It was the Commonwealth Parliament, not the Government.

Mr. MARSHALL: I may have made a mistake there.

Mr. Smith: It is a different thing altogether.

Mr. MARSHALL: No. I know exactly what the hon. member is hinting at, and he is far from being correct, because he implies that it was necessary to introduce legislation to give effect to an extension of the monetary system of Australia.

Mr. Needham: That legislation was not introduced.

Mr. MARSHALL: It was. Two Bills were introduced and both were deserted.

Mr. Needham: They were defeated.

Mr. MARSHALL: They were not defeated. It was a case of emergency. They could not wait for the Senate to deal with them; they were sent to Select Committees. Let me tell the member for Perth and also the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe that no legislation was necessary then to deal with our monetary policy, and no legislation is necessary now.

All that is necessary, if the Commonwealth wants money, is for it to direct the Commonwealth Bank to give effect to its policy. All the Commonwealth Government has to do is to give an assurance that it will take full responsibility for that policy. What is the Commonwealth Bank Board other than the servant of the Commonwealth Government? And what is the Commonwealth Bank other than the bank of the people? All the Commonwealth Government had to do was, not to waste time with legislation, but to direct the Commonwealth Bank Board to give effect to the Commonwealth Government's policy to extend credits, and issue them to the State Governments, local authorities and semi-governmental authorities on the understanding that they used such credits for nationally-important and urgent works. By doing that the Government could have sucked up every unit of unemployment throughout the Commonwealth without any legislation whatsoever. Members need not accept my statement on that matter. I treasure a book which is a copy of the report of the Royal Commission appointed by an anti-Labour Government to inquire into our monetary and banking systems. I think the present Federal Treasurer was a member of that Commission. It took two years of meditation, consideration and investigation to get out this report. I shall refer to page 206, paragraph 530. I want members to be fully cognisant of what I am going to quote because it is a clear indica-

tion of the power possessed by the Commonwealth Government without legislation.

Mr. Seward: It is paragraph 503 which refers to that, is it not?

Mr. North: Paragraph 504.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MARSHALL: I shall quote from paragraph 530 on page 206. The hon. member is at liberty to have a look at this report if he so wishes. I do not intend to make it a secret document. Very few copies of it are available at the moment, and that is why I treasure this one. I know that quite a number of people would like to destroy it. The quotation is as follows:—

Where there is a conflict between the Government's view on what is best in the national interest and the board's view, the first essential is full and frank discussion between the two authorities with a view to exploring the whole problem. In most cases this should ensure agreement on a policy to be carried out by the bank which it can reconcile with its duty to the community and which has the approval of the Government. In cases in which it is clear beyond doubt that the differences are irreconcilable, the Government should give the bank an assurance that it accepts full responsibility for the proposed policy and is in a position to take and will take any action necessary to implement it. It is the duty of the bank to accept this assurance and to carry out the policy of the Government.

Mr. Doney: Who made that statement?

Mr. MARSHALL: That is from the report signed by a majority of the Commission.

Mr. Needham: What was the year of that report?

Mr. MARSHALL: The year was 1935, a fact which should have been known to the hon. member. The report was a document of great importance for which we had waited a long time.

The Minister for Works: You did not know the date until you looked it up.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am not so much concerned with the date as with the contents. I wanted to give that information to members who thought it was necessary for legislation to be passed. There was yet another alternative, an honest way out, rather than to have forsaken and betrayed the people, and that was to have gone to the people and let them decide whether they would accept dictatorship from an international Jewish organisation or whether they would compel the Government to stand up to its undoubted responsibility.

It is true that the States were hopeless. They were hopeless because they had for-

feited and sacrificed their right over their own monetary policy when they federated, believing, of course, that at no time in the history of Australia would the people be so betrayed, especially to give effect to the whims of an international organisation. I sound a note of warning that unless the public men and people of Australia awaken almost immediately, they will be betrayed further. Every move that is made indicates quite clearly to me that there is still an effort by this international octopus to rope in all nations willing and foolish enough to be caught in the name of permanent peace, freedom and liberty, and ultimately enslave them. The proposal is to get complete control over the monetary system and currency of the nations foolish enough to fall for it. Any nation that sacrifices its sovereignty over its own money is a doomed nation. The proposal is to create an international police force after the war is over. Armies, navies and air forces will foregather in some particular place and this dictatorship will rule supreme and impose its dictation upon nations foolish enough to embrace the scheme.

I fear that the soldiers of Australia will yet have to spill blood within our own borders, not that I advocate the spilling of human blood, even that of an enemy, but so powerful are these people and so subtle is their work and so amenable to their wishes are our statesmen, that I fear the future very much indeed. We do not know what Australia is committed to. Who does know? All I know is that one member of the present Commonwealth Ministry—I am not sure that it is not the Prime Minister himself—said that the powers contained in the 14 points were essential to give effect to international commitments. To me it appears that the idea is to transfer the powers from the States to Canberra and from Canberra to this international organisation, and the day that happens we will become abject slaves. The Commonwealth has full control if it can only develop the courage to use its power; the courage is all that is lacking.

I wish to quote a reprint published in a Melbourne paper recently of some remarks made by a long dead statesman whose name is familiar, even today—Bismarck—on the death of Abraham Lincoln, formerly President of the United States. I regard Lincoln as one of the most courageous statesmen who ever lived. He challenged the banking institutions of the United States and it

cost him his life and, when fighting in the Civil War, he said—

I have two enemies—the army in front of me and the banks at my rear. Of the two, I fear the enemy at the rear most.

He knew the power that the banks were exercising. Let me quote what Bismarck said at the time of Lincoln's death—

The death of Lincoln was a disaster for Christendom. There was no man in the United States great enough to wear his boots . . . I fear that foreign bankers with their craftiness and tortuous tricks will entirely corrupt modern civilisation. They will not hesitate to plunge the whole of Christendom into wars and chaos, in order that the earth should become their inheritance.

God knows, we are getting close to it now! How true those words are today when one reviews all that is going on! Consider the promises made during the last few years by practically the same statesmen. And they are making the same promises today, with no more intention of fulfilling them than was the case during the last war. I shall now quote statements made by two statesmen which are well worth quoting at this juncture. Lloyd George was Prime Minister of Britain during the major portion of the last war, and he, like most of his ministerial colleagues, gave the information after having betrayed the people—not before! It is remarkable how these men have the temerity to reveal facts of major importance to the welfare of a country when it is too late! Everybody knows what Lloyd George promised—a new world order, a war to end war, a war to make the world fit for heroes to live in, a world that would be safe for democracy! First of all Lloyd George goes to the peace conference, hears all that happens there, and then goes back to the Imperial Parliament of Britain and has the peace agreement ratified. Later on he has this to say about the conference—

The international bankers swept statesmen, politicians, jurists, and journalists all on one side, and issued their orders with the imperiousness of absolute monarchs who knew that there was no appeal from their ruthless decrees.

That is what Lloyd George had to say about the terms of the last Peace Conference, although he got them ratified by the Imperial Parliament. Thus we have individuals of this type—mouthpieces for money-bags! Britain's present Prime Minister also had quite a little to say regarding

the Peace Treaty. In his book, "The World Crisis" he writes:—

A requisition, for instance, for half a million houses would not have seemed more difficult to comply with than those we were in process of executing for 100,000 aeroplanes or 20,000 guns, or the medium artillery of the American army, or 2,000,000 tons of projectiles. But a new set of conditions began to rule from 11 o'clock onwards. The money cost, which had never been considered by us to be a factor capable of limiting the supply of the armies, asserted a claim to priority from the moment the fighting stopped.

And we have such treacherous practices going on constantly. Again we are told of a new world order. May I predict what it will be? It will be the lowest possible minimum that the multitudes of the various nations are prepared to accept without rebelling! Has the rich warm blood of the Australian soldier been spilt to that end? Will the Commonwealth Government hand returning soldiers a statement of the Australian national debt and the annual interest bill thereon, a bill not for a year or two but in perpetuity, whereas the money required for this war could have been obtained without its costing the people a penny? I wish to make another quotation; in fact, I have a room full of quotations available for members. This one is from a paper frequently quoted by the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe, the "London Times." It reads as follows:—

Credits issued by the banks as loans are really national credit owing their value to the capacity of the country to provide goods and services. Book-keeping technique to facilitate the production of goods and services . . . plays much the same part in economic life as a railway ticket plays in transportation.

The Commonwealth Government could have been doing that all along, without adding one solitary penny to Australia's national debt! What are our soldiers coming home to? Taxes, taxes, taxes sucking the life-blood from the nation! Everything we eat and drink or use to adorn or shelter our bodies is taxed. Is there any prospect of redress? Has any move been made by any Government of the Allied Nations to relieve the position? Has one of those nations challenged the power of international finance?

Mr. North: Yes, Canada.

Mr. MARSHALL: True, but the Constitution of Canada made it impossible for the challenge to succeed. Now I shall submit a quotation which will not be challenged by

any member on this side of the Chamber. Members on the other side, of course, have not sufficient knowledge to be able to challenge. I have here two short quotations from men holding ministerial positions in the present Commonwealth Government. Mr. Chifley, when his ability to deal with monetary matters was challenged, replied as follows:—

I can assure you that your interpretation of the Government's financial policy is not in accordance with facts. Briefly, the Government holds the view that there is no problem of war finance as such. The only problem is so to organise the manpower and productive resources of the Commonwealth that they will be of the maximum value to the country at this time.

Have you, Mr. Speaker, read certain speeches made by the same man when sponsoring loans and intimidating Australian citizens, almost threatening them with confiscation of their private bank balances, telling Melbourne workers that if they did not subscribe to every loan he would take some action? Democracy! God help us! Now I shall read my other quotation. In New South Wales there is a journal published known as "The Locomotive Journal." In Vol. II., No. 3, of the 14th December, 1939, there appears an article written by the present Prime Minister of the Commonwealth. It is entitled, "Labour and War." Mr. Curtin has expounded Labour policy and Labour opinions, and expounded them very brilliantly. In "The Locomotive Journal," Mr. Curtin wrote—

Everything in war must be paid for, not by reducing wage standards, but by the use of the national credit. Because of a Labour Government in the Federal Parliament, there is a Commonwealth Bank. It was created as a means for releasing national credit. But because Labour lost office the national bank has been transformed by our opponents into a mere puppet of the private banks. As a requisite to national defence, the Commonwealth Bank must have restored to it its original charter. When we are in power, we shall proceed to redeem the national bank from its slavery. The cost of war can be met without piling up huge debts, and without interest payments sucking our national life-blood. The Commonwealth Bank must, with a Labour Government, work out a freer and fuller life for our people.

Mr. Withers: That will come.

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes.

Mr. Needham: How long has Curtin been in power?

Mr. MARSHALL: I have already told the member for Perth but will tell him again

and any other interjector that it is not essential for legislation to give effect to the Commonwealth Government's policy.

Mr. Needham: It is essential to have power of government. Curtin only had the power until July of this year.

Mr. MARSHALL: Will the hon. member understand that the Commonwealth Government's policy can be given effect to? The Commonwealth Government can call the Commonwealth Bank Board into its office tomorrow and say, "This is the Government's policy. I give you an assurance that the Commonwealth Government will be solely responsible for it."

Mr. Needham: You try it with a hostile Government later on.

Mr. MARSHALL: Hostile, foot! How these men fear a little hostility! How quickly they surrender!

Mr. W. Hegney: Our Government cannot compel the Commissioner of Railways. What are you talking about?

Mr. MARSHALL: The railways come under a special Act. Do not make that comparison. I tell the hon. member—and I quote from the Royal Commission's report—that so far as policy is concerned, not administration—

Mr. W. Hegney: Policy!

Mr. MARSHALL: If the hon. member were desirous of doing something for the welfare of the people and found himself with that power, he would not hesitate to develop sufficient courage to call the Commonwealth Bank Board into his office and say, "Here is my policy; give effect to it. If you do not, you are finished." After all, the members of the board are only servants of the State. What right have they to dictate policy? They are administrators and should give effect—as the Royal Commission says—to banking policy as enunciated by the Commonwealth Government. Do not let us have any more of that nonsense!

With regard to post-war reconstruction, I would like to hear the member for Boulder, at his best, expounding his views on all the talk and noise about post-war reconstruction. I can hear him saying, "All this eyewash and balderdash!" I admit that the problem of changing over from a peace economy to war economy under the conditions in which Australia found herself at the outbreak of hostilities was a damnably big problem, a tremendous problem. We had nothing. We did not even have men experienced in military, naval and air war. We

had to create it all, besides getting the wheels of industry moving to feed the armies. That was a problem. But what of the problem of rehabilitation? That is a complicated and tremendous responsibility. What does it involve? Two factors only. One, as the Minister for Mines says, the first and the most important, is money. Unless the Commonwealth Government develops courage there can be no question of reconstruction. The second factor is economical and efficient administration. Those are the only two factors that come into the picture.

Mr. Thorn: Quite right.

Mr. MARSHALL: If the Commonwealth Government will make the money available, I do not think one member listening to me tonight will deny that at least the State Government can carry out its own national works more efficiently and more thoroughly than they could be carried out from Canberra.

Opposition Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MARSHALL: The spectacle we have seen around us of recent years was sufficient to indicate—

Mr. Leslie: Where were you before the 19th?

Mr. MARSHALL: May I suggest that we can do it without the creation of bureaucratic boards?

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Smith: We have 93 boards in Western Australia.

Mr. MARSHALL: The Commonwealth Government talks about manpower. Here is our Minister for Health wanting labour to look after the unfortunate people in the Claremont Asylum.

The Minister for Mines: Lots of it, too.

Mr. MARSHALL: And yet we have 100 persons whom the taxpayers of this country are paying working for officers in the Savoy Hotel. That is the kind of administration we are getting! Women are required to look after our unfortunate mentally sick people but they cannot be got. Yet we can provide two or three uniforms for each girl, in addition to her wages, so that she might dance attendance on officers at an officers' club. I presume we pay the rent for the five-storey Savoy Hotel, too.

The Minister for Mines: They do not get it free.

Mr. MARSHALL: Whether they get it free or not, I venture to say the officers do not pay for it. So I repeat, let us have no

more of this balderdash. Let us assume that this war finished two years ago. It has not and because it has not we have maintained 800,000 soldiers and nearly as many other persons in producing war material since then. We have paid them their wages and provided them with uniforms and food. From the point of view of production of real wealth all those people have been unemployed during the whole of that period. As the war did not cease two years ago that has cost us about £400,000,000. But assuming that the war finished two years ago, we could have expended that £400,000,000 on our returning soldiers and we would have been no worse off.

What is the problem? Are they going to discharge these soldiers and put these women out of industry without payment? Is that the proposal? Are they going to put them out without any remuneration at all because they are physically capable of working and let them wait and probably starve in the interim until work is found for them? Is that the proposal? If it is not, where is the problem? There is no problem except that of finance and administration. But there is a keen desire for regimentation, coercion, conscription, rationing and direction by bureaucratic officials who want to plan and scheme out a life for others. Your life, Sir, and mine, are to be planned and schemed for by others. I heard a member talking about the need for cheap housing. How we desire to cramp everything into a chronic shortage of money! What right have we to build homes for the people? Are they to have no choice in the homes they are to occupy? Why do we not see there is sufficient purchasing power for people to choose their own homes, instead of having this slum-building? Look at the spectacle in this State! One can pick out a worker's home the moment one's eyes fall on it.

What right have we to deny freedom to people to choose for themselves? We can give them that freedom by giving them purchasing power. But here is a board of bureaucrats designing homes and we fall for it! And the more chronic the shortage of money, the more we endeavour to cramp social desires into it. We never attack the cause, but are always trying to remedy the effects. We fall for it just like we fall for the "work-for-all" slogan. God forgive us! Work for all! Everybody is to be working like the people in Russia—men, women and

children. We must work until we reach the time when we can get the old-age pension; until we are broken in health or until the dissolution of life is complete.

Mr. W. Hegney: Work never hurt anybody.

Mr. MARSHALL: Every fellow that has got away with it without working himself has said that! It does not matter whether it hurts or not; that is not the principle we should be investigating—whether it is injurious to the physique or not. We should be asking: Why this drudgery in a machine age?

Mr. Triat: It is like medicine, not nice to take.

Mr. MARSHALL: Surely we should accept work as a means to an end. Work! Nothing but work! Then we find that with the application of scientific invention to production, there is no work. Those that suffer in consequence do not share the wages of the machine producers. That is the fallacy of the system. The productive energy of the universe has increased by 5,000 per cent. over the last 100 years and I ask my colleagues, must we still work?

Mr. W. Hegney: No.

Mr. MARSHALL: No! I now return to what I said when I started to speak and told the new members that they would not be here long before they were disillusioned. That is the outlook for the working class—work! And some members are proud of it, and justify it and giggle and laugh at any suggestion against it. I have been disillusioned. That is not the first time; and it will not be the last. Any man that fights sincerely and conscientiously for the betterment of the people of the Commonwealth will be giggled at. He must advocate work! Work, that is, not for himself, but for the other fellow! What about this new world order?

If members want to see what is going to happen, let them observe the proposal presented to the Imperial Government; the proposal known as the Beveridge Plan. Mark the likeness between that and the social security legislation of the Commonwealth, showing the unseen hand at work all the time. The Beveridge Plan provides a lot of benefits. It is a glorified dole. That is going to be the soldier's lot when he gets back from this bloody holocaust. That will be his lot if he is an Imperial soldier and our lot will be very little better. The plan provides for

a married couple to receive £1 per week each or £2 in all. A single person over the age of 21 will receive 25s. That is glorious, is it not? True, it is an improvement on 7s. a week. I also find that if a person is under 21 and over 18, that person is to receive 17s. 6d. So he has to pull his belt a little tighter.

The Minister for Mines: Small waists are coming in again!

Mr. MARSHALL: If a person is between the ages of 16 and 18 he has to take in his belt a little further. That and other benefits such as workers' compensation, are the principal provisions in the Beveridge Plan. And let it not be forgotten that the people—the workers of England—will contribute towards the cost. They will pay a little of it themselves. What they do not contribute directly will be taken out of their pockets in the way of taxation. They will contribute money which will be given back to them, like child endowment in Australia. I find, too, that under this particular plan, in a maternity case £4 is allowed to the mother. That would be something to urge her on! Surely she should be inspired when she sees that! I also find that under the same scheme £20 is to be allowed for burial. So it will be seen that a man is worth five times as much when shuffling out of the world as when he is slipping into it. That is the Beveridge Plan and we find something similar on the stocks in Australia. I propose to quote from "The West Australian" of the 11th August, 1943, in which a message from Canberra states—

A survey of the Beveridge Plan has been completed by the Social Services Department and it is understood that parts of the scheme could be made to apply to Australian conditions.

No doubt! Especially the monetary part. It already applies in the provision of 25s. for a widow. The message continued—

Consideration of phases of the scheme will be undertaken by the new Parliament. Bills dealing with unemployment and sickness benefits are also being prepared.

If the taxpayer is to pay for these benefits—and somebody must do it under the present obsolete monetary system—what is the ultimate benefit to the recipient? He will know that he does not make a direct contribution to the amount he receives, but he will do so by way of taxation. Has not the Government to get the money somewhere? It can get it only by putting its

hands into other people's pockets and taking it out in the way of taxation—in other words, this levelling-down, socialistic idea. When I first came into the Labour Party, I was taught to look to the highest rung and then struggle to emancipate and lift up the others. But today we look at the lowest and bring the rest down to that level. It is a plot designed so that we shall all share the poverty. This is a wealthy country, and, although all Governments are making a bold endeavour to inculcate into the people that it is poverty-stricken, they wrong the country and the people when they do so.

This land can produce an abundance of wealth, so much so that everyone can enjoy a high standard of living without the people being reduced to a state of tax slavery. The cost of everything we look at, eat or drink, as well as our amusements, is composed largely of taxation. I pay 10d. for a packet of cigarettes, and 7½d. of that is tax. The cost of the hat I wear consists of 50 per cent. tax. My suit is the same. This highway robbery affects poor and rich alike. We are all robbed by it, and by this monetary system. Hence my hostility to these humbugging utterances, about a new world order and post-war reconstruction when there is no indication from any of the Allied Nations to show that there is any degree of sincerity in them at all. I have searched the annals of them all and can I find anything in their proposals to lighten and finally dispose of the burden of debt? No. To increase it, yes.

The Minister for Works: Could you tell us anything about Russia's financial system?

Mr. MARSHALL: I do not know very much about Russia other than this: About 1932-33, Ramsay MacDonald went to the ex-Governor of the Bank of England, Mr. Montagu Norman, and asked him to make further credits available so that he might absorb the unemployed because he feared that otherwise a communistic state would prevail in England. Ramsay MacDonald was rudely surprised when Mr. Montagu Norman said, "We would welcome it." So he would. It is the very form of government that his people have financed all through. Kuhn Lob & Co. financed Lenin through the revolution and financed Russia right through its industrialisation, and they raked off a profit of several millions as a result of their investments. Men,

women and children all work to pay for it. I know that much about Russia, and that is sufficient for me. Is there anything in any of the proposals to lighten and finally dispose of the burden of taxation? The Prime Minister, speaking the other day, said that the servicing of our national debt at the completion of this war would require us to maintain a high standard of production. There does not seem to be any indication of any possible change in our monetary system.

Taxation must eventually increase. Do not think it will be reduced! We were told during the last war that that was what would occur, but there was no reduction. Is there anything in the policy of any of these Governments to transfer the burden of work from the shoulders of men to machines? No. The proposal is work for all; work, and glorified toil. Is there any proposal to extend the pleasures of the machine age? No. Is there a suggestion to remove the economic causes of war? No, but there is every indication of preparation for another war even amongst the Allied Nations today. Wrangling is going on between one and the other for international markets as soon as the war is over. So we start off again in preparation for the third world war. Is there any suggestion to give freedom in security? No. In conclusion, I refer to the four freedoms; the academic process featured in bringing into existence the Atlantic Charter on the high seas, at great sacrifice, no doubt, to the great statesmen concerned. During the last war similar promises were made, but immediately the war was over those who made the promises became pacifists and the promises went out on the high seas.

During this war further promises have been formulated, but they had to be made in a spectacular way to be reassuring, and so these men went out on the high seas and sat in conference and produced the Atlantic Charter, which is to be the basis of the new world order. Strangely enough, a third man was on that ship, but he is never mentioned. That man is Montagu Norman. He was there to watch the interests of international bankers. They are always present; they are employed by the Governments here. The men who created the depression are still here, employed by the Commonwealth Government. What are these four freedoms? The first is the freedom from want. That reminds me of

the old tiger over in the Zoo. He has freedom from want. He gets his meals regularly every day.

Mr. McLarty: He does not think so.

Mr. MARSHALL: Well, he is a disgruntled old cuss. He is regularly attended to and has his bed laid down for him.

Mr. Cross interjected.

Mr. MARSHALL: Would the hon. member speak English, so that I can understand him?

Mr. Cross: Would the—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MARSHALL: He gets everything that freedom from want embodies or implies. He is attended to most thoroughly every day. So he has freedom from want, which the unfortunate soldier fights for today. Then we have freedom from fear. The tiger in the Zoo has that freedom, because no-one is going to shoot him. Everyone likes to look at him and admire him.

Mr. Cross: A lot of them were killed off only last week.

Mr. MARSHALL: In the general sense he has no fear. He is protected and so he enjoys that freedom. Then we come to freedom of speech. The old tiger can growl by day and roar all night long, and no-one takes the slightest notice. So he has that freedom. I do not know what his religion may be, but whatever it is he can observe it without interference from anyone. Those are the four freedoms for which our men are fighting. The one freedom which is worth while is not included in the Atlantic Charter, and that is the freedom to choose or refuse. That is the only freedom worth having—the freedom of the individual to have some say.

Mr. North: Alberta is trying to get it.

Mr. MARSHALL: That freedom is not mentioned in the Atlantic Charter. People can have all the other freedoms, but the most important of all, the only one worth having, is not in the Atlantic Charter. I warn the people of Australia that the rich, red, warm blood of our men is not being spilt for this freedom, and I am afraid our boys will be sadly disillusioned if, when they return, they find that we give them freedoms of no value and deny them the only freedom worth fighting for. It is an inherent desire in the British makeup to be free. Despite Governments and their tyrannies and their desires to conscript and coerce, I hope the Australian lads when

they return will demand the only freedom worth fighting for, the freedom to choose or refuse.

MR. SMITH (Brown Hill-Ivanhoe): Mark Twain was once asked whether he was going to give a dollar to hear Col. Ingersoll on Moses. "No," he replied, "but I would readily give a dollar to hear Moses on Col. Ingersoll." I would not give a dollar to hear the member for Murchison on Mr. Curtin, but I would readily give a dollar, indeed, I would readily give a fiver, to hear Mr. Curtin at this moment on the member for Murchison.

Mr. Thorn: It would not be worth the money. You would be wasting your fiver.

Mr. SMITH: I take this opportunity to congratulate the new members on the speeches they have delivered and the excellent matter those speeches contained. I trust that their most sanguine expectations and the results they hope to achieve will be realised. But here I can agree with the member for Murchison—I feel they will be very much disillusioned. I rise to speak on the Address-in-reply, more as a matter of conforming to practice. There is nothing the world likes so much as conformity, not that I have any expectations that results will accrue from anything I might say. Anything that one says in this Chamber nowadays receives very little publicity. If a member wishes to get publicity, he needs to speak about the vice squad and its activities in connection with the class of person whom the famous Irish historian Leckie referred to as the supreme type of vice but ultimately the most efficient guardian of virtue. On one occasion I spoke on that subject in this House and received quite a lot of publicity. Evidently it is a subject that is not readily discussed by people because most of us are afraid to face up to its realities, but when we do so we can be sure of some publicity.

From my experience in this Chamber, I believe that private or ordinary members of Parliament must in time feel that they are frustrated in their efforts and ambitions. I think there is quite a lot in the suggestion made by the member for Murray-Wellington regarding the appointment of committees who might be given work to do in connection with the functions of Parliament, and so absorb the latent talent that lies outside the Executive. I remember reading of the Leader of the Opposition in this Chamber having moved a motion along simi-

lar lines; I was in Melbourne at the time. If my memory serves me aright, that motion was thrown overboard at the end of the session. There is quite a lot of latent talent outside the Executive. Our form of government appoints an executive. It is an executive that, according to Lord Macaulay, is supposed to comprise the leading men of the party that commands a majority on the floor of the House. But I disagree with Lord Macaulay's viewpoint, and I think Mr. Winston Churchill would disagree with it, too.

On one occasion, about 1928 or 1929, Mr. Churchill was a member of the Opposition in the House of Commons and the Ramsay MacDonald Government was in power. Mr. Churchill, by way of interjection, referred to Ramsay MacDonald as a boneless wonder. Later Ramsay MacDonald jettisoned the principles of a lifetime and formed a coalition Government and, in doing so, insisted upon Mr. Churchill being left out of the Cabinet. This has since been referred to as the most expensive interjection ever made in the House of Commons. So the question of the executive comprising the leading men of the Party that can command a majority on the floor of the House is very much open to argument. As a matter of fact, there are many considerations that lead to the appointment of an Executive. Personally, as I look over the Cabinets in the various Australian Parliaments, including the Commonwealth Cabinet, I think it would be nearer the truth to say that the collective calibre of the Executives is representative of the collective calibre of the bodies that elect them. I am well aware of the fact that in our Executive we have some leading men who can command a majority on the floor of the House, but other considerations enter into the question of the election of Executives.

There is the question of the popularity of people who are members of the Executive from which the Cabinet is elected. Some of them, too, may have that kind of personality which begets expectation that out-runs performance, and are consequently elected to the Executive. Others again are elected because of successful efforts of sectional interests to secure representation for themselves in the Cabinet. Consequently we find Lord Macaulay's dictum on the composition and structure of Cabinets, much as it might have fitted in with the era of which

he wrote, does not fit in with our present era, nor with our present methods and results in electing executive bodies. As a result we find on both sides of the House men of talent excluded from the Cabinet, men with more talent sitting on the sidelines, as it were, than some of those who at present enjoy Cabinet responsibility. I would make this recommendation to new members, that each and every one of them should aspire to Cabinet rank, because—much as one hears from time to time from members about what Parliament can do—this Parliament can do little or nothing that does not find favour with the Executive body.

I remember the Leader of the Opposition on one occasion making a speech in this Chamber and moving a motion in connection with it, but he referred to the many motions moved and carried expressing opinions of the House and enumerated many of them as the result of which nothing was done—proving conclusively that motions carried in this Chamber are not effective but support the contention once put forward by Lord Riddell, that the carrying of resolutions is one of the weaknesses of democracy. Many subjects mentioned in the speeches of new members, and also in speeches made by old members, were worthy of some answer at the conclusion of this Address-in-reply debate. But what do we find? That we are less influential in this Chamber than the members of another place. Certainly they are much more influential than we are, since almost every salient point raised in speeches delivered there on the Address-in-reply is ultimately reviewed and dealt with by the Leader of the House. At least that consideration is extended to members of another place. But such is not the case here. I have looked up "Hansard" from 1932 onwards and found that whilst we have on two or three occasions had a speech on the Address-in-reply from a Minister, not more than one Minister has taken part in that debate in any one year. Certainly none of them has at any time replied to any of the salient points raised by private members on matters of interest to the Chamber.

I want to say a few words tonight on the subject of goldmining, because goldmining is an industry that at present looms large by reason of its giving promise of affording a large field of employment after the war. I do not know whether such a promise is highly acceptable to members of the Fight-

ing Services. I try to imagine—though I cannot imagine—that I am one of those men fighting their way up through the mud and slush of jungle trails and that the lieutenant or captain in charge of them is giving them a bit of pep talk, saying, “Stick to it, boys, stick to it, and when we get through this I can guarantee you a job, once peace has been restored, on the 2,000ft. level of a mine!” That would be a most interesting promise, a job in the goldmining industry after the war! Recently there appeared in the Press a letter signed “F. W. Simpson.” It was headed “A Medical Viewpoint.” I presume therefore that Mr. F. W. Simpson is a medical man. He quoted Dr. Cumpston, the Director General of Health for the Commonwealth, as saying—

It is clear that respiratory diseases as a whole are much more prevalent among goldminers in Western Australia as causes of death than amongst males over 15 years of age generally.

Pneumonia is three times as prevalent while tuberculosis is twice as prevalent. Bronchitis, pleurisy, asthma, and emphysema are all distinctly in excess, whilst the group “other respiratory diseases” is nearly 12 times as fatal to miners as to males generally.

He mentions that as a result of an inquiry from Mr. Bennett, the State Registrar, he discovered that from the 1st July, 1939, to the 30th June, 1944, there were 21,971 accidents of which 78 were fatal. So this is the great industry—the goldmining industry—that is going to give so much employment to the members of the Fighting Services when they return from this war! I can quite imagine, after listening to the member for Murchison and to the few expectations he has of a better world after this war, that I am in a world which expects a lot but to the majority gives very little.

Consequently the goldmining industry cannot be ignored as a field for employment after the war. I quite appreciate the fact that the goldmining industry will continue for a long time after the war. It is quite evident that the gold stocks now frozen in America and owned by the central banks and individuals of many countries are not going to be allowed to lose their pristine value. The people owning them are going to make sure that those accumulated stocks shall be maintained in price somehow or other; and the shareholders and the big interests in the goldmining industry of this State and of South Africa will do their best to see that the goldmining industry is con-

tinued and extended, if possible with renewed vigour. Why should they not? We find, as anyone can find, from the South African returns that gold is produced at anything from 52s. to 148s. per ounce and is sold in London at £8 8s. per ounce. A wonderful profit to be derived from the goldmining industry!

While we are talking about the wonderful possibilities of this industry and the great amount of employment it is likely to give after the war, I think it would be most interesting to ascertain, properly and accurately, how many men have been employed in it in past years. I have never seen much sense in our trying to fool either ourselves or anybody else about the number of men who are employed or have been employed from time to time in the goldmining industry. During the Referendum campaign, and on other occasions, too, I heard many people criticising the Commonwealth Government for having taken men out of the industry and having left only 4,500 in it. But if there is any complaint at all about the number of men that have been taken from the industry, no complaint can be made about the efficiency of those left in it, for we find in the report of the Department of Mines for the year 1942, that in 1940 the number of tons of gold ore raised and treated per man employed above and under ground was 290.7, whereas in 1942 the number of tons of gold ore raised and treated per man was 401.56.

The Minister for Mines: That is quite understandable.

Mr. SMITH: These figures are supposed to give some indication of the efficiency of those engaged in the industry. I would like to know how it is understandable.

The Minister for Mines: That is easy.

Mr. SMITH: The Minister might say that no development work is being done now.

The Minister for Mines: That is a fact.

Mr. SMITH: Probably it is. However, the manager of the Lake View mine said when Mr. Dedman was speaking about the necessity for taking men from the goldmining industry that he had two years of ore developed and broken underground at that time. If we are to be supplied with figures referring to the efficiency of the men employed in the industry, why should we not have figures showing not only the tons of ore broken and raised to the surface, but the tons of ore developed and left lying on the ground? The Minister for Mines told us in 1942 that although 7,000 men were

withdrawn from the industry and taken into the various services, 60 per cent. of the remainder of 10,000—of 10,000 mind you!—were under 45 years of age.

The Minister for Mines: Under 45?

Mr. SMITH: Yes. That is what the Minister said in his speech in 1942. I would like to refer to the Actuary's Report on the Mine Workers' Relief Fund, not that I want to quote from it in extenso at this stage. At page 3 he says—

The total contributions paid to the fund since 1936 have varied from about £53,000 in 1941 to about £21,900 in 1944.

As £5 8s. is paid into the fund each year on behalf of each worker employed, the sums mentioned by the Actuary reveal that from 1936 to 1944 there were never more than 9,815 workers paying into that fund, while in 1944 the number paying in was 4,055. Yet the Minister in his speech on the subject of employment in the mining industry—and he is supported to some extent by records shown in departmental reports—said—

Certainly there is a quarter of a million in the fund, but it has a liability towards upwards of 15,000 men.

So if it has a liability towards upwards of 15,000 men, obviously there must have been upwards of 15,000 men in the industry at that time. In the same speech he went on to say—

A very few months ago, not less than 15,000 men were employed in the industry. Today the number is down to 10,000. I am speaking of those who are left, for about 7,000 have gone into the various Services.

So he raised it then to 17,000 employed in the industry. That is word for word from "Hansard."

The Minister for Mines: I could not have read "Hansard" very well afterwards.

Mr. SMITH: The Actuary's report shows that from 1936 to 1944 never on any occasion were there 10,000 men paying into the fund, and all employees pay into this fund, with the exception of the clerical staff. I do not see that there is very much sense in fooling ourselves, or trying to fool anyone else, in connection with the number of men employed in the goldmining industry. We should get down to facts, and I know that these mines when putting in returns take cognisance of the turnover of labour instead of the actual number of men employed during the year in the mines.

While we are thinking and talking about what a wonderful field the goldmining industry is going to be for employment after the war, it is a good time to think about trying to improve conditions in the mining industry, if they can be improved, and enlarging and extending the compensation for accidents and disease suffered by those who have to work in the industry. I consider that no order can be referred to as a new order that provides by way of compensation to a man totally and permanently incapacitated the sum of £750 which he cuts out in about 4½ years, as a rule, and then, when he is in a very much worse condition, when the disease for which he was given compensation has advanced and he is much less physically fit, he is placed on a lower scale of payments than the miserable £750 he was receiving in the first instance. As a matter of fact, the Workers' Compensation Act is long overdue for amendment.

I recollect that when Mr. McCallum introduced amendments to it in this House he said that nothing had been done in connection with the measure for 13 or 14 years. On that occasion he certainly did effect some very necessary improvements, as a result of which he referred to it as one of the best Workers' Compensation Acts in the world. But even on that occasion he failed in one particular, which I think is most essential in workers' compensation. I refer to the provision he tried to have incorporated in the Act as a result of which people suffering an injury—the loss of a limb or the loss of the efficient use of that limb—would be paid some compensation for it. I remember his emphasising the fact that when a man meets with an accident of that description in which he loses a limb or the efficient use of a limb, he suffers two disabilities; there are two losses. Mr. McCallum endeavoured on that occasion to have the Bill so drafted that a man would be able to draw on £750 in connection with the loss of his limb and also in connection with the loss of time necessarily incurred while the injury was being treated. But he failed on that occasion and I know of one case of a man in a mine in Kalgoorlie who suffered a fractured ankle as a result of which he lost about 50 per cent. of the efficiency of his foot, and he was off duty so long that he drew £168 by way of compensation. There was not sufficient left of the compensation to which he was

entitled to pay him anything for the loss of efficiency in the foot as a result of the accident. To add insult to injury, he had to pay taxation on the £168 he received during the 15 months in which he was incapacitated, because the Taxation Department says that where money is received as wages or in lieu of wages, it is taxable.

We have certainly lagged very much behind some of the other States since 1924 in connection with our Workers' Compensation Act. It is true that from time to time we have effected some minor improvements, but the Commonwealth Act which was recently amended provides a minimum of £800 in the event of death, with an additional £25 in respect of each child under 16 years of age. The injured or incapacitated worker gets a weekly payment equal to two-thirds of his weekly wages up to £3 a week, with £1 a week for his wife and 8s. 6d. for each child under 16. The maximum weekly payment for incapacity that is not of a permanent nature is equal to the weekly pay at the time of the injury. The total sum provided for these payments is £1,000. In cases of permanent incapacity, such as those to which I have previously referred, there is no limit to the total sum provided from which to make these weekly payments that are equal to the weekly pay at the time of the injury, and provision is made, too, in the Commonwealth Act for medical, surgical, and hospital treatment up to £100. When this Act was before the Commonwealth Parliament, it received a lot of support from members of the Opposition. Mr. Menzies, the member for Kooyong, said—

I have no quarrel with the main principles of the Bill. Indeed, I support them. I have always been a great believer in liberal schemes of workers' compensation. The first vote I ever gave in Parliament, the Parliament of Victoria, was to increase the amount of compensation payable under the Compensation Act of that State.

Sir Earle Page said—

I welcome the introduction of this Bill because a great need has arisen in the last three or four years for an enlargement of both the schedule of industrial diseases and the schedule of specified injuries for which compensation is payable.

Mr. Holt, the U.A.P. member for Fawkner, said—

I have no desire to prolong the debate or to register opposition to the measure, but with the consent of hon. members I shall incorporate

in "Hansard" a table which, in my view, is informative. This could well be listed as a subject for discussion at a Premiers' Conference with a view to achieving uniformity throughout the Commonwealth.

The New South Wales Act also provides very similar compensation to that contained in the Commonwealth Act. There, too, we find that for total and permanent disability there is no limit to the payments that are made. Certainly some other States, such as Tasmania, Victoria and South Australia, lag behind us. So I appreciate the difficulty which will arise at the Premiers' Conference if this matter is discussed in an endeavour to get uniformity. But at least I think that something should be done in this State in connection with workers' compensation, particularly for those whom we expect to be employed after the war in the goldmining industry which is, I think, already regarded as a rather dangerous industry to work in from the points of view both of accident and industrial disease.

I read with a great deal of interest the actuary's report on the Mine Workers' Relief Fund. He made an investigation covering the period of eight years from the 1st February, 1935, to the 31st January, 1943. The Registrar again pointed out, as he had previously, that the fund had not been constructed on strict actuarial principles. I remember when the Act was passed in this Chamber. I drew the attention of the Minister at that time to the fact that it was not actuarially sound and that the large number of liabilities being thrown on to the fund itself would in time result in the fund having a deficiency. And so it has proved, because although the Registrar has been somewhat handicapped by an insufficiency of data, and, to some extent, these deficiencies are based on conjecture, it is my opinion that if he had more data and less conjecture the probability is that the fund instead of having an estimated deficiency of £268,285, as he estimates, would probably have a greater deficiency, and that notwithstanding the fact that the fund has assets in the bank; that is liquid assets or assets at call amounting to £250,464. I think it is time some steps were taken to do away with the Mine Workers' Relief Act altogether.

I have heard members of the Opposition speaking about the goldmining industry and the importance of it to this State. But all I remember the Opposition ever doing for the goldmining industry was to repeal the

Miner's Phthisis Act, which was a reasonable measure of compensation for those who were suffering from tuberculosis and silicosis in the mining industry. In my opinion the Mine Workers' Relief Act is nothing more or less than a device for those in the goldmining industry to carry a part of their own insurance for risks in the industry. I know the Government contributes one-third, the employers contribute one-third and the employees contribute one-third to the fund. They have to pay £5 8s. per year per man by way of premium to ensure them a paltry measure of compensation to cover part of the risks that the industry itself should be called upon to meet. It is time for the whole question of workers' compensation to be placed upon a more scientific basis. I remember, in connection with this Mine Workers' Relief Act, that the Minister of that day, the late Hon. J. Scaddan, said—

Another important provision of the Bill will enable the Board to grant such benefits as may be prescribed by regulations to persons who are employed as mine workers, including prospectors who at the time are engaged as mine workers, or within two years after being so employed are, or become, incapacitated, or whose earning power may be materially prejudiced by any disease or malady, which may be legitimately attributed to the nature of their occupations as mine workers, subject of course to certain restrictions. The Board will not be compelled to make such regulations but will have the power so that if a person has been carrying on his occupation as a mine worker and becomes incapacitated so that his earning power is materially affected by any disease that may legitimately be attributed to his work he may have ample provision made for him.

As a matter of fact, no ample provision has ever been made for such cases.

The Minister for Mines: Where did you get that £5 8s. per miner per year?

Mr. SMITH: That amount is the total of the three contributions. If I said that that was the amount contributed by the miner himself I made a mistake. The amount of £5 8s. is paid in by the three parties on behalf of each employee. Anyhow, I am not talking about that aspect at the moment, but about the men who are suffering from a disease or malady which may be legitimately attributed to their working in the goldmining industry. I say, although the Minister said what he did when the Bill was introduced and told this House that it was possible for the Mine Workers' Relief

Board to pass regulations to make these payments, that these payments have never been made. I made that statement on the authority of the member for Mt. Magnet who was a member of that board and should know. Speaking on the 1st October, 1942, on this very matter, the hon. member said—

If, however, he came in after 1938 he has no claim on the old fund, and the old fund could not pay to that man anything whatever.

Then he mentioned cases of men who had received no benefits—rheumatic cases, heart cases and rheumatoid arthritis cases. He also mentioned spondylitis and other diseases that are contracted by men who work in the goldmining industry, which they can legitimately attribute to their work, and as a result of which they become incapacitated. In those cases they get no compensation whatsoever. I certainly think it is high time that we dispensed altogether with the Mine Workers' Relief Act. That legislation is nothing more nor less than a device to make the workers in the goldmining industry carry some of their own risks in connection with their employment. I do not regard that as a scientific method of workers' compensation. Neither do I regard as a scientific method of workers' compensation one that imposes premiums on industries in accordance with the risks incurred in the respective activities. On the contrary I regard that as entirely unscientific.

In my opinion, industry generally should be called upon, in a collective and co-ordinated fashion, to carry the risks of industry. Some, like the butchering trade, pay high premiums but can pass on the cost of workers' compensation and so spread that expense over the whole community. The timber industry, in connection with which very high premiums are paid to insure its workers under the compensation legislation, has to meet fierce competition all the time and the cost of workers' compensation insurance might very well put some of those engaged in the industry out of business altogether. The costs have also become so high that workers in many industries will never get a fair deal with regard to workers' compensation because it will always be said that the premiums that would have to be paid would be so high that the cost would put the concerns out of business. In my opinion, the responsibility for the payment of workers' compensation premiums should be spread over industry generally in a co-ordinated and collective fashion.

In Kalgoorlie, for instance, each man working in the goldmining industry maintains four more persons in other forms of employment. There are shop assistants, clerks, accountants, tram conductors, bar-men in hotels, bookmakers and many others engaged in all sorts of industries respecting whom the payments for workers' compensation insurance are immaterial to cover the risks taken by the employees. As a result of the risk taken by the workers in the goldmining industry many other forms of employment are made available—and so it is throughout the whole State. I trust this question of workers' compensation will be thoroughly re-considered, particularly with regard to the premiums paid. I trust that this absurd idea of regulating premiums in accordance with the risks associated with particular industries will be seriously reviewed. If there is any portion of our social system in Western Australia that is independent it is industry, and I consider that, in order that this matter should be placed on a scientific basis so that the workers may be provided with some hope of receiving reasonable compensation in the future, industry generally should have to bear the cost of a flat rate of premiums.

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

House adjourned at 9.25 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 24th August, 1944.

Questions :	PAGE
Apples, as to importation.....	236
Commonwealth housing scheme, as to plans and costs	236
Yampi Sound iron ore, as to power for treatment	236
Address-in-reply, eighth day	236

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

QUESTIONS (3).

APPLES.

As to Importation.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER asked the Chief Secretary:—

(i) Is it a fact that a large shipment of apples from another State has recently been landed in W.A.?

(ii) If so—(a) What quantity of cases were landed; and (b) for what reason?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(i) No.

(ii) (a) Recently four cases of apples, part of a shipment of Tasmanian apples to Adelaide were carried on and landed at Fremantle. They were immediately detected and reloaded on the vessel concerned.

(b) Answered by (ii) (a).

COMMONWEALTH HOUSING SCHEME.

As to Plans and Costs.

Hon. A. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary:—

When will copies of plans and estimates of a wooden and brick house, being erected by the State Government under the Federal Housing Scheme, be laid upon the Table of the House?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

Copies of plans and estimates of a wooden and brick house, as are being erected by the State Government under the Federal Housing Scheme, will be available to be laid upon the Table of the House in the near future.

YAMPI SOUND IRON ORE.

As to Power for Treatment.

Hon. G. W. MILES asked the Chief Secretary:

Further to my question, and the answer thereto, of the 18th November, 1941—In view of the necessity of peopling and developing North Australia in the post-war reconstruction period, has the Government further investigated the economic possibility of harnessing the tide (where there is a rise and fall from 20 to 36 feet) for the purpose of generating electrical power?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

A preliminary investigation of the economics has been made.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Eighth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. SIR HAL COLEBATCH (Metropolitan) [4.35]: At the risk of repeating some of the things that have been said by previous speakers, I feel impelled to devote