

However, that is for experts to decide. But the bottle-neck from Bulwer-street to the city causes considerable and many delays. What I have mentioned concerns only one area. This traffic question must be faced. Before the war the city experienced a lot of traffic congestion which has been relieved because of the war. However, as the position will arise again in the near future the people concerned should take the matter in hand and do something about it before it is too late. I support the motion.

On motion by Hon. H. L. Roche, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.15 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 21st August, 1945.

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

MOTIONS—THE WAR.

(a) *Cessation of Hostilities.*

THE ACTING PREMIER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [4.32]: With your permission, Mr. Speaker, and with the indulgence of the House, I desire to move, on behalf of the Government, the following resolution:—

That, following the recent unconditional surrender of Japan and thereby the complete victory of the Allied Forces, the Legislative Assembly of Western Australia in Parliament assembled expresses its profound gratitude to Almighty God, its deep and abiding loyalty to His Majesty the King, and its great admiration of all those men and women of the British Commonwealth of Nations and the other United Nations who fought and worked to destroy German and Japanese aggression and tyranny and that His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor be asked to transmit the foregoing resolution to His Majesty the King.

The recent unconditional surrender of Japan, following the previous unconditional surrender of Germany, brought the war to a complete end. Not only was this world-war the most terrible of its kind in human history, in regard to the destruction which it brought to the world, but it had an unusually destructive feature which had been associated only to a small extent with previous wars. I refer to the death and destruction which it brought to civilians, and to property of all kinds, in countries that were not actually in the , fring-line, in the old sense in which that term was always used. So we have every reason, I think, to feel grateful that this terrible conflict between nations has at last come to an end.

Some people might feel that the war was decided entirely by the weight of arms, by the weight of numbers, by the work of scientists, and of men and women in the factories and in the production of food-stuffs and similar necessities, but I think we would be foolish if we were to overlook the fact that the nations ranged on one side were fighting in a righteous cause, whereas the nations—such as Germany and Japan—on the other side were waging a cause that was entirely unrighteous and completely cruel and tyrannical in the purpose for which they were carrying on that struggle. Therefore it seems to me that there is always operating a supernatural influence which plays a tremendously important part in deciding, sooner or later, that righteousness and justice shall prevail over all the forces which oppose those principles, no matter how powerful the opposing forces might be in the early stages of the struggle, and no matter how spectacular and devastating the progress of those forces might be before the other nations have time to prepare themselves for the struggle and to meet, with equal and indeed superior strength, the strength which the aggressor nations were using.

I think it is most appropriate, too, that we should, as a Parliament, express our loyalty to His Majesty the King, because by doing that we are expressing our loyalty to the people he represents and to everything associated with the life and work of the people of Great Britain and the other British Dominions. We know that during this war the people of Great Britain—especially the people of England

—suffered very great ordeals that came to them frequently, and the coming of which gave them at times little warning, and at other times no warning at all, so we feel extremely appreciative today of the great work the people of that country did during the most dreadful days of the war in which they were particularly engaged, namely, the war against Fascist Germany. It is not easy to particularise regarding the leaders of the United Nations because when one starts to mention the name of one, one feels bound to mention the names of all, but I think every member will agree that it is appropriate that we should, when dealing with a resolution of this kind, express our great appreciation and admiration of the tremendously inspiring leadership given to Great Britain during the war by Mr. Churchill.

It is fitting, too, that we should refer briefly to the great service given to the United States by the late Mr. Roosevelt, by the leader of Russia—Marshal Stalin; by the leader of China—Chiang Kai Shek; by the leader of Australia during the war years—the late Mr. Curtin, and also by the leaders of other nations and countries that were part of the United Nations of the world. It is difficult to find words that are adequate to express our admiration for the fighting men of all the United Nations. Those men, by becoming part of the Fighting Services, indicated that they were prepared to sacrifice everything, even life itself, in order that their people and their countries might be saved from the dreadful fate which would come upon them in the event of the aggressor nations being successful in the war.

I do not propose to say anything in particular at this stage about our Australian fighting men because there will be a separate resolution dealing with them. To the men and women who, although they were not in the Fighting Services of the United Nations, played a vital part in many ways in the fields of production and in other fields of service, enabling the war effort to be developed to the maximum and carried on without let-up of any kind, we must feel and express our admiration. This, indeed, was a total war in every sense of the term. It was a war that came almost to everybody in some shape or form, and there was in this war, therefore, a greater opportunity for service on the part of the ordinary men

and women in the communities of the United Nations. Thus, in a more direct way than ever before, they were enabled to play an important part in assisting the war effort. Especially was this so in Australia where, during this war, we produced ever so much greater a quantity of war materials in the form of munitions than was done in the previous world war. So, for the reasons I have explained and for many others that could be explained, I now move the motion.

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [4.43]: It gives me very great pleasure to second the motion and to say that I entirely subscribe to all that has been said by the Acting Premier. I, too, consider that we must include in our feelings of gratitude a great measure of gratitude to that power which the Acting Premier referred to as supernatural and which is referred to in the motion as Almighty God, because I am perfectly convinced there has been ample evidence during this war that such a power has been at work. Otherwise, it is extremely difficult to understand why it was, in the worst days of 1940, when the Axis nations were at the zenith of their power and when the Ally upon whom we then relied—the Republic of France—had completely collapsed, no invasion of Great Britain in its then state of unpreparedness took place.

If it is not true that those whom the gods wish to destroy they first make mad, why was it that Japan should have struck at the United States of America at the same moment as it struck at the British Commonwealth of Nations, because undoubtedly its action at that time precipitated, with great speed, into the war the whole of the Forces of the United States, which undoubtedly had a very great deal to do with the recent sudden collapse of the Japanese? One might go on and ask why was it that the German leader turned eastward to Russia in 1941 when he need not have done so. What was it that drove him to that action when the promise of conquest might, had all gone as he anticipated, have led him westward to the victory which he then believed was within his reach? So I have no doubt whatever, and I am sure most of us here, on reflection, will be of the same opinion as the Acting Premier, that that supernatural power was at work in the interests of what we believe were justice and truth.

To our Royal Family, we must, as loyal citizens of the Commonwealth and the British Commonwealth of Nations, extend our congratulations and our feelings of loyalty and gratitude for their behaviour during the struggle through which we have just passed. From the highest to the lowest in the British Commonwealth of Nations, there have been bereavements. The Royal Family have suffered just as have many families in our midst and so many families in the other nations which have comprised the United Nations in this war. To all the people who have suffered in that way, we are willing and anxious to extend our sincerest sympathy. To those whose sons and daughters, perhaps, have been spared by the end of the war coming quickly as it has done, we must extend our feelings of pleasure because of the great number that have undoubtedly been saved from a similar fate that must have overtaken them had the war lasted longer and had it been necessary to carry it on to overthrow the enemy's armed forces as was done in the European theatre of war. All our people of all classes and all sections of the British Commonwealth have striven to their utmost and done their duty nobly in the interests of the war effort. Starting from scratch, indeed from behind scratch, they managed to reach a stage where they were able to overcome the armed might of their enemies, and this could not have been done without the greatest measure of unanimity, I believe, that has ever been achieved. It is a measure of unanimity which I hope and have reason to believe will be carried into the period after the war in an effort to reconstruct that which has been damaged or destroyed, and to improve the other conditions that exist in the British Commonwealth of Nations and elsewhere.

It is true, I think, that every great occasion in the British Empire has found us a great leader. When things are at their worst, it seems that someone turns up who is able and willing to undertake the great tasks that are waiting to be done and to carry them out successfully. During the 1914-18 war we had Mr. Lloyd George, and on other occasions we have had other great citizens, and during this war we have had Winston Churchill, who boldly told the people of Great Britain and the British Commonwealth in 1940, when he took over the helm of office at a time when ruin and disaster stared

us in the face, that although he could promise nothing but blood, sweat and tears, he yet looked forward to final and complete victory. His belief was justified, and the job that he did will go down in history as unquestionably one that probably could not have been done in similar circumstances by any other man who did not possess the peculiar qualities that are possessed by the Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill—tenacity and courage.

In our country, too, we have had men who have faced the issues and done their utmost, with a considerable measure of success, to co-ordinate and bring into full effect the efforts of our people. In every part of the British Commonwealth, we have had similar men—such as Marshal Smuts in South Africa—who have led the way in doing what was required to hold their people together, and to bring the greatest and strongest war effort to bear so that the cause of justice, to which the Acting Premier referred, might triumph. It seems to me that we are justly entitled today firstly to express our delight at the successful termination of this very terrible war at a period long before most of us expected it to end; and secondly to offer our congratulations to all of those who in any way have contributed to bringing hostilities to a successful conclusion.

In the Pacific area, we were blessed by divine providence in being provided with a man in charge such as the General of the American Army, General MacArthur, who has displayed all the qualities that are associated with great leadership. In the British field, we have had a man like Admiral Mountbatten who has, in his own section of the combat area, provided us with the same leadership and the same success. Throughout the whole of the period, I believe there has been no one in this House at least who was of the opinion that we would not ultimately emerge triumphant from this struggle. Admittedly, in 1940 it was hard to maintain our belief in that point of view, but I do think it was maintained and—thank God!—the end has justified that belief. It now only remains for us all, in our several spheres and to the utmost of our endeavour, to promote a state of affairs in the post-war period that will result in a reasonable measure of human contentment and no more wars.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [4.52]: I know that I express the deepest feelings of those associated with me on these benches when I ask that we should be associated with the motion moved by the Acting Premier, and with the sentiments expressed by him and by the Leader of the Opposition.

Question put and passed; the motion agreed to.

(b) *Tribute to the Services.*

THE ACTING PREMIER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [4.54]: I move—

That the Legislative Assembly of Western Australia in Parliament assembled desires to convey the deepest thanks of the people of Western Australia to the fighting men of Australia for the magnificent service given by them in the cause of freedom, justice and righteousness. The deep appreciation of our people is also expressed to all those men and women who assisted the fighting men by work and service in the various theatres of war, on the seas, in the air, or on the home front. This resolution to be forwarded to the appropriate Ministers of the Commonwealth.

In support of this motion, not very much requires to be said. We know very clearly the history of our own fighting men in this war as in the previous war. The fact that during the recent conflict the Japanese almost invaded Australia and that we were saved only in the nick of time by the aid which came to us from America, does not in any way detract from the heroism and the willingness to sacrifice of our own Australian fighting men. During the war, they fought in many parts of the world—in the Middle East, in Greece, in Crete, in Europe, in New Guinea and elsewhere. Wherever they fought—whether they were sailors, soldiers or airmen—they brought great credit to themselves and won for themselves, in the estimation of the Australian people in particular and of the people of the world in general, a very high place. I think it can be said without any attempt at exaggeration that they proved themselves to be thoroughly entitled to be given the name "worthy sons of the Anzacs." They played as conspicuous a part in this war as our fighting men played in the last war.

Knowing these men as we do, I think we can say with a considerable degree of certainty that they will, when they return to Australia, play a prominent part as citizens of the Commonwealth in establishing within

this country goodwill, comradeship, and a system of social security which will be beneficial to the people of Australia today and to all those people who may live here in the future. We must also feel considerable gratitude to the ordinary men and women, many of whom, for various reasons, could not enter the Fighting Services or the auxiliary services. Those men and women played their part wherever they were—on the farms, in the mines, in the workshops, and in the many other places in which activities were carried on which, although their effect upon the war was indirect, were nevertheless tremendously important. To all of these we express our appreciation and thanks. We know that the greatest reward that they would wish to have for the efforts they made during the war, would be the ending of the war and the return to them of loved ones from the various theatres of war spread throughout the world.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [4.57]: I have the honour to second the motion. This time marks the end of an epoch—of a period of great suffering and great heroism and a period during which so many people have laboured incessantly to bring about the victory we celebrate today. It is very proper that this Parliament should recognise what has been done for the nation by its Fighting Services. They have honoured Australia, and it is fitting that Australia should honour them. It is appropriate, too, that we should express to all of those who have lost their sons or husbands or fathers in the course of the war our deepest sympathy in the bereavement they have sustained. Then, too, we know that the exertions of our Fighting Services would have been of no avail if it were not for the devotion and labour of so many men and women in industry and in the economic life of our country. On the whole I think we can say that the Australian nation has risen to its responsibilities and rendered a faithful discharge of its duties. Very often it has been done under very great difficulties because of the anxiety that has been felt by so many people whose relatives have gone oversea, and the difficulties that the housewife in the home has had to face. People on farms have had to meet difficulties day by day, and so have others in the outback districts.

The meeting of our obligations has been made not less easy by long hours, and by working under difficult circumstances. To all those people there should also be given their just reward of praise. It is almost impossible to realise, after six years of war, that the strain has come to an end. I do not know whether we really appreciate that we are, possibly, entering on a new era altogether in human history. We are too near to events to be able to appraise them at their real significance, but I am prepared to believe that the end of this war will be a new date in the story of mankind. If it is to be a golden date in the history of mankind we must see that the exertions and sacrifices of the last six years become the foundation of better conditions for all the people throughout the world. The best tribute we can pay to our fighting men will be to ensure that when they return they receive justice and a proper place in the civil community. That will be the best expression of our obligation that we can make to them.

Also, the opportunity is now presented to the world, and to us in Australia, of seeing that as many as possible of past evils are eliminated. We know that we were plunged into a most terrible conflict because the spiritual and moral values of the world had not kept pace with its scientific attainments. That is only a platitude today, but it is none the less a lesson to us, and an obligation to see that in the days to come these spiritual and moral values take their proper place. There is much to be done. There is a sense of community responsibility, and of responsibility for each other's welfare that needs to be built into the community, and which we hope to see following the sufferings of the last six years. On behalf of those associated with me I have, therefore, the privilege of supporting and seconding the motion moved by the Acting Premier. I hope, with him, that today will usher in a better and happier era for all mankind.

MR. THORN (Toodyay) [5.5]: On behalf of myself and those associated with me I wish to express pleasure in supporting the motion so ably moved by the Acting Premier and supported by the leader of the Liberal Party. We can all agree with the views expressed by them, and I can assure

members that we on these benches are most gratified that this terrible turmoil has been brought to a successful conclusion.

Question put and passed; the motion agreed to.

QUESTIONS.

LANDS.

As to Settlement West of Mt. Barker.

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Lands:

1, Have any proposals been prepared for the use of the lands to the westward of Mt. Barker, including the area known as Rocky Gully, which were inspected by the then Minister for Lands and a party of departmental officers toward the end of 1941?

2, If so, what are the proposals?

3, If not, what conclusions were arrived at in regard to these lands as areas suitable for closer settlement, or other settlement, as a result of the inspection referred to, and what are the intentions of the Government in regard to their use?

4, If the use of these lands has not received such consideration as to enable a decision to be made, will a review of the information gained as a consequence of the inspection and from other sources be conducted in the near future with a view to coming to a decision as to the best methods to be adopted for making use of this fertile country?

5, If the lands in question are available for settlement, are there any special terms connected with their availability or any limitation on the persons who can apply, and what are the prices and terms of payment applicable?

The MINISTER replied:

1, Yes.

2, The proposals include a complete investigation as to the suitability of the land for settlement purposes within the area mentioned, and if such investigations prove satisfactory, then the establishment of the necessary development both in regard to roads, general facilities, and on particular areas to be included in farming units to be made available under the War Service Land Settlement Scheme.

3 and 4, Answered by (2).

5, The blocks in the subdivision held by the Crown were made available at prices ranging from 2s. 6d. to 6s. 6d. per acre on conditional purchase conditions, subject to

tender by the applicant for the value of any improvements in each case. No applications were received.

RAILWAYS.

(a) *As to Trucking Yards at Carbarup.*

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Railways:

1, Has work on the erection of the approved stock trucking yards at Carbarup siding yet commenced?

2, If not, when is it likely the work will be commenced and completed?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Minister for Railways) replied:

1, No.

2, Work will probably be commenced early in September and completed three weeks later. Non receipt of materials and shortage of manpower have precluded an earlier start.

(b) *As to Officers over 65 Years of Age.*

Mr. NEEDHAM asked the Minister for Railways:

1, Are there any officers employed in the office of the Commissioner of Railways over the age of 65 years?

2, If so, how many?

3, What is the name and position occupied by such officer or officers?

4, Are any officers receiving advanced capacity pay because of the retention of such officer or officers?

5, If so, how many?

6, What is the amount of salary paid to each by way of advanced capacity pay?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Minister for Railways) replied:

1, Yes.

2, One.

3, Secretary for Railways and Assistant to the Commissioner. In view of the very heavy call upon the Commissioner of Railways in connection with war work and post-war planning, the Government approved of Mr. Tomlinson being relieved of his duties as Secretary for Railways and being fully utilised in his capacity as Assistant to the Commissioner.

4, Yes.

5, Four.

6, The necessary re-arrangement of staff was made as an internal alteration without additional personnel. The additional remuneration for acting services is as provided for under the by-law.

The names of the four officers mentioned in reply to Question 4 are:—Mr. C. Reymond, Mr. P. C. Raynor, Mr. C. J. Eivers, Mr. W. R. Gibbons.

Regarding Question 6, the additional salary payable for the relief involved is:—For the first 14 days, nil. For the next 12 months—Mr. Reymond, £240; Mr. Raynor, £40; Mr. Eivers, £10; Mr. Gibbons, £132. For the following 12 months—Mr. Reymond, £260; Mr. Raynor, £70; Mr. Eivers, £40; Mr. Gibbons, £162. For the following 12 months—Mr. Reymond, £320; Mr. Raynor, £110; Mr. Eivers, £70; Mr. Gibbons, £192. For the following 12 months—Mr. Reymond, £380; Mr. Raynor, £150; Mr. Eivers, £70; Mr. Gibbons, £192.

(c) *As to Loco. Spark-arresters.*

Mr. DONEY asked the Minister for Railways:

1, In what year was the last test made of a spark-arrester other than the H.D.D. type now in use, and what was the name of that arrester?

2, Since the H.D.D. arrester was first installed how many tests of other arresters have been undertaken?

3, How many, if any, arresters have been declined tests and in what years?

4, Is his department still prepared to interview inventors and make tests of new appliances?

5, If such new appliance is accepted for use on the W.A.G.R., what royalty or other remuneration is offered the inventor?

6, Apart from the occasional tests here-over referred to what efforts are being made by the Railway Department to secure a more efficient arrester than the H.D.D.?

7, Is the Railway Department satisfied with the H.D.D. arrester?

8, For how long has that arrester been in use on the W.A.G.R.?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Minister for Railways) replied:

1, 1940. Circular type spark-arrester as used on the Midland Railway Company (W.A.).

2, Three.

3, Suggestions submitted and not tried either through lack of particulars or obvious impracticability.—1900, 4; 1901, 4; 1902, 9; 1903, 4; 1904, 6; 1905, 6; 1907, 7; 1908, 2; 1909, 3; 1910, 2; 1911, 3; 1912, 4; 1913, 2; 1914, 1; 1915, 8; 1916, 5; 1917, 9; 1918,

14; 1919, 9; 1920, 7; 1921, 12; 1922, 16; 1923, 6; 1924, 6; 1925, 5; 1926, 3; 1927, 4; 1928, 3; 1929, 4; 1930, 2; 1931, 3; 1932, 3; 1933, 1; 1934, 2; 1935, 1; 1937, 3; 1939, 1; 1940, 2; 1941, 1; 1942, 4; 1943, 1; 1944, 2; 1945, 2. Included in this figure are seven spark-arresters tried on other railway systems and of which particulars have been obtained.

4, Yes.

5, This would necessarily be a matter for negotiations—taking into account the degree of improvement effected.

6, Matter constantly under review—technical literature published in Australia or overseas is studied and careful consideration is given to every suggestion put forward. Officers of the Department discuss and consider possibilities of improvement promptly.

7, Yes, but further improvement is sought continually.

8, The H.D.D. arrester has been in use for 24 years.

ABATTOIRS, KALGOORLIE.

As to Modernising.

Mr. LEAHY asked the Premier:

Is it the intention of the Government to have the Kalgoorlie Abattoirs brought up to date before the hot summer sets in?

The ACTING PREMIER replied:

Approval has been given to the erection of chillers at the Kalgoorlie Abattoirs. Negotiations with the Commonwealth have been completed regarding the supply of electric power, and it is intended to proceed with construction at an early date.

GOLDMINING.

As to Survey of Coolgardie Field.

Mr. KELLY asked the Minister for Mines:

1, Is he aware that a survey of the Coolgardie goldfield area has not been undertaken since 1902?

2, Does this position obtain in any other goldmining district?

3, How many mines surveyors are employed by the Department?

4, How many geologists?

5, Are there any apprentice or junior surveyors or geologists in training?

6, Is it the intention of the Mines Department to increase the number of surveyors and geologists when skilled men become available?

7, Is he aware that, although a consistent producer for 10 years, no geological or geophysical survey has been made of the important felspar deposit south of Coolgardie?

8, In view of the importance of both geological and geophysical knowledge to the goldmining industry will he investigate the possibility of increasing activities in both directions?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (for the Minister for Mines) replied:

1, Considerable work has been carried out by the Geological Survey in the Coolgardie Goldfield since 1902, and the results have been published in numerous bulletins and annual reports. The latest bulletin concerning the Goldfield is Bulletin 91, "The Auriferous Lodes of the Gibraltar District," and the latest information to appear in annual reports will be found in the Annual Report for 1943 which contains a report on the lithium-bearing in the Coolgardie-Londonderry district and notes on the felspar quarry, Londonderry.

2, All other districts in this State have received at least some geological attention subsequent to 1902, and in most cases the results have been published in a number of bulletins or annual reports.

3, The only surveyors employed by the Department are two for surveying the boundaries of mining titles.

4, The present establishment of the professional officers of the Geological Survey is the Government Geologist and four field geologists.

5, The usual recruiting ground for the professional staff of the Geological Survey is the Department of Geology in the University of W.A., where a number of men are at present taking their courses, and others will be available when released from the Services.

6, The Government Geologist has already made recommendations for increasing the strength of the professional staff of the Survey after the war when skilled men will be available.

7, The felspar deposits at Londonderry have been examined twice in recent years by the Geological Survey and the following reports have been published:—Scales Felspar Quarry, Londonderry, Coolgardie Goldfield by F. G. Forman in 1936; and Notes on the Felspar Quarry, Londonderry, by H. A. Ellis in 1943.

8, Arrangements have already been made for co-operation with the Commonwealth Department of Supply and Shipping in the use of geophysical methods, the first place chosen for work being the Collie coalfield.

BULLDOZER.

As to Use for Land Clearing.

Mr. WILLMOTT asked the Minister for Lands:

1, When will the first bulldozer arrive in the Sussex electorate for clearing operations for future soldier settlement?

2, Will the bulldozer be available for clearing for private settlers?

3, If so, have those settlers to make previous application, and to whom?

The MINISTER replied:

1, For a considerable time efforts have been made through the Commonwealth and other channels to obtain bulldozers for use in connection with War Service Land Settlement, and it is expected that one or more of these will be obtained in the near future. It will be employed on the preparation of farms under the War Service Land Settlement Scheme.

2, No.

3, Answered by 2.

MIGRATION.

As to State and Commonwealth Action.

Mr. DONEY asked the Premier:

1, Having regard to the reported activity of the Queensland Government in the matter of inviting migration from the British Isles to Australia, will he inform the House whether his Government has taken or intends taking similar notice of this important and very urgent matter?

2, Has the Commonwealth Government's sub-committee, which was appointed to consider the migration position, yet reported?

3, If so, has the Government received a copy of that report, and, if received, will he make it available early to this House?

4, Has the Agent General for Western Australia reported upon this question and if so, when and in what terms?

The ACTING PREMIER replied:

1, The matter of immigration is receiving consideration, and is to be discussed at the present Premiers' Conference.

2, No notification has been received from the Commonwealth Government that this sub-committee has reported.

3, No copy of the report has been received by the State Government.

4, No.

INFANT HEALTH CENTRES.

As to Status of Nurses.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER asked the Minister for Health:

1, Are the infant health sisters now Government employees?

2, Are they engaged on work similar to certain nurses classified as public servants?

3, Do their activities now become governed by the Public Service Act and regulations?

4, Are they governed by the Superannuation Act, and if so, when were they brought under the said Act?

The MINISTER replied:

1, This question has been receiving consideration and a decision will be made in the near future.

2, No.

3, No.

4, See answer to No. 1.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Ninth Day—Amendment.

Debate resumed from the 14th August.

MR. SEWARD (Pingelly) [5.18]: First of all, I wish to join those who have preceded me in the current debate in expressing regret at the retirement from the Premiership of the member for Geraldton, Hon. J. C. Willecock. Ever since I have been a member of this House—a matter of 12 or 13 years now—I have received nothing but courtesy, encouragement and assistance from that hon. gentleman, and I wish to acknowledge that fact now and to say that, in all sincerity, I hope that, as a result of his release from the onerous duties attached to the Premiership, he will be rapidly restored to health so that he

may remain with us for many years to come. I trust that he will be able to give us the benefit of his ripe experience in the consideration of problems during the difficult years that lie ahead. To the Premier, although he is not in the State at the moment, I also extend my congratulations upon his attaining the highest office in Parliament after a comparatively short political life. He must be most gratified at the rapid promotion he has experienced. While I cannot wish him a long term of office, I do trust that when the time comes for him to hand over the reins of government to some other leader, he will be able to do so in the knowledge that his work has been satisfactory to himself and to the State.

I also offer my congratulations to the Deputy Premier on his rapid advancement to his present high position. Of his ability we have had ample evidence in this House, and I wish him a happy term as Deputy Premier of Western Australia. I also give expression to my pleasure, which I shall voice when he returns to the Chamber, at the appointment of the member for Murchison to the Ministerial office he now holds. Since I have been in this Chamber, I have recognised Mr. Marshall as a consistent and thorough worker, one deserving of promotion. I realise that in his control of the departments allotted to him, there is one thing that the officers concerned will soon know, and that is that they have a Minister controlling their offices. He will not be a rubber stamp by any means—I am not insinuating that any Minister has been a rubber stamp in the past—but the new Minister will give full attention to his departments and will make the officials there realise that they have over them a man who will probe matters to the bottom and see that justice is done to all concerned.

While in a congratulatory mood, I would certainly be lacking in my duty if I did not pay a tribute to the work done by a committee of Government officers appointed by the Minister for Lands and Agriculture during last session of Parliament to cope with the difficult problem of supplying water to many country areas. I happen to have been associated with those gentlemen, and I can testify to the volume of good and effective work the committee carried out. Whenever a call was made upon

the officers concerned, often at times inconvenient to them, they did not hesitate to give attention to the matters to be discussed and certainly did not spare themselves at all. They were always willing to do their utmost to get water to outlying districts and, although at their first meeting the opinion was generally expressed that no water could possibly be sent to any outlying districts for a variety of reasons—there is no need for me to go into those reasons at this juncture—the fact remains that water was supplied to many of those districts, with the result that the interests of those areas were conserved and stock saved, all due to the unremitting efforts of the officers I allude to. For that reason I desire to convey my congratulations to them at this stage.

Before proceeding to deal with some subjects I wish to discuss, there is one matter to which my attention has been drawn. I refer to the concluding portion of the speech delivered by the member for Pilbara a few nights ago. Probably it was merely a temporary lapse on his part, but it represented a lapse that was indulged in fairly frequently during the Referendum campaign that took place some time ago.

Mr. Watts: He often has lapses!

Mr. SEWARD: That, of course, was done to bolster up the case for the granting of additional powers to the Commonwealth Government at the conclusion of hostilities, and the object of that was to avoid a repetition of the depression that followed the 1914-1918 war. In mentioning that phase, the member for Pilbara asserted that two years after the conclusion of the last war there were 125,000 unemployed in Australia. This was not so. If the hon. member likes to consult the Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia, he will find that the great unemployment problem, which we all deplored at the time, did not take place until about 12 years after the conclusion of the 1914-18 war.

Mr. J. Hegney: You are wrong!

Mr. SEWARD: Then the hon. member will have an opportunity to correct me later.

Mr. J. Hegney: Too right, I will.

Mr. SEWARD: If the hon. member takes the trouble to look up the Official Year Book, he will see that in 1920 the total

number unemployed was 27,463, which was 27,463 too many, but it represented 7.8 per cent. of the population.

Mr. W. Hegney: Who supplied those figures for the official publication?

Mr. SEWARD: They are the official figures. The publication also shows that in 1921, the unemployed totalled 40,549, or 11.2 per cent. of the population, while in 1922 the number was 35,219, or 9.2 per cent.; in 1923 it was 26,672, or 7.1 per cent.; and it was not until 1932 that the number rose to approximately the total mentioned by the hon. member, the unemployed that year aggregating 120,454, or 29 per cent. I have quoted these statistics with a view to correcting the statement made by the member for Pilbara, more particularly as it has been frequently asserted that a period of depression followed the conclusion of the 1914-18 war. In order to avoid a repetition of that following upon the cessation of hostilities now, we have been told that the Commonwealth Government intends to take certain steps, but among those steps are proposals that will take away many of the rights and powers of this State.

The first matter I wish to deal with is the Great Southern water scheme or, as it is popularly termed, the comprehensive scheme for the supplying of water to the Great Southern and districts to the east of it. I do that because, in reply to a question I asked, the Minister said—

In view of the opposition expressed to the scheme by some members of Parliament and the very qualified approval given to it by others, it is doubtful if any such work will be commenced until parliamentary approval has been obtained for the scheme as a whole.

If the Minister, by his remarks, desired to convey the impression that I am opposed to the scheme, he was hopelessly wrong. If I asked questions regarding the project, it was in order to secure information about it so that I could give details of the scheme to people concerned and also to determine whether I should oppose or support it. As you, Mr. Speaker, and other members know, the necessity for a scheme to supply the Great Southern has been before Parliament for many years, before the Minister and I were members of this House. I shall not traverse the history of the proposition over all that period. The last time the matter was prominently before Parliament was in 1936 when the member for Katanning—the present Leader of the Opposition—moved for

the appointment of a Select Committee to investigate the problem. The then Minister for Water Supplies, speaking for the Government on that occasion, opposed the motion, which was defeated. The reason that the Minister gave for his objection to the move was that he was convinced that there was nothing to be gained by the appointment of such a body as there were no hydraulic experts here outside the ranks of the departmental officers, and he concluded by saying that while he opposed the motion he was willing to give an undertaking that the whole question of providing country towns with adequate water supplies would be considered by the Government. A year later, in 1937, in answer to a query regarding the progress that had been made with the matter, the Minister said—

The vastness of the ramifications of the project, the collation of data, and the necessary intensive consideration of same preclude any statement being made for a considerable time yet.

Then in 1938, after the lapse of another twelve months, in answer to a question regarding the project, the Minister said—

I hope to be in a position to make the report available to Parliament this session.

That was seven years ago, when the survey had been completed and only the office work remained to be done. Yet, when I asked the Minister a few nights ago—

if details regarding the scheme will be sufficiently far advanced to enable the scheme to be placed before the next Premiers' Conference—

I was referring to the conference that is in session now—the Minister replied in the negative. However, in further answer to the same question, the Minister stated that

every effort would be made to introduce the Bill before the conclusion of the present session.

That serves to emphasise the difficulty. I fail to see how that can be done because until it is known just what financial assistance is to be available from the Commonwealth Government, how can consideration be given to any legislation authorising the work unless the Government can inform members as to the proportion for which the Commonwealth will pay and what proportion the State will have to finance? The whole thing depends on the cost to the users of this scheme. Therefore, if the scheme is not being submitted to the present Premiers' Conference—I understand that is

when the year's works are determined—then it appears to me it cannot be considered by that authority for another 12 months and we shall consequently have to wait for another 12 months for the question to be dealt with.

I draw attention to another aspect of the matter which is not always made clear. In my opinion, and I think in the opinion of the members on this side of the House who have been advocating this scheme for a number of years, there are really two schemes involved. One is for the supply of water to the towns along the Great Southern, and the other is for the supply of water to the agricultural areas east of the Great Southern. As far as the first scheme is concerned, it has my unqualified approval. On that point one has only to consider the many speeches I have delivered over the past dozen years in support of motions from this side of the House and when Estimates have been considered, as well as at other times.

We have done everything possible to bring that scheme before the Government of the day in order to get it inaugurated, because it is—as has been admitted by the ex-Minister—the only possible suitable scheme for supplying the towns along the Great Southern with an adequate water supply. It must be pumped there from a reservoir situated in the higher rainfall area of the hills; which particular area is to be selected may be debatable, but our engineering experts now advocate that the supply should come from the Wellington Dam. That, however, is by the way; the point is that it has to come from somewhere. We want to know when that scheme is to be put into operation. I notice that the Mayor of Narrogin—I do not know whether he has any inside information or not—when reporting to his council a few days ago said that he understood the water would be at Narrogin at the end of the third summer from now, that is, by the end of the summer of 1947. What I want to know is what we are to do between now and the end of the 1947 summer. Are the people of Pingelly to struggle on as they have been doing for the last dozen years, getting water by cart in 100 gallon tanks or 10 gallon tanks, or any kind of tank obtainable, in order to secure potable water? Are we to live on promises only?

I do not want to speak about other electorates represented by my colleagues, who can speak for themselves, but my colleague the member for Williams-Narrogin has said that the unfortunate people in his electorate were forced to fill their baths on a Sunday afternoon in order to obtain the water that was to suffice for their needs for the ensuing week. Yet we are told by the Mayor of Narrogin—whether or not his information is authoritative—that there will be no water from this scheme until the third summer from now, 1947. I protest against that; it is unfair. I notice that when other works are in contemplation, such as the electric power station at South Fremantle, there is no delay in bringing a Bill before Parliament. No Bill was brought down; the work is just carried out. In our case, however, we must bring a Bill before Parliament. It has been said that the scheme will be very costly, involving £9,000,000 or £10,000,000. That may be the cost of the comprehensive scheme, but I am dealing with the question of supplying the towns to which I refer. The previous Minister for Water Supplies, when replying to the motion of the member for Katanning for the appointment of a Select Committee, stated—I think I am right—that the cost to bring a pipeline from the Wellington Dam to Narrogin would be £250,000, or £3,500 per mile. There is another 31 miles to Wagin, and another 32 to Katanning, and it is 32 miles from Narrogin to Pingelly.

The cost of supplying those particular towns was estimated, in round figures, at £600,000 or slightly more. Whether it will be necessary to lay down a 16 inch pipeline I could not determine, as I am not competent to do so, but the Minister on the occasion referred to, mentioned that a nine inch to 11 inch pipeline was employed for the Norseman scheme and that it cost about £1,600 per mile. If it were possible to utilise a pipeline of similar size for the scheme to which I am referring then the cost would be considerably reduced. Even if it were decided to lay down a 16 inch pipeline and if we allowed for the necessary reservoirs and other works, I should imagine the cost would not be very much more than about £1,500,000 or £2,000,000, and I cannot see why the people in the Great Southern area should be deprived of water

and made to suffer for another three years for an amount of that description.

Consequently, I appeal to the Government to give this matter further serious consideration and not to postpone the work because of the opposition of some people or because other people have given it only a qualified approval. I have not heard of any opposition during the past 12 years to the proposal to supply water to the towns in the Great Southern District. What opposition there is, is to the other scheme to supply water to the agricultural areas eastward. As I have said, I am not prepared to give my assent to that scheme at the present time, because I do not know enough about it. I appeal to the Minister to let us have the information at the earliest possible moment. We want to know the people who will be rated, exactly where the water will be supplied and what the charges will be to the people concerned. The matter is most serious. Obviously, the people who have laid down water supplies during past years at considerable cost to themselves do not want this scheme. They will object to being rated for a scheme which they do not want. Further, it will have to be determined, to my satisfaction at all events, that there is no alternative method.

I was surprised to read the statement of the Minister that there were four alternative schemes for water supplies. One was a water supply from open excavated dams depending on run-off from natural catchment areas. The Minister said that this method had already been tried and had failed many times in the areas under discussion. It may have failed; it has failed in many instances, but I maintain it is not because the system is wrong. The Minister will know that he has already taken action to bring many of those public dams under the control of his own department in order to ensure that the drains are cleaned out, as well as the dams, periodically. That is most necessary; but there are many farmers in the area concerned who last year did not have to cart a gallon of water because they had all the water they required conserved on their farms. Their dams were large enough to provide the water for their requirements, and one would naturally ask why all the other farmers have not similar dams. I cannot say, but it is surprising how many farmers have only small dams which cannot ensure them an

adequate water supply during the summer. The dams are too small, and consequently the farmers have been encouraged in recent years to rely on the key dams in the area to which I am referring, east of the Great Southern.

Another point to be considered is that every farmer is not able to put down large dams; in many cases the farmers have not the plant required to construct them. Such a plant would involve serious expenditure. With the advent of big machinery, however, particularly the bulldozer, which was referred to today in connection with land clearing, the cost of constructing dams of sufficient size will be considerably reduced, at least we hope so. In addition, the work would be carried out by competent men, who could go from farm to farm and sink the dams in such positions as the farmers might determine, and the dams would be of proper size and shape so as to avoid having a large surface, thus overcoming evaporation. I put this plan before the then Minister for Lands 18 months ago and, had the suggestion been carried out, the greater number of the farmers who were short of water last year could have got their supply the following year and that would have been of great assistance to them. The expense involved could have been estimated; it might have been £100, £150 or £200 at the outside for each farmer.

To connect the farms up to a pipeline will be a costly matter, because steel pipes will have to be laid throughout those areas and the farmers will have to pay an amount which cannot be determined for a period. We shall then have a state of affairs such as was quoted by the ex-Minister when replying to the motion to which I have referred, or about that time, when there was outstanding for water rates a sum of about £160,000. It was outstanding because the farmers could not pay it. We should avoid such a state of affairs. We want to get the water as quickly as possible and at a minimum cost. If there is any doubt about the matter—and there is much doubt amongst practical farmers in those areas—I think the Minister and the Government would be well advised to get further advice from those men and divide the scheme into two, one dealing with a water supply for towns and the other with a water supply for the agricultural areas. If that were done I think uniformity would be achieved and the problem would

be solved much quicker and much more satisfactorily than it is being solved at the present time.

I wish to refer to another matter of extreme importance, the proposal to standardise the railways of Australia. I understand there was something in this morning's paper on the subject, but I did not arrive in Perth in time to read it closely. I glanced casually at the column and was immediately struck by one statement made by Sir Harold Clapp, as follows:—

He visualised the use of Deisel locos. to do away with the coal problem.

What an extraordinary statement for Sir Harold Clapp to make! He bases the whole of his advocacy of the standardisation of railways on this sentence—

Unlike air and road transport, they (the railways) do not have to rely on imported fuel, and they alone are thus able to meet an important defence requirement, being independent of external aid.

He bases his advocacy of the standardisation of railways on the fact that railways will utilise our coal, and in the event of trouble the necessary fuel will be available to us, as we will not have to import it. It may be asked why this matter should be dealt with at the present time. I am dealing with it because I am extremely alarmed at the number of big works that are being started in this State without any reference to the Parliament of this State. It may be contended that this work will be referred to Parliament, but we have no reason to anticipate that that will be so, at any rate before this State is definitely committed.

I noticed in the "Sunday Times" about five weeks ago that no less than 36 positions were advertised in connection with the preparatory work for the proposed 4ft. 8½in. gauge railway from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie. Men were required for the survey staff, engineering, drafting, etc. In all there were 36 positions advertised carrying salaries ranging from £700 a year down to £500, which meant that the situations were responsible ones. Applications for the positions closed on the 13th August, 1945. This Parliament has a right to know what all this means, on what particular work these people are going to start, and what the commitment to Western Australia is likely to be. I venture to say that not many members of this House have read the report of Sir Harold Clapp. If they have they have been extremely fortunate, because I have

only recently seen it myself. The first copy I had was given to me through the courtesy of the Minister, who made available his own copy.

Mr. Watts: He could not give it to me at the time I asked for it.

The Minister for Lands: You cannot get two out of one.

Mr. SEWARD: At any rate the Minister's copy did not contain all the graphs, etc., that are contained in the copy now in my possession. I cannot think that many members have been able to study this report, and I therefore do not apologise for taking up the time of the House in dealing with it.

Mr. Watts: Tell us as much as you can. We cannot get a copy for ourselves.

Mr. SEWARD: The member for Kalgoorlie referred the other night to the question of Australian railway gauges. He said that the work in this State would cost about £8,000,000 to start with. Sir Harold Clapp states that he regards the standardisation of the Kalgoorlie to Fremantle railway as the start of the general standardisation of the Western Australian railways. That, to me, is a most important matter. This Parliament should first of all determine whether we are going to standardise all the railways in the State or only certain lines. I am in favour of the standardisation of our railway from the Eastern States to the seaboard, namely from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie. I agree also that we should have a standard gauge railway from Albany, or at all events from the south coast, running up north so that the two lines would intersect. By that means the various points in all parts of the State would be brought within reach of the standard gauge between Western Australia and the Eastern States. With regard to the question of standardising all our railways, we want to know what benefit the State will get out of it. Will it get any benefit whatever?

The Minister for Works: We want to know that, too.

Mr. SEWARD: I do not desire that this State should be committed until Parliament has had an opportunity to debate the matter.

The Minister for Works: You can rest assured that this State will not be committed to such an undertaking until that is done.

Mr. SEWARD: But the applications for the positions to which I have referred have closed, and we have not yet had put forward to us any scheme. We do not know what the scheme is.

Mr. Thorn: Was the Government consulted?

The Minister for Works: I have not seen the advertisement.

Mr. SEWARD: The applications closed on the 13th August, 1945, with the Chief Civil Engineer, 615 Wellington-street, Perth. If numbers of men have put in their applications they are entitled to have them treated as genuine. They would have some call upon the Government.

The Minister for Works: There is plenty of other work for them to do.

Mr. SEWARD: Yes, and plenty of work about which this Parliament should be consulted.

Mr. Doney: These men must have been qualified particularly for railway work. You can hardly switch them on to some other job.

The Minister for Works: There is plenty of other railway work too.

Mr. SEWARD: If this proposal goes through it means that we will have added expenditure to face, so far as we know the sum of £8,000,000 in the next four years. There will be other expenditure too. If we standardise most of the lines that Sir Harold Clapp deals with in his report we shall be committed to an expenditure, we are told, of £47,000,000. Where is this State going to find that money, or a proportion of it? I myself do not know. Our railways, with their present capitalisation, cannot pay their way today. If we are committed to an expenditure of £8,000,000, added to the present indebtedness, the railways will go back still further.

The Minister for Works: You need not be afraid of the State being committed to even a portion of that expenditure for a long time.

Mr. SEWARD: I wish I had the same assurance as the Minister.

The Minister for Works: You have that assurance.

Mr. SEWARD: These are times when the Commonwealth Government is taking unto itself powers of all kinds, there being

grave doubt as to its right to do so. The Minister for Transport appears to be backing up Sir Harold Clapp's report. Sir Harold addressed a meeting of experts in Sydney recently in support of his proposal, and I understand that he is coming to Perth to address a meeting here in support of it. If things like this go on we may wake up one day to the fact that this State has been committed to the undertaking without Parliament having been consulted. The Commonwealth Government is in the position today of having a lot of money. Once you get people with a considerable amount of money at their disposal, and with a few schemes in their heads, you may find you are committed to a proposal before you know where you are. We may wake up to find that although unification has not been agreed to, we shall be so tied up that in effect unification will have been brought about.

Mr. Watts: The Commonwealth Government may resume the Eastern Goldfields line and build a new one on top of it.

Mr. SEWARD: In his first proposal Sir Harold Clapp refers to the standardisation and construction of the line from Kalgoorlie to Fremantle. He says—

The construction of this independent line in Western Australia is the simplest way to provide the inter-capital gauge link, pending the conversion at a later date of the entire Western Australian system. In view of the extensive nature of the standardisation project I am unable to recommend the conversion of the entire Western Australian railways at the outset, but the proposed independent line would be an integral part of the railway system of that State, both prior and subsequent to standardisation, and would not in any way interfere with the operation of the existing 3ft. 6in. gauge system.

I wish to say here that if we are committed to the conversion of the Kalgoorlie-Fremantle railway, the first thing I would like an assurance on is whether we are also going to convert all our other lines. If we are only going to deal with a certain number of our lines, including that between Fremantle and Kalgoorlie, I ask myself whether that is the cheapest and most efficient way of carrying out the work. Would it be cheaper to alter the existing line from Kalgoorlie to Fremantle, or to build another line somewhere else? At this moment I am not going to raise the "battle of the routes." That is a matter for other

people more competent than myself to deal with. I will now continue the paragraph in Sir Harold Clapp's report—

Speaking generally, the conversion of narrow gauge lines to standard gauge necessitates the track being more or less completely rebuilt with heavier rails, longer sleepers, wider formation, including cuttings and banks and new bridges, while in many cases the present sharp curves and steep grades will necessitate re-location of the route.

We should have advice on the question whether it would not be cheaper, and without loss of efficiency, to put a new line down in another part of the State between these two points, and approximately the same distance, namely, 410 miles. If the work can be done cheaper in some other way, and £1,000,000 or £2,000,000 saved, that money would come handy to the State, and could be used towards the construction of, say, an all-weather road in the North-West or some water scheme of which we are more in need than we are of standardised railways.

The Minister for Works: I think you are quite right.

Mr. SEWARD: This is information the House should have before we come to any decision on the matter. If the Commonwealth Government were to say, "We are getting a considerable amount of money through taxation: we will continue that taxation for another 12 months and build this railway out of that money," the proposal would be one that could well be considered. But that Government is not going to do that. Despite the large surplus it must have now that the defence expenditure has been cut down this will be an additional financial burden cast upon the State, and we have yet to learn what Western Australia has to gain from it. The next question I would deal with is that of who will pay for the line, and how much each authority will pay.

In the course of his report Sir Harold Clapp says that the question of finance did not come into his terms of reference so that he does not know who will pay. He then says—

My Terms of Reference do not include the submission of a recommendation as to the apportionment of the cost of standardisation of gauges as between the Commonwealth and the States. The last Cabinet decision regarding this matter (January, 1930) was to the effect "that the Commonwealth Government reaffirm the proposal agreed to in 1921 to pay one-fifth of the total cost."

That means that the Commonwealth Government will pay one-fifth of the cost, and the States will be left to carry the other four-fifths. If that is so I want to know for what reason the line is being built. Is it being built for defence purposes or economic purposes? If it is required for economic purposes and will open up and develop Western Australia and thereby increase the railway revenue, the apportionment of the cost would be a different matter compared with the position that would arise if the work were carried out for defence purposes, as Sir Harold Clapp says. If the line is being built for defence purposes obviously the Commonwealth Government should bear the greater portion of the cost. Most people will agree with that. Sir Harold says there is nothing to guide him upon that point other than the resolution of the Federal Cabinet in 1921 when it was decided that the Commonwealth Government would pay one-fifth. Sir Harold has this to say on page 30 of his report—

On the 4th September, 1944, I recommended that the Commonwealth Government grant authority for a survey to be made for the re-location of the sections of line referred to above, the cost of which was estimated by the Western Australian Commissioner of Railways at £82,000, and this item is included in the estimated cost of the line. It is understood that Cabinet authorised the Minister for Transport to discuss the matter with the State Premier, and I am unaware of the result.

These are things we do not want to be unaware of. We want to know the result before we embark upon such an undertaking. I will give members an idea of proposal "A" as regards Western Australia. In the first year of operation—the whole thing is to be done in four years—it is to cost £457,000 (£247,000 for tracks and structures, and £210,000 for locomotives and rolling stock), in the second year the cost is to be £1,152,064, in the third year £3,657,394, and in the fourth year £3,085,542, a total of £8,352,000 in the four years. That is a fair amount of debt for this State to carry. If we take four-fifths of it, it comes to £6,000,000 odd, the balance to be paid by the Commonwealth.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: It is supposed to be shared equally between all the States on the population basis.

Mr. SEWARD: Here it says it is one-fifth to the Commonwealth and four-fifths to the States. I will give the figures in re-

gard to the associated works, which bear that out.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Read what "The West Australian" said about the Premiers' Conference this morning.

Mr. SEWARD: I have not seen what "The West Australian" said. I am reading from Sir Harold Clapp's report, and that is what we have to go by. If the work is to be done from a defence point of view, and that certainly is a very strong argument for doing this work, it seems peculiar that one of the lines should have been cut out of Sir Harold Clapp's proposal with regard to the Western Australian lines to be converted, inasmuch as he eliminates the line running from Pinjarra to Narrogin. If it is a defence proposal it is obviously necessary to have communications inland from the coast, from Fremantle inland and from Bunbury inland, as we found in the last war. This is a line which I would have thought would be included, as it runs from Pinjarra to the Great Southern, yet Sir Harold Clapp has eliminated it. Dealing with the matter from that point of view I find it difficult indeed to determine why Sir Harold has cut that line out.

Another question to which I want to refer is that of associated works, as Sir Harold Clapp calls them: that is the works that the railways will have to carry out. For instance, they will have a certain amount of maintenance work and so on in the coming years in connection with the 3 ft. 6 in. gauge. If the railway from Kalgoorlie to Fremantle is standardised it follows that in order to use that line the State will have a certain amount of rollingstock for that purpose. In all these things Sir Harold has determined the proportion of the expenditure that the various States are going to carry, but there is a rather significant statement by the Commissioner for Railways in Victoria. When Sir Harold wanted this information he wrote to the various Commissions of Railways and asked what their works were going to be over a period of years, so that he could determine what he should regard as the State's expenditure and what should go to the standardisation scheme. The Commissioner for Railways in Victoria replied to Sir Harold and suggested that the matter might be deferred until the question of the allocation of standardisation

costs between the Commonwealth and the States was decided, and mentioned that—

It seems obvious that any determination as to allocation of costs between the Commonwealth and the States would depend upon the number of assumptions, of which perhaps the most important is ability of the respective States to pay.

That was a very significant statement. Sir Harold then wrote, asking the Commissioner for Railways in Victoria to reconsider it, but that Commissioner said he could not and would not do it, with the result that Sir Harold Clapp then determined the matter for himself and allotted £10,152,605 to Victoria and to Western Australia £1,047,500. There is also the matter of the provision of the rollingstock necessary to use on this line. If this line is put down from Kalgoorlie to Fremantle the Commissioner of Railways in Western Australia has stated that he intends to use it, to the extent of nine trains per week, three interstate trains and six intrastate trains, which seems to me to be a very small amount of use for that line. It is estimated by Sir Harold Clapp that it will require 38 locomotives, 64 passenger cars and brake-vans and 650 goods and other freight wagons, at a cost of £1,887,500, for the construction of new rollingstock. Sir Harold has apportioned that cost between the standardisation scheme and the State and considers that the State should have 23 locomotives, 40 passenger cars and brake-vans and 250 goods and other freight wagons, at a total cost of £1,047,500. Sir Harold says—

The cost of this equipment is, I consider, a charge to Associated Works, and the cost to the standardisation project is, therefore, £840,000.

In Item 1, for the construction of an independent line from Fremantle-Perth to Kalgoorlie, the estimated cost of the line on a 4ft. 8½in. basis is £6,681,600 and the estimated cost of construction on locomotives and rollingstock is £1,047,500, a total of £7,729,100, and the estimated time involved to complete the project is four years. The Western Australian railway authorities estimate that the operation of the existing 3ft. 6in. gauge line and the proposed new independent line, without any prospect of increased business, would result in Western Australia incurring an additional cost in both operation and main-

tenance to the extent of approximately £317,000 per annum.

To sum it up, it seems to me that if we take four-fifths of the cost of the line from Kalgoorlie to Fremantle it comes out at about £6,681,600, and if we add to that £1,047,500 for associated works, and then add £1,500,000 which it is estimated by Mr. Paynor it will take to bring our rollingstock up to requirements, the total is £9,229,100. It is also proposed to add £310,000 to present interest and maintenance costs. That means that the railways in this State will have to shoulder a responsibility of about another £1,000,000 on top of the present loss of over £100,000 per year. If that is not a project which calls for serious consideration by this Parliament before it goes any further, I do not see the use of this Parliament being here at all. While I know that the Premier is a fighter, of which he has given ample evidence in this House, in Canberra he is competing with Eastern States people who are involved to a greater degree. If we are to rely entirely on the Premier to uphold and secure the interests of this State, I think we are placing an unfair burden on him.

The Minister for Works: Have you read this morning's issue of "The West Australian"?

Mr. SEWARD: As I have said several times, I have not had time to do so. I had these remarks ready about last Wednesday, but was unable to make them then.

The Minister for Works: If you had read this morning's issue of "The West Australian" I think you would have spoken differently.

Mr. SEWARD: No, because whatever "The West Australian" said this morning, this Parliament so far has not been consulted on this scheme, and I think the first thing that should be done is for this Parliament to determine what the financial commitments are going to be.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: The Government was not consulted until yesterday, through its Premier.

Mr. SEWARD: Then I am evidently giving the Government support. I will move a slight amendment to the Address-in-reply, and in doing that I want to assure members on the other side of the House that it is not a censure motion

against the Government, nor can it be read that way. I simply want to give this House the opportunity of learning the proposals and discussing them, and if the Premier is opposing the present proposals we can give him that support that this Parliament should give him. In tonight's issue of the "Daily News" there is a paragraph headed "Premiers Accept Rail Plan". It reads—

Premiers' Conference decided today that work on standardising Australian rail gauges should be proceeded with as being essential to national defence and development.

The Minister for Works: What are the conditions?

Mr. SEWARD: The Premier is going to see about those conditions. Are we going to put it into the hands of those who have greater representations than we have?

Hon. J. C. Willcock: It is unconditional surrender!

Mr. SEWARD: We are not offering unconditional surrender. The Commissioner for Railways in Victoria refused to give an estimate to Sir Harold Clapp, and Sir Harold had to work it out for himself, but our Commissioner gave Sir Harold the information and he then apportioned so much to the Commonwealth and so much to the State. I move an amendment—

That the following words be added to the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply:—"But this House considers that your Government should not enter into any agreement for the standardisation of railway gauges until the whole of the facts and information available have been considered by this Parliament."

I think it is essential that this House should adopt the amendment, and should do it as soon as possible, in order to give the Premier some support in any stand that he might be making at the Premiers' Conference.

THE ACTING PREMIER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam — on amendment) [6.12]: I am sorry I am not able to express appreciation to the member for Pingelly for having made available to me a copy of this amendment, but I will do the best I can without having a copy of it available to me. It would appear, from what the hon. member has said, that he almost regards Sir Harold Clapp as having power superior to the powers of Government, because most of

his speech appears to indicate to those who were listening that because Sir Harold Clapp had said this, and had recommended that, the Governments are more or less bound to proceed along the lines recommended by Sir Harold Clapp. I think it should be made clear that Sir Harold Clapp was appointed by the Commonwealth Government for the purpose of investigating the general question of the advisability of standardising the railway lines of Australia on the basis of the 4 ft. 8½ in. gauge. In due course Sir Harold Clapp carried out the investigations which he considered necessary and then gave consideration to what information he had been able to obtain, and subsequently submitted his report and recommendations to the Commonwealth Government.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The ACTING PREMIER: I was pointing out that Sir Harold Clapp had been appointed by the Commonwealth Government to investigate the question of the advisability of establishing a uniform system of railway gauges in Australia, and, in addition, that it is wrong to imagine that Sir Harold Clapp himself has any power in connection with the matters upon which he has made recommendations. They are purely recommendations that have yet to receive the consideration of the Commonwealth and State Governments. In dealing with a question of this sort, it is quite easy to develop all kinds of fears and doubts and worries, to express those things in words and then, with further words, to deal with them to one's own personal satisfaction. However, I suggest that at this stage we are all considerably in the dark regarding the whole matter. I have glanced through Sir Harold Clapp's report, but I frankly confess that I have not yet had time to give it the serious consideration it probably deserves. The amendment moved by the member for Pingelly proposes the addition to the Address-in-reply to the Speech with which His Excellency was pleased to open Parliament of the words—

“That the House considers the Government should not enter into any agreement for the standardisation of railway gauges until after the whole of the facts and information available have been considered by this Parliament.”

I think we might all agree with the principle contained in the amendment, but I do not agree that this is an amendment which

should be made to the Address-in-reply. It is unreasonable to try to tack on to the Address-in-reply an amendment of this description, especially as it deals with a matter on which only certain information has yet been made available and only preliminary negotiations have yet been carried out.

Mr. Doney: It was the outstandingly important public question and might have been mentioned.

The ACTING PREMIER: It is an outstandingly important public question. If the member for Pingelly is anxious to ensure that this House shall have an opportunity to discuss the whole matter after full information is available to us, two methods are open to him, either of which would be quite effective. One method would be to put to the Government, by way of a Parliamentary question, a request for an assurance such as he asks for in the amendment, namely, whether the Government would give an assurance to the House that the State would not be committed to any agreement in connection with the standardisation of railway gauges until the Parliament had had an opportunity to debate the whole question. The second method which he could appropriately adopt would be to give notice of intention to move a motion in the ordinary way for the purpose of getting the opinion of the House that this should be done. I suggest to him that he might adopt one or other of those alternatives.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: Or move for a reduction of a vote on the Estimates.

The ACTING PREMIER: I suggest seriously, yet in a friendly way, that it is not desirable to try to tack this amendment on to the Address-in-reply. I ask him seriously to ponder this before the time comes for the amendment to go to the vote.

The State Cabinet has had some discussion of this matter. We naturally discussed it before the Premier left Perth to attend the Premiers' Conference. I think it is quite proper to say that, to a substantial extent, our views are much in line with those expressed this afternoon by the member for Pingelly. I am able to think of many important undertakings required in this State ahead of any work for the standardisation of any of our railway systems to the 4 ft. 8½ in. gauge, and I am sure that other members are able to think of many important and urgent works required in the State

ahead of work of this description. We can think of hospitals, schools, water supplies, secondary industries, the revival of mining, the building up of primary industries and a dozen and one other important requirements which, in point of priority, would receive our approval ahead of a proposal of this sort. So the member for Pingelly, or any other member of the Opposition who might be inclined to think with him, need have no fears that the State Government will commit Western Australia to any large expenditure for the standardisation of railway gauges if any such work is listed or is likely to take place to the detriment of many undertakings much more urgently required by us in this State.

Mr. Watts: That is the best statement you have made for quite a fortnight.

The ACTING PREMIER: I accept that as a very great compliment for what I have said, and I take it also with some doubt as to the worth-while nature of the things I have previously said. For my own part, I feel that the standardisation of our railway system to the 4ft. 8½in. gauge is something that could be justified, to a large extent at any rate, only on defence grounds in the present stage of our development. Members are aware that this State through the years has spent a tremendous sum of money on the existing railway system, and although the system does not meet every modern requirement by any means, it has nevertheless over the years done a great job for this State. It has assisted materially the development of our resources and our industries. I think it can be said that our railway system, with all its shortcomings, has played a major part in the development of most of our industries. No-one in his senses would advocate the spending of tens of millions of pounds on converting our existing 3ft. 6in. gauge to 4ft. 8½in. I do not think many people in Western Australia will take an entirely narrow view of the matter.

We might all be inclined to agree that ultimately the railway systems of Australia should be standardised on the basis of a 4ft. 8½in. gauge, if that in these days is considered to be the best gauge. It may be that more recent experience and modern development would indicate that some other gauge might be even more suitable, but that is a matter for experts to judge and determine. Evidently Sir Harold Clapp believes that the decision arrived at by ex-

perts many years ago in favour of the 4ft. 8½in. gauge was and still is the right decision. If a satisfactory arrangement could be made between the State Government and the Commonwealth Government for the continuation of the 4ft. 8½in. gauge railway line from Kalgoorlie to Fremantle, probably the great majority of Western Australians would favour that work being proceeded with.

Just on what basis a satisfactory arrangement could be made it is not easy to say at this stage. I think, however, that the advantages which would be conferred upon this State would not be many; they certainly would not be great, and therefore the measure of the financial burden to be placed upon the State in connection with such an undertaking ought not to be great. The Commonwealth authorities should be prepared to shoulder the major portion of the capital cost of building such a line. But, as I say, that is one of several proposals with respect to the suggested unifying of the railway systems of Australia which we in this State might be inclined to favour, if the agreement made between the Commonwealth and the State on the subject was considered to be satisfactory to the State from the financial standpoint. In the "Daily News" of this afternoon there appears a report sent from Canberra setting out the agreement reached at the Premiers' Conference. The following is one of its most important sections:—

Conference decided to appoint a committee representing the States and the Commonwealth to consider what sections of the recommendations in the Clapp report should be accepted.

Members will agree that the conference between the Commonwealth and the State Premiers did the right thing in making that decision, as being the first step in their approach to the recommendations made by Sir Harold Clapp. It is clear that the Premiers were not prepared even to discuss with the Commonwealth any proposal which would have the effect of committing the State Governments to any of these recommendations at this conference. Quite naturally, every State Premier would be anxious to know a great deal more about the proposals and certainly would be anxious to be placed in a position to be able to measure, firstly, the likely benefits to be obtained by the States and, secondly, the actual financial burden which the

States would have to take upon themselves under any agreement which they might make with the Commonwealth. The report proceeds—

Conference also decided that a committee representing the States and Commonwealth should confer and report on the division of financial commitments for the project, having regard (1) to defence value of the work, and (2) to the value of the work for developmental purposes.

That is a proper approach to the question, too, because it indicates that the Commonwealth is to be made responsible for the defence value which any instalment of these recommendations might establish for the Australian people as a whole. It also shows that the State Premiers on their part are willing reasonably to consider giving in to the Commonwealth, financially and otherwise, for the purpose of meeting some of the burden if it can be shown, after close inquiry, that the carrying out of any of these recommendations would confer an economic value upon the respective States. I do not think it could be argued that the Commonwealth should shoulder the whole of the cost if at the same time it could be proved that the States concerned would receive great benefits in the way of production of wealth and the development of the States generally.

Mr. Doney: What particular benefits do you think might ensue?

The ACTING PREMIER: If the more important portions of the State railway system are brought up to date by the Commonwealth making a major financial contribution, we shall be able to provide a modern system which probably would give far better service to producers generally and by so doing provide that service in the long run at a much cheaper cost to the customers of the railways. That could be done without necessarily reducing freights, because, after all is said and done, it is not always the cost of a service which counts; it is the quality of the service which sometimes counts as much or even more than its cost. It is therefore reasonable to say that economic benefits might accrue to the States if the major portions of their railway systems were converted to a uniform gauge; but I personally am not committing myself strictly to that view at the moment.

Mr. Doney: You cannot feel certain of any improvement.

The ACTING PREMIER: No-one can feel certain at this stage because there is not sufficient information available upon which safely to base an opinion. That was the feeling of the Premiers at the conference today. They realised that they were not in possession of nearly sufficient information to enable them to arrive at a decision, or to say yes or no to the individual recommendations contained in the Clapp report. So quite rightly they, representing the people of the different States, decided as Premiers that these committees should be set up for the purpose of carrying out the investigations to which I have referred. Another interesting point about this report is that the proposals in connection with the unifying of the railway gauges in Australia are not considered likely to interfere with more urgent undertakings such as housing and other important public programmes.

I think there is no member of Parliament who for one second would agree that men and materials should be used in the near future, or even in the reasonably near future, for the purpose of setting to work to unify railway gauges of Australia when there are such desperately urgent works required as the building of thousands of houses and other matters that easily come to mind. For my part I do not feel that the Commonwealth Government has put forward these proposals for discussion at the Premiers' Conference with any idea that they should receive equal priority, or anywhere near equal priority, with the housing programme and other public works programmes that have been developed in recent times as the post-war reconstruction policy for Australia. I know that the Commonwealth Minister for Transport, Mr. Ward, is tremendously enthusiastic about these proposals to unify railway gauges. I am aware that not so many weeks ago he indicated by way of a public statement that these proposals should have a top priority, at least equal to housing.

Mr. Doney: Was he speaking for the Commonwealth Government?

The ACTING PREMIER: I should say he was not; but even if he were, he was not speaking for the Government of Western Australia; and members generally can take it for granted, without question, that

the, Government of this State would not agree under any conditions to allow the unifying even of the railway from Kalgoorlie to Fremantle to take place to the detriment of the building of houses, the establishment of water supplies, the revival of the goldmining industry, the building up of the primary industries, the expansion of secondary industries, the building of hospitals and schools, and a number of other matters.

Mr. Doney: It will be five years at least before the change is started over here, will it not?

The ACTING PREMIER: I am not in a position to say how long it might take, but I will be very surprised indeed if any actual work, apart from preliminary work, is done for the purpose of building a broad gauge railway line from Kalgoorlie to Fremantle during the next five years. It might be—it probably will be—that preliminary work will be carried out for the purpose of developing a position under which the building of the line from Kalgoorlie to Fremantle could be undertaken without delay, if circumstances justified that action being taken. For instance, after three, four, or five years, we might easily find that in Western Australia we had completed most of our major public undertakings in the way of house building and public works generally, and at that stage we might find there was a paramount necessity to provide employment for a considerable number of men, as there was during the depression years. Under those conditions, there might be reasonable justification for putting in hand a work of this kind, and I should say that work of this nature should be reserved for attention in circumstances such as those.

So I say again, as I said earlier, that whilst I agree—and I think every member of the House will agree—in principle with what the member for Pingelly is aiming at in his amendment, I do not agree for one second that it is appropriate to tack the amendment on to the Address-in-reply. There are other methods open to the hon. member to express his views and to obtain whatever assurances he wishes to obtain. I have indicated that he could do it by way of Parliamentary questions to the Government or by moving a motion in the ordinary way. I think that if he takes either of those courses he will find that he will meet with

no opposition but with complete agreement from all concerned. But if he proposes to persist with this amendment, I am afraid we shall have no option but to oppose it and do whatever is possible to defeat it.

MR. WATTS (Katanning—on amendment) [7.56]: We are indebted to the member for Pingelly for moving this amendment, if only for the reason that it has called forth from the Acting Premier the statement he has made which—I think it will be agreed—is as clear as any he has seen fit to make in this House. With regard to many aspects of this matter, he has relieved my mind concerning the attitude, or the possible attitude, of the Government to which he belongs. But I would like to express my own opinion on this subject while the opportunity offers. I believe that the creation of a 4 ft. 8½ in. railway gauge from Kalgoorlie to Fremantle is warranted. We have suffered loss because we have not had that gauge. Since the trans-Australian line was completed in 1917, the break of gauge has been responsible for loss to various people and a great amount of unnecessary work, and the position should be remedied at the earliest possible moment. But when it comes to the question of making 4 ft. 8½ in. railways of all the lines in Western Australia, which I understand is part of the plan in the mind of the Minister for Transport, Mr. Ward, then I think the House might pay more attention than it has already paid to the remarks on 3 ft. 6 in. gauges that have been made in this House from time to time by the member for Pingelly and the member for Kalgoorlie.

Only a few nights ago, the member for Kalgoorlie had a great deal to say on the question of 3 ft. 6 in. gauges. He speaks from a well-informed mind on this subject. It is obvious he has given a great deal of attention to the points on which he spoke the other night. He impressed upon us that in order to obtain reasonable speeds and the haulage of considerable loads over long distances in an efficient manner, it was not necessary to alter the gauge of the existing Western Australian railways other, I would say, than the gauge from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie, which is to form part of the trans-Australian railway and which therefore deserves separate and special consideration.

There is another matter on which, to my mind, a great deal could be done as has been done in other countries. South Africa and Japan have been instanced on more than one occasion by the member for Kalgoorlie for making efficient and speedy transport services available. There are considerable doubts in all our minds as to what is to be the actual future of railway transport. For many years it has had one competitor, and a very strong and efficient competitor, to wit, road transport. As I see it there are practically no limitations to what road transport can do if a determined effort were needed and made to make the utmost use of road transport as an adjunct to, or indeed, in substitution for any part of our railway system.

Of more recent years air transport has come into being and we know what marvels have already been accomplished by that means in the carrying of loads which even five years ago would have been regarded as impossible. What limits are to be placed on carriage by air are, as yet, unknown to me. Obviously air transport will carry much heavier loads in the future than it has tackled in the past, and it may become a very strong competitor, over long distances and for reasonably heavy loads, of rail transport. Therefore, it is not at all clear what the position of our railways is going to be in the future. Whether their usefulness will be as great as it has been in recent years, or whether it will be lessened, is a problem which only the future can answer. But having that doubt in one's mind and having at the same time information such as has been supplied by the member for Kalgoorlie, and from other sources, can we do anything else but doubt the advisability of investing sums up to £45,000,000 and £50,000,000 in the suggested unification of all the railway lines of Western Australia, other than the link with the transcontinental railway? Unless we unify them all we will place ourselves in a very difficult position, because if we alter the main lines and not the branch lines we will merely have a repetition of the double handling, because of the break of gauge, that has been taking place at Kalgoorlie for many years.

As I see the position, it is all or none except for the main line from the Eastern States for which there are various reasons why it might be converted to a 4ft. 8½in. gauge. I have, therefore, been extremely reluctant to agree, even in my own mind,

to any proposal for the unification of any other lines than that one because it has always seemed to me that there is grave doubt as to the use that could be made of them when we realise the very considerable expense involved, because we have no guarantee of a greatly increased population and therefore no guarantee of a greatly increased revenue which would enable us to amortise the obligation we would enter into for the purpose of constructing these lines. But the Federal Minister for Transport, as the Acting Premier has said, has been making statements which have induced the belief in a great many people's minds that he spoke for the Commonwealth Government, and that the Commonwealth Government had in view the unification of railway gauges as a first priority. He said so; it was published in the Press.

It is the custom in this State, at least, if any Minister of the Crown makes a statement on a public matter of that character which is given publicity, to believe that he expresses, as far as he knows them, the views of the Government of which he is a member. Therefore it is only reasonable to suppose that the Minister for Transport, when he made that statement, was doing the same thing. But apparently he was not, because only a few days later he proceeded to qualify it in another statement which he made, but even in the second statement, when he qualified his original observations, he went on to say this:—

Today critics of the scheme speak of manpower and relative priority for other works. Those objections are excuses and not reasons for delaying standardisation and must be discarded by all thoughtful, nationally-minded people.

So, as I say, having qualified the statement which he made he proceeds, in effect, to repeat it in those words which were reported in "The West Australian" in the middle of June last. So the impression has got abroad that the Commonwealth Government is going to try to insist on that as a very early priority and as a great national work, and to use its best endeavours to compel the States to put this scheme of wholesale unification of railway gauges into operation as early as possible. Now the Acting Premier has successfully disposed, in my mind anyway, of the re-actions of the State Government to that point of view. Quite obviously he is not going to subscribe to activity of that nature. He realises that there are other

works which have far more justification and which should be put in hand in the interests of Western Australia. When I bear in mind the conclusions which can be arrived at in regard to the possible efficiency of our existing railways by re-organisation and expenditure of a reasonable amount, then I can see no reason to dispute the point of view that has been put forward by the Acting Premier.

What I do not want to see, however, is this, that the Premiers' Conference having, as we now know, appointed its committees and made its further inquiries should come to a decision and that we in this Parliament, whatever that decision may be, should be faced, when the Premier and his advisers return, with something in the nature of an accomplished fact; that is to say that the Premier comes back here pledged to some proposal—whatever it may be, and not, obviously, Mr. Clapp's proposal—and desiring his colleagues and supporters in this House to agree with him because he has, broadly speaking, given the word of the State of Western Australia that the particular project, whatever it may be, will be proceeded with. That would result, virtually, in this Parliament having no say in the matter. Out of loyalty many of his colleagues would feel compelled to support him, even if it were against their better judgment, so that in the net result it would not be a deliberative assembly discussing the matter but one, the majority of which had already made up its mind what to do, namely, to adopt the decision of the Premiers' Conference, whatever it was.

As I see it, the member for Pingelly, in moving his amendment in the terms he did, sought only to make sure that there should be no accomplished fact as far as the Premier of Western Australia is concerned; that he would hear the discussions and take part in them at Canberra or Melbourne, or wherever the Premiers' Conference is held, and having heard them would form his own conclusions and agree only that he would come back here and discuss the matter with the Parliament to which he is responsible. If he will do that, and if as a deliberative assembly, and having heard all the information that can be put before it, this Parliament decides to accept his point of view—that is the majority point of view at the Premiers' Conference—we shall have no more

to complain about. We shall at least do it in the light of all the information and because the better judgment of the majority of members of the House has reached the conclusion that it is the right thing to do. We have had, in the past, too much of Premiers coming to conclusions, over in Canberra or Melbourne, as to what has to be done, while we are simply presented here, when they return, with a measure to carry those decisions into effect.

The Legislature of this State, heavily involved as it will be in any transaction of this character, has not in those instances been consulted in the way in which it should be consulted. It has been obliged, broadly speaking, to put a rubber-stamp to something which is an accomplished fact before the debate takes place. That is not the right thing to do in a matter of this kind. There will be little difficulty, as I see it, in getting the assent of this House to a proposal which involves the building of the 4 ft. 8½ in. gauge railway from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie. It will be very convenient to have no break of gauge at Kalgoorlie. It will facilitate intercourse between this State and the Eastern States of the Commonwealth, but it will more greatly facilitate the intercourse of people who live in the Eastern States—because there are more of them—than it will the intercourse of people in Western Australia; and there is a defence reason which has to be considered.

Strangely enough, it will have been noticed, from Press reports of the European war, that the railways of central Europe were greatly used for the transport of the military forces of the Axis nations, but it was apparent to everyone who studied the course of the war in the last few months in Europe that the railways had been very heavily damaged by the Allied Forces, and particularly the Air Forces. For months and months they had set themselves the task of blowing up junctions and damaging and wrecking locomotives and goods-trains, obviously with the idea—and most successfully too—of dislocating the Axis transport. The net result, as I was informed the other day by a man who was for over three years a prisoner of war in Western Germany, was that ultimately the state of transport in Western Germany became pitiful, and the railways were in a condition of ruin and chaos, because of the con-

stant bombardment. Road transport was the only effective means at that time of handling the supplies for the German Army, and it had been so for a considerable period of time. Finally that broke down, as I understand the position, because of the difficulty of obtaining sufficient quantities of fuel at the right place and time, and so the whole of their transport ultimately became chaotic, and their Forces consequently collapsed. We, therefore, have to bear in mind, in considering this railway as a defence project, that probably, if we were to require it again for that purpose, we would ultimately find the enemy doing exactly the same here as the Allied Forces did in Germany, and it would have the result that road transport would be substantially the medium for bringing up supplies because, though the railway line had been put there for defence purposes, it would be damaged and broken down by our attackers. So even as a defence project, it is doubtful, to my mind, whether it will be useful, or as useful as some people believe.

Let us assume that it is something which is vitally necessary for the defence of this country in the future. On that assumption I submit that it is the duty of the Commonwealth, which is responsible for the defence of this country and which derives the greater portion of the powers it exercises during wartime from the alleged exercise of the defence power, to pay the greater part of the cost of it. If that is not a sufficient reason why by far the greater part of the cost of it should be borne by the Commonwealth, then the fact which I mentioned earlier—that convenience of intercourse will be given to a far greater proportion of people in the Eastern States than in Western Australia—should justify it in absorbing nearly all of what the work of this link in the Trans-Australian railway will cost. So it seems to me that the Parliament of this State, when giving consideration to what share Western Australia should bear, should have those other States in mind, and that it is as great a convenience to the rest of Australia—if not a far greater convenience—as it is to Western Australia, and that it is reasonable that the minor proportion of the cost only should be borne by this State. I feel, also, that if we are prepared to go in for a large share of the

expenditure, even on this isolated link in the trans-Australian railway, or on the creation of the unified gauge in other sections of our railways, we must bear in mind that we are not going to get any great revenue out of it.

We are going to have a very considerable development of certain services in Western Australia, and instead of endeavouring to charge as much as possible to the persons who are going to use those services, let the loss be borne for something that will increase the development of the State and which will be likely to enhance our population. Let that be borne by the taxpayers as a body and lighten the cost to the users of the scheme. I can think of electricity supplies and water supplies, which have been mentioned, as two very useful sources of expenditure, and I can see justification for taking that point of view in regard to them. I do not feel that it is necessary to force this amendment to a vote. The attitude taken up by the Acting Premier has, as said earlier, been a reasonable one.

Mr. Needham: Are you afraid to take a vote?

Mr. WATTS: The hon. member will be asking about co-operation in another five minutes, if I keep on. If the Acting Premier will be willing to add to the statement that he has made that it will not be merely a rubber-stamp consideration of the proposals that will be offered to this Parliament, but that we will be given an opportunity, as a deliberative assembly, to discuss the whole scheme before either the Government or Parliament is bound by a decision—

The Minister for Lands: He cannot make another speech.

Mr. WATTS: Then I would be quite prepared to ask my colleague, the member for Pingelly, to withdraw his amendment, because the purpose for which he moved it, as I understand it, would have been achieved.

MR. NORTH (Claremont—on amendment) [8.20]: The main question raised by the member for Pingelly comes to this: Should railways be scrapped altogether as being obsolete or should they be modernised? I cannot see that we have ever had an answer to that question. I asked a question of the

Minister for Railways some time ago, and the reply was that the railways should be kept going as they were still in the running. The United States of America have 300,000 miles of railways built and run by private companies, and if railways were likely to become obsolete, they would know what to do. An announcement was made in "The West Australian" recently, however, that the companies there were spending £350,000,000 on modernising their railways. That statement shows me that the answer I set out to get has been given by the United States. If they can spend an enormous sum like that, on top of their already heavy capital outlay, in order to improve their railways, the answer for us is fairly clear.

The member for Pingelly should be commended for raising the issue because I believe we should stress to the people of Australia the absurdity of the bogeys raised against the standardising job as a whole. During the ten years ahead over which the job is supposed to be spread, the national income, on present indications, will be approximately £15,000,000,000. If we deduct from that the sum of £70,000,000 for the work of standardisation, we can see that the job can be done. The United States had seven gauges and reduced them to one gauge. Not being Government concerns but being business concerns, however, the railway companies did not hold long debates. Representatives sat around a table and got down to an agreement in the space of a few months. Consequently, I feel that when the question whether we are going to scrap our railways or not is finally answered in this State, the result will be that we shall find the money and modernise them and thus bring our State into line with sister Dominions, with Britain and the United States, each of which has a uniform gauge of one kind or other.

Another reason for which the member for Pingelly should be commended is this: We shall have an opportunity to find out how the figures given by the member for Kalgoorlie for modernising the narrow gauge would compare with the total cost of modernising, plus standardising. If it were found that there was not much difference in the two costs, he might be prepared over the years as unemployment occurs to support the complete change. On the other hand, if it were found from the figures

that the modernising alone could be done more cheaply, then we would have another story, leaving out the question of the East-West line, which the Leader of the Opposition dealt with and supported. I ask members to consider the figures for the South African railways. They are really staggering. They seem to show that the results obtained on the 3ft. 6in. gauge there are equal to those obtained on our broad-gauge lines. I think that point could be substantiated.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: South Africa has much heavier rails.

Mr. NORTH: That is so; I believe the rails used there are 120 lbs. I do not think members of this House would support the expenditure of millions of pounds to convert narrow-gauge lines if similar results could be obtained. These points seem to me to be pertinent once we get past the housing question. It is regrettable that such an important engineering question should have to be mixed up with local requirements, due largely to the war, and having nothing to do with railway construction. Therefore I feel that good will come of this discussion. We shall learn all there is to learn on the subject. I want to see adopted the best transport system available.

Many years ago, I moved a motion relating to the railways, but we have learnt much since then. We have to be guided by facts and by the advice of experts, but I believe the day will come when we shall be glad that the last sod has been turned and that Australia, like its sister Dominion Canada, will be able to run trucks and coaches from one end of the continent to the other without a break of gauge. The primary cost will probably prove to be the final cost, whereas, by running the railways under present conditions, we have a continuing loss. For every few pounds we save in interest, we lose millions in efficiency and convenience, and we shall not solve our train problems if we try to maintain three gauges. Let us remember the experience of Britain and the United States of America and get the job done. If we provide the uniform gauge we shall find the finance, too.

MR. DONEY (Williams-Narrogin—on amendment) [8.26]: The member for Claremont will doubtless pardon my making a small correction, but he seemed not fully to

understand the nature of the submission by the member for Pingelly. He said the hon. member had stated that the railways were to be scrapped or modernised. I do not think the member for Claremont had any justification for taking that rather absurd view of the remarks of the member for Pingelly. However, what I am particularly perturbed about is the vast difference between the purport and the general meaning of the report in "The West Australian" of this morning upon the standardisation of gauges question and a subsequent report in tonight's "Daily News." In that difference, as I see it, lies a complete justification for the amendment submitted by my colleague. According to the report in "The West Australian" this morning, there was not a single State, other than Tasmania, that gave anything approaching support to the principles that Mr. Ward laid before the Premiers' Conference, and Tasmania is the one State of the six that is not concerned in any way with the problems which its Premier discussed.

The Minister for Lands: Except that Tasmania wants a bridge across the Straits.

Mr. DONEY: Each and every Premier or Deputy Premier who spoke for the other States went out of his way to show that the proposal did not appeal at all and gave his reasons. According to the "Daily News," however, a complete change seems to have come over the Premiers attending the conference. In lieu of the objections of the previous day, we now have a report setting out that the Premiers have accepted the rail plan.

The Minister for Lands: According to the "Daily News."

Mr. DONEY: Yes, and I quote the paper without making any pretence that the report is reliable.

The Minister for Lands: That is an insult to a good newspaper.

Mr. DONEY: I am saying nothing against the newspaper.

The Minister for Lands: Have a look at the "Opinions" column.

Mr. DONEY: The caption in the "Daily News" is "Premiers Accept Rail Plan." That is easily understood. The report states—

The Premiers' Conference decided today that the work of standardising Australian rail gauges should be proceeded with as being essential to national defence and development.

It is impossible to misunderstand the meaning of that quotation. Certain it is that later in the conference the Premiers seem to have accepted an amendment to a motion submitted by Mr. Ward calling upon them to give further regard to the question of the proportionate cost to the States and to the Commonwealth, and also to determine exactly whether the project has any developmental value or only a defence value. From the viewpoint that most members on this side of the House take, the developmental value that might be expected to be derived from this project, if carried into effect, would be practically nil. As to the defence value, that to my mind is problematical, to say the least of it. I am by no means accepting Sir Harold Clapp as the final word in regard even to a matter affecting railways. I notice that he said this: That to the north of us there are some 1,200,000,000 people, but he continued to say that if we standardised the gauges of our railways in Australia we should have nothing absolutely whatever to fear from those millions. That is a most amazing statement and entirely unjustifiable, whether made by Sir Harold Clapp or by anyone else.

My colleague on my right went to some trouble to point out the terrible confusion of the people in Germany and other central European countries following the blasting to bits of their railways by Allied airmen. We know very well that there was no country in Europe at the commencement of the war just concluded in a better position with respect to its railways than was Germany, but that did not stand to Germany to the extent that Sir Harold Clapp is contending it will stand to us in the event of our having trouble with the millions to the north of Australia. I would like to express this view, too, that the Premier will certainly not come back to Western Australia having committed the State to the plan. There is absolutely no need whatever to hurry over this matter, as the Acting Premier said, and we all agree with him it is entirely unlikely that within the next five years we shall see any great amount of work undertaken on this project. There is therefore ample time to discuss the matter.

The Minister for Lands: Why discuss it now?

Mr. Triat: It is wasting time.

Mr. DONEY: The reason is obvious. I hope that the Premier comes back with proposals to make to this House, but at the same time giving members ample opportunity, as representing the taxpayers, to come to a decision as to whether we will or will not accept those proposals.

Mr. SEWARD: In view of the Acting Premier's promise to give members an opportunity to discuss the matter, I ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. TELFER (Avon) [8.34]: I am extremely pleased that hostilities have ceased and I hope we are now entering on an era where many evils may pass and not recur and where goodwill will exist between all nations. I must add my quota of good wishes, even though it be repetition, to the ex-Premier (Hon. J. C. Willcock). History will prove that our Parliament was the better for his long association with our legislation. To the new Premier we must offer thanks for his accepting the Premiership. We know him and appreciate his proved ability. Congratulations must also be extended to the Deputy Premier, who will do honour and justice to his position; and I would be wanting in honesty and appreciation if I failed to thank the various Ministers of the Crown for the assistance which I have received from them. I consider we are slowly but surely reaching the point where we shall have a system established that will give Government banks sovereign control over the issue of internal currency established for national developmental work, housing, water, transport, etc., and thus secure the machinery to provide a regular equation between the community's production and the community's purchasing power, such being based on honest value of goods, services and labour. Perhaps the awful carnage of war may be semi-justified if it proves to the people the community's want of freedom.

President Roosevelt had four wonderful freedoms. Western Australia has four wants: Want of full employment, want of scientific control and management of credit and currency; want of orderly production of major primary products, with honest prices to producers and consumer alike; and want of fellowship and sympathy for the other man's right to live

in a reasonable degree of comfort and security. Full employment can be given with scientific control and management of currency, and if a Government should be congratulated on this score, it is the Willcock Government for entering into the cheque-paying bank business through the medium of the Rural and Industries Bank. Our Premier deserves special congratulations for the way in which he brought down the Bill for the establishment of that bank and for the personnel appointed as commissioners. They, I believe, will administer the bank with justice, honesty and vision, also with sympathy and understanding. I hope the Rural and Industries Bank will make service its keynote and give security and peace of mind to its clients. That has not been the policy of the associated banks, which only grant loans from year to year. Among other facilities which I hope the bank will extend to its customers will be banking facilities in the smaller country districts, where agencies should be opened once a week at least. It is most unfair that business people and others should have to travel up to 30 miles to transact ordinary banking business. Ordinary routine banking service must be undertaken by the rural bank in order that it may give the fullest value to its customers. It should have the status of a co-partner with the Commonwealth Bank and not be subservient to that bank. Speaking to the objective of full employment, it will be necessary to associate that matter with the Commonwealth Bank and the rural bank for the management and control of loans and advances, with or without interest, the interest factor to be governed by the national character or otherwise of the work under review, and with the idea of bringing about right co-ordination in full employment.

It is pleasing to note how often the Hon. J. C. Willcock, when Premier, had with him the present Premier at conferences in the Eastern States. I feel that we should be strongly represented at such conferences, because in many cases the future of Western Australia is being discussed and most of those discussions are concerned with the reconstruction of our new and vital relationships with the future. Hence we can make no effort too great to ensure that the fullest opportunity is taken to see that we are represented at those conferences, in order that every avenue may be explored to estab-

lish a system in the reconstruction period that will yield scientific control of money, credits and markets. Finance must not only be provided to give full employment but it must also be used to stabilise markets for all major primary industries. The land and primary products form the foundation of our whole economic structure and our social system. Hence stabilised markets will, to a major extent, provide employment. Water services and transport will play an ever-increasing part in the provision of work for all and the development of our primary industries.

I hope that Western Australia will follow the idea adopted in New South Wales in regard to irrigation schemes, and that when we instal or review water services, transport and other facilities of that kind we will work out a reasonable and just price for the community to meet. The consumers should pay a reasonable figure and the balance of the cost should be charged to the general taxpayer. It is fantastic that breeders of livestock in one district should pay 2s. 6d. per thousand gallons for water and that those living somewhere else should pay 5s. to 6s. A flat rate of 2s. or 2s. 6d. is quite sufficient. Water supply schemes in the future must receive serious attention. When finance is necessary, the Commonwealth Bank should make money available at a nominal interest rate; and if there is any excess debit, it should be spread over the community. As the wealth of the country always finds its way to the city, the city should meet its quota of national development charges. Pending some comprehensive scheme, water is required at key points in sufficient quantities for emergency carting when necessary. As we are now in the post-war period, extensions should be made where circumstances permit.

As national development charges with regard to water supply services constitute a State responsibility, so should a big proportion of the interest charged to the railways. Hundreds of miles of the State's 4,700 miles of lines were built for the development of the State and its resources. Those lines would never have been constructed if their construction had been viewed from a common-carrier point of view. Here again the policy of New South Wales, where only a reasonable interest is debited to the work concerned, should be Western Australia's policy. It is only right that national de-

velopment should be a State responsibility. Reading the report of the Commissioner for Railways, one notes that 85 per cent. of our locomotives are over 30 years of age, and that 50 per cent. of our engines are approximately 50 years old. Ninety per cent. of the passenger coaches are 35 years of age. We have heard a good deal about the railway system of South Africa. That country has hundreds of miles with rails 90 lbs. to the yard. Western Australia has only 15 miles of rails over 60 lbs. to the yard. From this it can be understood why our railways are inefficient and carry a debt of £26,000,000, with an interest bill of £1,042,000. The Commissioner of Railways and his staff cannot be blamed. It is beyond a matter of administration. The situation has been created through interest charge and the developmental policy of the State. Nevertheless, it is up to all of us to ensure that we modernise transport. Congratulations will be extended to the State Minister when drastic action is taken to overhaul our railways and transport system generally. We want road motor transport to fit in with any reconstruction scheme.

It is to the credit of the Government that it has shifted some thousands of tons of wheat to the coast by road. In South Africa road transport of merchandise annually amounts to nearly 1,000,000 tons and passengers carried total 7,500,000. No country has a greater need for road transport in co-ordination with railways than has Western Australia. If necessary, we should spend several million pounds in the post-war period to re-organise the State transport system. The best labour-saving equipment should be installed, not with a view to dispensing with manpower but with a view to enabling employees to give greater service to the public. With regard to the financing of such a venture, we should pay only a nominal interest on borrowed money, not four per cent. as hitherto. In 1908-9 the Government of the day did a very great injustice by isolating a fine area of farming land and farmers in the district now known as the route of the Yarramony-Eastward Railway. I sincerely hope something will be done to rectify this grave wrong in the period ahead of us.

I would like to thank the Minister for Education on the start he has made towards improving educational facilities in the country. A good deal still remains to

be done, however. The consolidation of schools is working out very well, and it is now generally being accepted that consolidation is the right way to reach the desired objective of educating and moulding the character of our future citizens. All country schools must have facilities to give children every possible opportunity to obtain a good pass out of the ninth standard. Unfortunately, we have schools in our larger country towns that have not an average of one Junior pass per year. That is a very undesirable state of affairs which requires remedying at the earliest possible moment. Schools with technical and rural education, plus commercial classes are wanted. The consolidation of schools can give that training. Shortage of staff in many instances has brought even the teaching of woodwork and domestic science to a standstill. I hope that this shortage will soon be overcome.

The public is asking for high school facilities in the eastern wheatbelt. I commend that thought to the Minister. I trust that in the near future instead of his vote being £830,000 it will be up to the £1,000,000 mark. Want of complete educational opportunity for the country child is one of the reasons that is driving parents to the metropolis; and opportunity for the child to be taught a trade is another. Only last week a country railway employee transferred to the city. He and his wife had been in the country for 30 years. They had built a comfortable home and were very satisfied to remain there; but they had to sacrifice their home and come to Perth so that their child might be trained as an artisan. In some of the country districts State industries could be decentralised. The railway workshops is one industry that could be so treated. Trades could then be taught in those places. Perhaps it would be cheaper, in cold finance, to have centralisation of industrial works, but if centralisation depopulates the inland districts it is not doing justice to the State. Western Australia cannot live without the country, so that everything possible should be done to prevent the inland population from being forced to come to the city because of the failure of amenities and education for the children. Our objective should be to do everything to create a desire for country life.

One could speak for a long time on the advantages of decentralisation, and the

aid that could and must be given to inland towns. Now, in the post-war period, is the time to budget for this reconstruction and give the farmer, the country dweller, the artisan and the industrial worker security from want for himself, and his family by stabilising markets, giving an honest reward for labour, and providing amenities and education. By so doing we will find a totally different outlook spreading over the countryside. Most people seek only a decent livelihood and are not necessarily chasing hard cash. It is the amenities of life they want. Western Australia can afford these facilities and we, as members of Parliament, will fail in our duty if we do not legislate to give these people what is possible. Where necessary we must make representations to our friends in the Federal Houses for their quota of assistance.

Recently I was privileged to inspect the meatworks at Robb's Jetty. The control and organisation there are a credit to the Agricultural Department. We appear to be on the eve of an important change in this industry. I believe that very shortly—immediately the opportunity offers—we shall have the Midland Junction slaughter yards, abattoirs and cool stores extended. I hope that that will be so. I understand that the extensions will be carried out on the most modern lines. I have heard it said that because the Midland abattoirs were below the desired standard the American Forces refused to draw their supplies of meat from that centre. If such is the case, I believe the Minister for Agriculture will do justice to the situation. In the re-building I trust that he will consider the merits of the Government's taking over the whole of the slaughtering at the abattoirs. Speaking as one with a good knowledge of country livestock conditions, I think it would be an advantage if we had two sale days and two railing days for sheep at Midland. When the sheep yarding is over 18,000 or 20,000, delays and wastage in stock values are brought about.

I am afraid that our railway stock transport system is out of date. I have had complaints from Merredin organisations that lambs are scheduled to be loaded at Moorine Rock at 8 o'clock on a Tuesday morning. This necessitates their being taken off their feed on Monday afternoon. They are not sold until Wednesday—almost 48 hours later—and the distance they

are transported is 240 miles. Train schedules should be overhauled; timetables should show almost passenger-express running time. I have only mentioned what is happening on the main line. When branch lines are reviewed the position is much worse and, in addition, there are excessive delays at junctions. Our pig transport mortalities in the summertime are due to delays. Just as the Railway Department should enter into road passenger service to link with its rail system, so should Government-controlled road trucks be a connecting link with the railway stock transport. That is being done in England, America and South Africa, so why not here? The stock trucks of the Railway Department need re-constructing. They should all be of the CXA pattern with suitable roofs. Bogey sheep trucks are death traps for sheep unless suitably divided.

I hope that the whole matter of live-stock transport, slaughtering and marketing will be thoroughly considered and re-organised, and that steps will be taken to stabilise the market. The farmer today is receiving a reasonable price for his meat, and now is the time to create a stable market. In the days gone by I have seen farmers sell prime stock for 1d. a lb. I hope that at the end of five years such will not recur. But we may rest assured that immediately national security regulations cease the exploiters will once more be active to batten on the producer. I hope I will not again hear their song of the law of supply and demand. The organisation of markets is the only thing that will stop the exploiter, and the Government is the only body that can create the necessary machinery to stop exploitation. In closing, may I say that some of the objectives I have mentioned necessarily require Commonwealth assistance, but with that assistance they can be gained and justice be given to our country people. That will be a big step to that most worthy, desirable and essential goal—full employment.

We must ever bear in mind that one major factor is vitally essential, and that is that the Commonwealth and State banks must have complete and sovereign power to control and administer scientifically our currency for internal development, and to control employment and the marketing of our products. Currency must be available at interest rates, nominal or otherwise, in har-

mony with the ability of industry to pay. It is the instrument of the Devil, having to depend on the vagaries of the Associated Banks and financial institutions or private lenders for finance. It would be a libel to say of Sir Denison Miller or any of his successors that they created a state of inflation, and so it would be equally wrong to say that properly controlled currency would be detrimental to the average citizen. The reverse would be the case, and the only sufferer under controlled currency would be the financial exploiter. Most people are beginning to understand that the present way in which finance functions is obsolete. In fact, it is many times more obsolete than our present railway system and, just as our railways and transport can and will be modernised, so must our method of currency be modernised, to fit our needs and to tune in with the excellent progress that our scientists have made in their many fields of activity. As the scientist must necessarily work for service to the community and mankind, and not for the selfishness of the individual, so must our currency system function with the same objective, for the benefit of the people. Then and only then will slum housing in town and country be forced to disappear; then and only then will Governments be able to make available decent quarters and housing for their employees.

On motion by the Acting Premier, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.3 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 22nd August, 1945.

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

QUESTION.

TRAM LIGHTING.

As to Improving.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER asked the Chief Secretary: Seeing that the metropolitan trams are so badly illuminated that they are a