

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 31st July, 1940.

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

QUESTION—BERNIE'S CARAVAN.

Mr. McDONALD asked the Premier:—1, On what terms is the fish and refreshment business known as Bernie's Caravan in occupation of a public reserve in Mount's Bay Road controlled by the State Gardens Board? 2, On what date were the existing terms of occupation agreed to by the Board? 3, What is the reason for the delay in giving an answer to the representations of the deputation which waited on the Government on the 6th June last with reference to the presence of Bernie's Caravan on this public reserve?

The PREMIER replied:—1, Weekly tenancy; 2, About the 22nd May, 1940; 3, The time taken in testing the conflicting statements on this matter.

QUESTION—RURAL RELIEF.

Shortage of Funds.

Mr. SEWARD asked the Minister for Lands:—1, Have any claims been submitted to the Rural Relief Trustees by farmers and pastoralists, for adjustment of debts, in which a scheme of adjustment has been agreed upon, but in which finalisation is not possible through want of funds? 2, If so, how many, and what sum is required to finalise such cases? 3, Have any requests for adjustment of debts been submitted to the Rural Relief Trustees, consideration of which has had to be withheld through a lack of funds? 4, If so, how many? 5, In the event of question No. 1 being answered in the affirmative, what (if any) representations did the State Government make to the Commonwealth Government to secure additional funds? 6, What was the reply of the

Commonwealth Government to such representations?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied:—1, Yes; 2, 191. £46,083 11s. 6d.; 3, No; 4, See 3; 5, The State Government made representations to the Commonwealth when submitting the 1939-40 estimates and again recently to the Prime Minister. Further representation is to be made at the forthcoming meeting of the Loan Council; 6, Owing to the financial position, further funds could not be made available for the 1939-40 financial year.

QUESTION—MINING.

Ravensthorpe Treatment Plant.

Mr. STUBBS asked the Minister for Mines:—When does he expect to receive a report from the School of Mines on the gold samples from the Ravensthorpe district, lodged by the Government Geologist, in accordance with the promise made by him to a deputation on his visit to that district that he would endeavour to have a treatment plant erected to deal with the different kinds of ore there?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied:—This report has entailed a considerable amount of work and is expected within the course of the next few days.

QUESTION—RAILWAYS.

Price of Newcastle Coal.

Mr. WILSON asked the Minister for Railways: What was the price paid per ton by the Western Australian Railways and Electric Power Scheme, East Perth, Departments for Newcastle large coal and small coal (separately) in the ships' slings at Fremantle—1, for the year ended on the 30th June, 1931; 2, for the year ended the 30th June, 1940?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied:—1, No Newcastle coal was purchased for year ended 30th June, 1931; 2, Large coal, 40s. 7d. per ton. Small coal, 37s. 3d. per ton.

QUESTIONS (2)—PHOSPHATES.

Local Deposits.

Mr. HOLMAN asked the Minister for Industrial Development:—In view of the increasing cost of fertilisers to the producers,

will the Government take steps to investigate the possibility of the utilisation of phosphatic deposits in the State?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT replied:—Yes, possible sources of phosphates are being investigated. The most likely appear to be the iron phosphate deposits at Dandarragan. The deposits are said to be extensive but the problem is in their conversion to a soluble form suitable for agricultural purposes and in this connection the W.A. Branch of the Australian Chemical Institute has been approached for its assistance.

Examination by Mines Department.

Mr. HOLMAN asked the Minister for Mines:—1, Is he aware of the existence of workable phosphate deposits in this State? 2, If so, has any examination of such deposits been made by officers of his department? 3, What was the result of such examinations?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied:—1, Yes. 2, Yes. 3, Various islands along the Kimberley coast and the Abrolhos Islands near Geraldton have in the past supplied large tonnages of guano for local consumption but are now practically exhausted. Good quality guano occurs on other islands and on the coast, but quantities have not in all cases been determined. The coastal supplies, are, however, limited, while the grade is variable. Coprolite beds containing phosphate occur at Gingin and Dandarragan, while at Dandarragan and Yatheroo a firm rock carrying secondary iron phosphates is a possible source of fertilisers, but quantities available and average phosphorus content have not been determined. Mines Department Bulletins are available containing full information collected regarding the phosphate deposits.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Third Day.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [4.35]: In making some remarks with reference to His Excellency's Speech, one is necessarily impressed by the difficulties of the present time, by the paramount importance of Australia's war effort and the fact that that effort must be the first consideration of all parts of Australia. I feel, however, that

while we appreciate that our exertions directed towards securing victory and avoiding defeat must be the primary consideration that regulates everything we do at present, we must not lose sight of the fact that we have to provide for a great number of other subjects and in particular for the situation that will confront Australia and our State in the post-war period. The present is a time of violent change. It is a period of re-adjustment throughout the whole world. New conditions have arisen in the last few months that would hardly have been thought possible a year or two ago. Nowhere is this more marked than in the United Kingdom. As has been observed by an American writer of great repute, and one who is widely read, the United Kingdom has become a socialist State almost overnight—a socialist State not in the sense that there has been an expropriation of private ownership of property, but a socialist State in the sense that the earnings of the people are being taken for the service of the State. The extent to which that has been done in England is truly remarkable. It is not exaggerating to say that with regard to all large incomes from property, the State now takes the whole. By the time a property owner pays income tax and sets aside by way of sinking fund or a premium on his life insurance policy—which is a common way of meeting the situation—a sum to meet the charge for death duties, the whole of the income of the recipient is taken by taxation.

The Premier: That is for incomes of over £20,000.

Mr. McDONALD: Yes, for incomes of over £20,000 a year, and I think that with the recent additions to the basic income tax in England, the same would apply to incomes from property of a smaller amount. The greater part of the income of the rich man, which runs into thousands of pounds, is taken for the service of the State. In the book, with which hon. members will be familiar, written by a Labour member of the Cabinet, Mr. Harold Nicholson, on the subject "Why Britain is at War," the writer points out that in the present war the English middle class, by which he means the people of moderate means, are committing economic suicide. He went on to say that they were doing so deliberately and gladly because they were prepared to maintain the liberties of their country and ensure

that it would ultimately attain victory. That is the spirit of the English people today. That is the class that has played such a great part in the political and economic life of England, and that is the class that is knowingly committing suicide so far as the economic position is concerned.

We see these great changes. We know that when the war finishes the England that emerges will be a different country economically from what it was before the war. We have every reason to expect and hope that it will be a better country in many ways, although we realise that the aftermath of the war must bring for England and for Australia a very great period of impoverishment. We know there is going on and that there will continue to go on destruction of wealth, which it may take many years to make up. If we preserve our ways of life and those forms and institutions that we prize we may well reckon the sacrifice is worthwhile. I mention these circumstances because the present position of the world and of Australia is at once a danger and an opportunity. We believe in democratic institutions, and are fighting to preserve them; and we who believe in democratic institutions must take every step to ensure that they function efficiently. There are ways in which they can function more efficiently than in the past. Australia as a democratic country with democratic institutions is under an obligation to put a finger on the weak spot, and ensure that the institutions we desire to preserve will be sufficiently effective to withstand the challenge of any rival theories of government.

The Federal Government is preoccupied with the war effort. Upon it falls almost entirely the responsibility for our war preparations and our war exertions. It has made remarkable progress in turning this country, which had no organisation for war, into the degree of preparedness for the production of munitions and fighting weapons that obtains today. It is remarkable that Australia should be turning out two aeroplanes a day, and in circumstances where two years ago everyone would have said that was practically impossible. Although it has this tremendous responsibility cast upon it, the Federal Government has found time to constitute a committee to deal with the post-war situation. That committee is studying the trend of affairs in order to arrange that the transition from war time to peace time

shall prevail with the minimum dislocation and the best possible issues for our people. I want to know what we in Western Australia are doing, to ask the House what we should do in this State. The Speech of His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor is barren of any reference to this.

Mr. Raphael: It has never been otherwise.

Mr. McDONALD: I do not think anything can be more barren than that which is already barren. There is no reference to policy or any reference to arrangements that could be made to deal with the situation arising out of the war in the future. I know from the Press that the Minister for Lands is not unmindful of this obligation, and that he has been giving attention to the question of post-war markets. Other Ministers may have also been doing the same kind of thing, but we do not know of it. What we would like to know is whether they have done anything, and if so what they are doing. In this period of adjustment, readjustment, and change, if we do not get into the running for our share we shall be lost. Some countries are using the present unsettled state of the world to increase their territories, as we see in the Balkans and elsewhere. Those acts of aggression do not form any part of the problem that affects us. There are, however, factors like markets that are going to be opened up or may be closed. There are supplies for industry and hundreds of other things that will affect Australia and this State. In the period of readjustment and change it seems to me that unless we are alert we shall be left behind by other countries that are better organised in their plans and are further sighted than we are.

Up to the depression of 1929 it may be said that Western Australia had a long-range policy. Our objective was to increase the population. We had an immigration policy. We also designed to increase our primary production. We had the vision of the State being a granary and larder for Europe, the United Kingdom and the Near East. We borrowed in large sums. We felt justified in doing so because we thought that with the increase in population, and with our growing trade and production, we should be able to bear the burden of indebtedness that to a large extent we were incurring for developmental works that had a real and enduring value to the State.

When the depression came population ceased to increase and immigration became impossible. Markets were to a large extent closed to our products, and even those that remained open were threatened. We continued to borrow. I raise no objection to that because we had to keep the wheels of industry going, and maintain as best we could the standards of living for the people of the State. From 1929 we had a policy that looked from year to year only. Perhaps we could not justifiably look further ahead than from year to year. To-day it seems to me that the time has come in this State when we should take fresh stock of where we are going, and endeavour to evolve some definite ideas of what our policy should be, what we are to aim at, and ascertain the best means by which we can realise our objectives. While affairs are in the melting pot and the new deal is proceeding throughout the world, we should see about securing our own share of trade opportunities. I do not suggest that we should seek any unfair proportion of what is available, but merely that to which we are entitled on behalf of the people of Western Australia. Now is the time when we should endeavour to determine, as far as possible, what our future position shall be, and we certainly do not require to look for any precedent for such a step. We find countries—unfortunately they are predatory—that so far have been successful in their actions, indicating evidence of long-range planning respecting their future objectives and aspirations. As I have indicated, they have been successful so far, but I do not see why countries that are not predatory should not also plan for the future along lines of legitimate aspiration. I fail to see why we should not formulate programmes and achieve the success to which we are entitled.

What should be the future policy of our State? I propose to mention two points at this stage. One of our chief objectives in Western Australia, in my opinion, must be to secure more population of the right type, suitable for a country such as ours. Even when peace is restored, the world will not be reformed in a month, a year, or even in a period of years. If there is any lesson to be learnt from the last year or two, surely it is that there is no security for the weak nation. If there is any lesson for us in Western Australia, where we have the smal-

lest population per square mile of any country in the world, it is that we should take steps at the earliest moment to ensure as far as possible that we have a more adequate population commensurate with our resources and our vast area, than we possess today. I shall have something further to say on that matter at a later stage. The next objective to my mind is that we must have secondary industries to balance our economy. The old theory of a primary producing State no longer holds good. From every point of view Western Australia, which comprises one-third of the Commonwealth, must aim at establishing industries, both primary and secondary. Irrespective of whether the policy I suggest is valid or not, it represents an attempt on my part to suggest what I think are the two main points that should dominate Western Australian thought. I would like to know what the Government is thinking about these matters. Have Ministers thought about them at all? If they have, what are their thoughts?

Then, again, when we contemplate these vital necessities, should we leave the matter entirely to the Government? Certainly Ministers shoulder the responsibility for carrying on the affairs of State, but in these days when we are confronted with a crisis not only as regards national security, but as regards the future economic position of the people, why should we not mobilise all the brains and experience available in order to assist the Government? I look around this Chamber and I see members on both sides of the House who, since the war commenced, have had no opportunity afforded them to do any special work in order to assist the Government at this particular time. Members associated with me on the Opposition cross-benches have all along been, and are now ready and willing and anxious to assist the war effort of Australia in any way that is open to them. Whether at the instance of the Federal Government or of the State Government, we are willing to do, and should do, all we can. We are doing all we can now. We attend meetings; we make our services available. Notwithstanding all this, I cannot help thinking there is a reservoir of knowledge, experience, energy and public spiritedness in this Legislative Assembly alone that could well be mobilised to assist in meeting the problems of national security and post-war regeneration that will confront this State and even now loom up

before us. I suggest for the consideration of the Government that six phases that affect the present and future of the State should be selected and then three or four members from both sides of the House should be invited to render assistance in dealing with those matters for, say, a period of 12 months. We need not look too far ahead but I certainly think we could explore the possibilities and mobilise the experience of members of Parliament for that broad purpose.

I would like to suggest also some directions in which members of this House could render valuable aid to the Government and the State at this juncture. Take one of the matters I have already mentioned, the question of secondary industries. We have now reached the stage where our secondary industry policy is in great jeopardy. We read in the "West Australian" today of the closing down of a factory at Bayswater. I am sure the Minister for Industrial Development has done all he could to prevent that occurrence, and I am certain the episode has occasioned him great disappointment. I am not in possession of details regarding the closing down of the undertaking apart from the information that appeared in the newspaper. It is not a mere matter of the loss of one factory. I fear the closing down of the undertaking is an indication of the difficulties confronting manufacturers in Western Australia, and the incident may have great repercussions in the future. Not only in Western Australia but throughout the Commonwealth will it be recognised that there are difficulties in the way of establishing secondary industries in this State.

Mr. Sampson: And others may be scared to start.

Mr. McDONALD: At present there is tremendous advance in secondary industries in Australia. Money is being poured without limit into all types of industry associated with the war effort. Today we are making goods that formerly no one would have dreamt we could possibly turn out within such a short time. We are training all classes of highly skilled artisans, and I am afraid the tendency must be more and more to confirm the Eastern States as the industrial centres of Australia. I know the Ministry has been doing what it can—everybody has. I know the Federal Government has done a great deal to decentralise war industries; but when time is the essence of

the contract then the Commonwealth Government is compelled to go to the already developed industries and factories in the Eastern States rather than commence pioneering industries in outlying parts of Australia. But we must do all we can; I have no doubt the Minister will do so. We may be able to furnish him with some new ideas and thus help to retain for this State the opportunities to increase its secondary industries which otherwise would be lost to it, more than ever by the particular developments occasioned by war expenditure.

Let me pass now to the question of unemployment. Every year for some years past in this House I have raised one specific matter, among others, and that is the position of men on sustenance. I fear that the Department of Labour has reached a kind of stalemate. It does not seem to have any new ideas at all; it does not seem to be able even to keep abreast of the times. The department was established about 1930 by a Government which was terribly short of money. In 1933 the basic wage in the metropolitan area was £3 8s. a week; today it is £4 5s. 4d. Apart from some increase which was made for prosperous conditions a year or two ago, it may be taken by and large that the increase in the basic wage is due to the increase in the cost of living. Since 1933 the cost of living, as reflected by the basic wage, has risen 25 per cent. The result is that the 7s. of 1933 is worth only 5s. 6d. today in purchasing power. In other words, people who were receiving 7s. sustenance in those days now have, in terms of purchasing power, not merely a maintenance of that amount but a steady reduction in the means of livelihood. I have urged repeatedly that many of this particular class are met with difficulties of ill-health or other circumstance which makes it hard for them to be employed on ordinary relief work. It is a reflection on the Government, the House and the country that these men should be compelled to continue receiving the same amount of sustenance while the purchasing power of the money is being reduced. At all times, the amount was not large, in fact it was a very small allowance.

The Premier: Those persons are only on sustenance for short periods.

Mr. McDONALD: Possibly. A man came into my office last week. He said he was on sustenance and had three children. According to his story, which I have no means of

testing—I am not on the committee which I suggest might be formed to help the Minister for Labour; if I were such stories could be properly tested—this man had had 16 weeks and two days employment on relief work during the last 12 months.

The Premier: That is an absolute exception.

Mr. McDONALD: It may be; but even if these men are unemployed for short periods, say, a month, two months or three months, at a rate, compared with 1933, equivalent to 5s. 6d. per week per head, it is too little. The Treasurer knows better than I do, but I believe it would involve a comparatively small expenditure by the State to put these unfortunate people on a better regimen. But allow me to return to some other aspects of the unemployment position. I am not at all satisfied that the Department of Labour is doing as much as it can to meet the situation. I have no official position which enables me to test many stories which are told to me and to other members; but I am informed on what I believe to be excellent authority that men are on relief work who could without difficulty obtain other employment. My informant mentioned the case of one relief worker who said, "I go to relief work every Monday morning. A truck calls for me, and every Friday night the truck calls for me and takes me back to town. I have my week-ends off at home with my family. I might earn more if I obtained private employment in the country, but relief work will do me." These stories should be tested, because if such men remain on relief work it means that others who genuinely cannot obtain private employment are going short of work. That is one aspect which I believe needs to be thoroughly tested by the department. In New Zealand, the Labour Party has established throughout the Dominion what are called labour exchanges. In this State we are centralised. I believe that rations can be authorised only in Perth. A person in the country may be in difficult circumstances, but rations cannot be authorised there. I cannot vouch for all I have been told; I must accept what I am told by people who desire to assist the unemployed and by what the unemployed themselves tell me. As I say, in New Zealand there are exchanges in all the various small towns and it may be that the local lands inspector, or some other suitable official, is the local representative of the employment department.

His duty is to deal with the conditions of his district and to bring employer and worker together. If there is a man on relief work and a farmer or a shopkeeper desires to secure that man's services, the officer is able to say at once to the man, "You must go off relief work; here is a perfectly good job which you must take." By this decentralisation the New Zealand Government has done very effective work in assisting unemployed men to get back to private industry, thereby relieving the State's obligation to support them.

The Premier: We have the same system in this State. Every clerk of courts is an agent of the department.

Mr. McDONALD: I have been given instances of men who could get private work. There does not seem to be any systematic check of the particulars supplied for employment, so that men on relief work can, when the opportunity occurs, be placed with private employers.

The Premier: We have a census of all the unemployed.

Mr. McDONALD: That is a great advance.

The Premier: You may be surprised to learn there are about 150 engineers on sustenance work.

Mr. McDONALD: It has taken a long time to compile the census. The unemployment problem arose ten years ago; we are just now taking the census, and that does not show any rapid action.

Hon. C. G. Latham: What engineers does the Premier refer to?

The Premier: People who say they are engineers.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Civil engineers?

The Premier: Mechanical engineers.

Mr. McDONALD: It does not show rapid action on the part of the department. I desire—as I know other members do—greater rapidity of action. We think the Department of Labour is one department that should be galvanised into action quite a great deal. Take the question of the single men in the South-West; again I speak subject to correction. I think there are 500 or 600 men there working on farms for two days a week. I am informed that much of the work they do is of very little value, as it consists of the clearing of country that may revert to nature. These men are not being taught anything, and have no opportunity of learning a trade. They are very

often young men and it seems a great pity to me that all this good material should lie dormant in the South-West when the State should be able to make better use of it.

The Premier: Very few of them are young men.

Mr. McDONALD: Perhaps so. I am not able to say how many are.

The Premier: We have a census of their ages too.

Mr. McDONALD: Even 500 men of the average age of 50 years working two days a week in the South-West, with the rest of their time idle, does not seem to me to be a very effective way to make use of so much man power. Cannot we evolve something that will achieve better results? I have information—my friends of the Country Party will know better than I whether it is accurate—that it is extremely difficult to obtain agricultural labour. A farmer told me so a week or two ago; he added that he did not know how the farmers would get on for labour. I am also told—and I think the Leader of the Opposition mentioned this last night—that farmers whose sons have enlisted will be met with serious difficulty in obtaining labour. On the other hand, the unemployed man has perhaps in some cases a justifiable reluctance in going to work in the country. The wages are small, and it is said that sometimes men have gone into the country and after working there a few weeks, did not earn sufficient to pay their fare. That may be gross exaggeration, but nevertheless the wages are small and the conditions not so comfortable as in the city. Yet farmers cannot pay higher wages. Sometimes the workers have said, as no doubt you, Mr. Deputy Speaker know, that when they have applied to the farmer for their wages they have been told, "I have not got the money to pay you." That may not happen often.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I do not think it happens very often.

Mr. McDONALD: It does not, although I have known of two cases, which came under my personal knowledge in the Bankruptcy Court.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It applies, of course, everywhere.

Mr. McDONALD: Yes. I am not suggesting that farmers are not doing as much as others to meet their obligations. But would it not be possible, where the farmer can establish that he is in urgent need of labour

and is not in a position to pay a higher rate of wages, for the department to give the farmer a subsidy to enable him to pay reasonable wages? Would it not be possible to introduce a system whereby the Agricultural Bank, or a private bank, might be approached? I think they would be only too pleased to fall in with the scheme and guarantee that a sum will be set aside from the farmers' overdraft to ensure that the worker will receive his wages.

Mr. Warner: You try it.

Mr. McDONALD: I have spoken to a bank manager about the matter. He had been dealing with a very large number of agricultural advances, and he said the scheme was entirely feasible. Is it beyond the wit of man and of the Department of Employment to bring together the unemployed men who could work in the country and the farmers who need them?

Mr. Seward: It is beyond them.

The Minister for Works: Last time that was tried, the men received only the amount of the subsidy.

Mr. McDONALD: Which men, the farmers?

The Minister for Works: No, the employees.

Mr. McDONALD: If the Department of Employment had two or three members from the floor of the House to advise it and the Minister, I think there would not be any difficulty in arranging for an assurance to the worker that he would get his wages.

Let me turn to the matter of finance. I have advocated that there should be a public accounts committee to inform members of the position of our accounts and of the State debt. My suggestion does not seem to have found favour, though it has been adopted in some other countries, and I think it would prove of assistance to the Treasurer at a time when he needs to scrutinise all the avenues of expenditure to ensure that the money available for spending is applied in the most fruitful and necessitous directions. On this subject members of the House could afford him some help. If we are to have any future policy—I mean a long-range policy—if we are to have any objectives to which we are going to work, then we should get members together to study the question with the Minister to see how far those objectives can be attained. Take population: Should we have more than our present population or are we to continue to have

only one person to more than two square miles? If we are to have more population, it must of course be the best population available, that is, the natural increase of our own people. Cannot we devise some method whereby family men and women might be given some inducement to rear and equip their large families? If we are to have additional population, might we not study how to get other population of the right kind? When peace conditions return, might not there be opportunities to get migrants of the right stock suitable for our conditions, opportunities such as have not existed for many decades? I think that is possible. If we are to aim at getting more population, why not set up some machinery so that the question could be studied?

Let me turn now to education and social services. We have had experience of totalitarian countries and of the effect and value of educating the young people along certain lines. We do not believe in the lines upon which those countries have based their systems of education, but have not we a lesson to learn as to education inside our own institutions and concepts? Instead of teaching children what we have been teaching them, has not the time arrived to reorganise our system of education and teach our people more of civics, of political institutions, of relative values, of the true sphere of horse-racing, which at present occupies a paramount position in the lives of our people, and of betting? I think that possibly by reviewing our education system, we could do much to enable our young people to become a better generation. On the side of social services we spent, in 1938-39, £3,660,000 on alcoholic drink. If I might draw a comparison, based on population, from the report of the Royal Commission on betting in South Australia, I suppose our people spend £300,000 or £400,000 a year on betting. This means that our people spend about £4,000,000 a year on alcohol and betting.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That is very moderate!

Mr. McDONALD: The drink bill of Western Australia represents £7 18s. per head, including every man, woman and child.

The Minister for Mines: Then somebody is getting my share.

Mr. McDONALD: The Minister's abstinence only goes to show how much some people drink. I am not speaking as a tee-

totaller, but can we view with equanimity the diversion of nearly £4,000,000 a year, largely from the earnings of the basic wage workers, for drink and betting? Is not there something wrong? It might be that education is required or that some other steps should be taken, but if that expenditure continues, is it not going to lead to a weakening of the economic and moral structure of the country? To put it on the lowest possible plane, is it not something that demands the urgent attention of the Government, the Parliament and the people at the present time? Our total receipts from income tax, financial emergency tax and hospital tax is about £2,000,000 a year and yet, as I have pointed out, we spend £4,000,000 a year on alcoholic drink and on betting. Perhaps those things cannot be drastically altered, but how much better it would be if only £1,000,000 of the £4,000,000 was spent on housing, instead of on alcohol! I think that these questions are ripe—if not more than ripe—for study, especially at a time when the nation is struggling for its existence and when money is urgently required, not to weaken the moral fibre of our people, but to strengthen it.

I should like to see the aid of members given to the consideration of another question that is fundamental to the prosperity of our State. I believe the Minister for Lands is giving it some study, but it cannot receive too much. I refer to the position of our agricultural industries. Whatever might be our objectives, we remain a primary producing country. Some time might elapse before we establish secondary industries to any considerable extent. Therefore we must recognise that the prosperity, stability and even the maintenance of our primary industries is absolutely fundamental to our welfare. We are all aware that those industries are experiencing great difficulties, and I think this House cannot give too much organised study to these problems, together with the Government—if the Government is prepared to accept such help—with a view to laying foundations for meeting the situation, not only for the moment, but also for the future when the struggle for markets will begin again in all its intensity.

I hope that the Government will not become too complacent. I think that is its greatest danger. Ministers might be con-

tent to regard their occupancy of the Treasury bench as a good old family business. They staved off the Opposition in 1936 and again in 1939 and are now settling down to a more or less happy existence in office, that is, so far as the pressing problems of the day permit of anybody in a position of great responsibility being happy. In relation to some of the matters I have mentioned, I think the time has come for much more dynamics to be infused into the running of the State. Taking the long view, the time has come to press this State's claims for development, not only for the good of the State, but as a part of the economic structure of Australia, and I think such claims would be recognised by the Commonwealth Government and by the Eastern States. This country has to face the future and it may be a future of considerable uncertainty, and we should not leave this vast expanse of territory inhabited by only a handful of people and regarded as a place that produces merely gold, flocks and herds.

The Premier interjected.

Mr. McDONALD: We should never lose sight of that and should always be striving to attain it, through the efforts not only of Ministers, but also of members, and by an organised system. In that way I think we should be successful.

The Premier: Do you think the Government should itself engage directly in secondary industries?

Mr. McDONALD: No.

The Premier: Then it is very difficult to get anyone else to do so.

Mr. McDONALD: If the conditions are reasonable—and we might make them so—we should be able to get people to come here and undertake the establishment of secondary industries. The Government has its own activities and responsibilities, but it will have ten times more worry if it assumes responsibilities that should be carried by other people. The Government would be well advised to restrict its attention to its own worries and leave other people to bear the loss, where there is not success, and to reap the profit where industry succeeds. The people have not come. If they were streaming hither—

Hon. C. G. Latham: Some have come and gone.

Mr. McDONALD: That is worse still. If they were streaming here, I should be dumb on this subject; but they have not come. Now, the Minister may have done all he possibly can; but I would like to see whether there cannot be some other ideas. We cannot give it up on the present basis.

The Minister for Labour: The Minister is still doing those things, and he has a committee of leading businessmen operating with him.

Mr. McDONALD: Well, get a few more. They have not done much so far. I regret to say that this is where the private member seems to be of very little use. The Government does not tell him anything. Private members learn nothing. They ought to be told more. If we were told more, we might be able to help more. In ordinary times that state of things does not matter much, I suppose; but when the British Empire is fighting for its existence, when we need every efficiency and every exertion that we can bring forward, then if we are told more we may be able to do more. I have no desire to go beyond that position. My sermon, or my text, is in short this: all the world is at the crossroads today, and we with the rest of the world; and whether we like it or not, we have to make our turning. Are we using every precaution to ensure that we are taking the right turning? Do we know where we want to go? And have we found out the best way to get there? I think private members could do more if the Government liked to call on them according to their abilities, great or small—and I place myself in the latter category. Ministers might then get some help that would surprise them, that would make their position easier, and improve the prospects of the State.

MR. NEEDHAM (Perth) [5.33]: I desire in the first place to compliment the member for Pilbara (Mr. W. Hegney) on the excellent speech he delivered when moving the Address-in-reply to the Speech of His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor. It certainly was a fine effort. I have listened with interest to the able speeches of the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the National Party. With some of the sentiments expressed by those two hon. gentlemen I am in accord. An important paragraph in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech says that the British Empire is facing the grav-

est crisis in its history. That, unfortunately, is true; and we must all realise the danger which the Empire is facing. By now we have come to realise the extraordinary power of the enemy confronting the British Empire. We have realised the effective force of his mechanised army. There are very few, if any, amongst us who nine months ago would have contemplated that within that period of nine months Hitler would have conquered Europe; but, unfortunately, he has practically done so. His mechanised army is one of the wonders of the world. However, he has other armies which to my mind are even more effective. There is for instance the army of treachery well in advance, and well dug in ahead, of his mechanised forces. In this struggle which involves us all, we must realise that the road may be a long one and the grade steep. However, I venture to predict that we shall make the grade.

The Speech also mentions the fact that the Government is doing everything possible, in co-operation with the Commonwealth, to prosecute the war to a victorious conclusion. There is no doubt whatever about the perfect truth of that statement. I believe that every member of this Chamber realises that is so. As the Leader of the National Party has said, while we are putting forth every effort to ensure a victorious end of the struggle, we must not forget the aftermath of war. We must not forget to prepare for the post-war conditions, in order to ensure that the liberties for which we are fighting and of which we are so proud, and the standard of living we have established in this Australian Commonwealth, are not endangered later. I hold the impression that this Government is not forgetful of the necessity to prepare for the aftermath, and for the repercussions which must come as the result of the clash of armies and the expenditure of colossal sums of money in the carrying-on of the conflict. Despite the criticism of the member for West Perth, I venture to affirm that Ministers are contemplating some policy to relieve the shock of post-war conditions. I cannot imagine that they are, or would be, indifferent to the lessons that were taught us during the depression years from 1930 to 1935. Surely this country, in common with other countries of the British Commonwealth of Nations, was taught a lesson then, and surely it is pre-

pared to meet the repercussions from the huge spending of public moneys during the war. I believe that the long-range policy which the member for West Perth suggests, is already provided for in the policy of the Labour movement and the Labour Government. We can only prepare for that position, however, by a change in our present financial system.

I wish to say a few words on what the Western Australian Labour Party has done and is doing in connection with the present war. In this morning's newspaper I read that a member of another place had made an attack on the trade unions. I have not the particulars of the hon. member's speech, but an attack on the trade unions of Western Australia is not needed. They have taken, and are taking, a highly effective part in the prosecution of the war. Indeed, every industrial Labour leader and every political Labour leader in the Commonwealth has voiced the ideal and the determination of Labour to assist in every way possible. The Labour movement has not been backward in proving its sincerity in that regard. May I mention that it has been the policy of the industrial Labour movement for many years to have disputes committees, which are, and have been, a strong factor in preventing disputes and preserving industrial peace. Those committees have not met simply to settle industrial disputes after they have begun, but also by their activities to prevent industrial disputes from arising; and in this they have been successful. They are largely to be credited with the fact that industrial peace has been preserved in Western Australia for many years past. A few weeks ago the State Executive of the State Labour Party received an invitation from the Employers' Federation to meet that body in conference with a view to establishing what might be called an industrial panel. The establishment of a joint committee would have for its purpose the proper conduct of industry during the pendency of the war. That invitation was accepted by the Western Australian Labour Party, and the first conference was held in the offices of the Employers' Federation, the president of that federation, Mr. R. O. Law, being in the chair. Another conference was held, and that conference met in no less a place than the Trades Hall. Over that conference I had the honour to preside. The result of these negotiations has been the appointment of

a joint committee representative of employers and of employees—representatives of the Employers' Federation on the one hand and representatives of the trade union movement on the other. The committee has held meetings alternately in the offices of the Employers' Federation and in the Trades Hall. The trades union movement in this State is helping in every possible way and an important feature of the activities of the movement towards the war effort is the response made to the appeal for subscriptions to the free-of-interest war loan and the purchase of war saving certificates. In the course of five or six weeks the trades union movement in this State has contributed a sum approximating £15,330. Some of that money has been provided as a free gift to the Commonwealth, but about 75 per cent. of it has been contributed to the free-of-interest loan. Some portion of it has been devoted to loans carrying interest and the remainder has been invested in war saving certificates and ambulances. No invidious distinction can be drawn between the unions. We know that an hon. member in another place has often spoken of trade unions as disloyal and unpatriotic, and in that respect he has referred more than once to the Fremantle Lumpers' Union. That body has subscribed no less a sum than £1,500 to the free-of-interest loan. No man in this State, either in public or private life, can say other than that the Labour movement here is doing all it can to assist in the titanic struggle in which the nation is engaged. The efforts to which I have referred are entirely apart from what individual members of the unions have themselves done. Quite a number, as we know, have volunteered for active service. A big percentage of unionists are in camp or waiting to be called up and others are actually overseas.

There is a reference in the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech to the manufacture of munitions, and it is stated that possibly from now on we may get a greater share of this work than before. I hope that will be so and that a greater proportion of war expenditure will take place in this State than has been the experience in the past. Viewing what the Commonwealth has spent on war efforts alone, we find that the greater proportion of that expenditure has been in two cities of the Eastern States. In Western Australia we have the men, the skill, and in many instances the equipment

as well. We may not have the particular equipment needed for the manufacture of certain munitions, but the Commonwealth should assist us to procure it. In this way it would be possible for us to keep our men in employment and so help not only those who have gone overseas but our own land as well. Mention is also made in the Speech that in spite of the large numbers that have enlisted there are still some 6,000 men dependent on the State for relief work or sustenance, and also that the State Governments should give preference to defence works. While that is so, I am glad to know that the relief workers will not suffer and that they will be kept employed as usual. Every effort should be made to see that as many men as possible are employed in this State on defence work and that they should also be employed on full time. I agree with the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald) that a sustenance man, when not actually working, should receive more than the 7s. a week allowance. Members of the Government do realise that that amount is not sufficient for men who are out of employment. Unfortunately, however, the Government has had to make its advances to these people according to the tune called by the Loan Council. Realising the immense sums of money that are being spent at the present time on war efforts, all of which is going towards the destruction of human life, surely from such a welter of expenditure something could be spared for the purpose of increasing the sustenance allowance of men during their standing-down period. In my opinion, if the Government of this State and the representatives of the Governments of the other States were to take a bold stand, the sustenance rates would be increased. The member for West Perth stressed the necessity for a long-range policy, but there was nothing of a practical nature in what he said; he entirely avoided the financial aspect. I could not help being struck, however, by the difference between him together with the party he has the honour of leading in this House, and that of the party to which the member for Greenough (Mr. Patrick) belongs, a party that has the confidence of the primary producers. That party at its recent conference did advocate something in the way of long-range policy; it came into line with the Labour movement's policy. That party said it was time that the nation

got control of its own finances. That was the claim of the primary producers, those who are responsible for returning to this House the members now sitting on the Opposition benches. The Country Party has given considerable thought to the policy which Labour has advocated for many years, but which unfortunately it has never had the opportunity to put completely into operation. Only once, during a brief period of five years, was Labour in the position of putting its financial policy into operation, and that was during the years 1910-1916 when it established the Commonwealth Bank—the people's bank, an institution which was the forerunner of Labour's policy of finance. It is true that a Labour Government was also in power in the Commonwealth from 1929 to 1931 but that Government was only in office, not in power. It was opposed by the anti-Labour majority in the Senate led by George Foster Pearce. I say advisedly now that if there is an appeal to the people and Labour comes into power, it will again put into operation its financial policy. It will be the long-range policy the member for West Perth preaches about and in connection with which he has not submitted anything in practical form. I would refer him to the conference recently held by the primary producers, which realised the necessity for the alteration of the monetary system. I only hope that the struggle in which we are now engaged will not be as long as we now fear it may be. We must, however, do all we can to bring it to a successful and victorious conclusion.

MR. BERRY (Irwin-Moore) [5.58]: I was particularly interested in that part of the Lieut.-Governor's Speech which referred to the manufacture of munitions. I do not think that ever in our history or in the history of the British Empire have we had to face a position such as that with which we are confronted to-day. Eleven months ago, when I was first elected to this House, I did not expect nor was it possible for anyone to forecast, that the German nation would sweep over the European world as it has done. It did not occur to me that in a matter of a few weeks' action a nation like Germany would destroy countries such as Norway, Denmark, Belgium, Holland and France. Two years before the war began I lived among German people in a German colony and I assure the House that a pecu-

liarity of those people was their nervous restless energy and that everything they did was done in ruthlessly efficient and military manner. Everything was disciplined and I assure the House that the discipline I actually saw was such that I should not care to live under it. This question of munitions is of such paramount importance that a duty devolves on every man in the country to do his share morally, physically and financially to see that our sons are sent overseas equipped in such a manner that they will come back to us. Australia's greatest heritage is her sons. There is not much more to be said on this matter except that I trust the Government will realise that the efficiency of the enemy is such that we must do more than match it; we must surpass it. There is no doubt in my mind that the English-speaking people can do that. There is such a thing as the Englishman's spirit and I am convinced from what I have seen of English-speaking people the world over that Hitler cannot beat us because we do not know when we are beaten. That is a characteristic of which we might well be proud.

Passing from the subject of munitions, I wish to draw attention to the wonderful effort made in this State and in Australia as a whole in subscribing funds to prosecute the war. I recently attended a war rally in the country. To my amazement I found that although members of the farming community were not in a position to give money, some of them submitted crates of fowls. That is a very hard pill for Hitler to swallow, and it demonstrates the spirit of the English-speaking people to which I have referred. I thought that was a wonderful effort. At the same time I cannot help feeling that with all these rallies and patriotic efforts we are making, we may lose sight of what might be called the refugees of our own country. There are institutions in this land that are suffering, I am told, because of the enthusiasm that is being displayed for patriotic funds. I trust nothing will be done to prejudice the interests of the many poor unfortunate folk who are in need of assistance here.

In his able speech, the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald) said he hoped that more secondary industries would be established in this State. I think that has the full agreement of every member of the House. My considered opinion is that secondary industries will come to Western

Australia when, and only when, the producers of Western Australia are producing at a profit. When that state of affairs exists, there will be no doubt about the establishing of secondary industries and the growth of population. There is an old adage which says that success brings success, and if the primary producers of Australia meet with success, I am convinced that the people of other countries, people of a type we wish to have, will come to the Commonwealth. The fact has been demonstrated in several other countries and especially in the Far East where I lived for some years, that when the primary producer enjoys prosperity, there is immense prosperity in the country as a whole. I would suggest that perhaps we have not yet formulated a four-square policy for the men on the land. We all admit that they are perhaps one of the hardest worked sections without pay in the community, but the Federal Government so far has not come forward with any definite plan to alleviate the distress that they suffer. We were told to grow more wheat; then we were told to grow less wheat. We have actually been told to cut our wheat for hay, presumably to feed tractors! The time has come when we must, as a war effort, see that the primary producer has a fair crack of the whip, because I consider that the primary producer, in the order of things existing to-day, is no less a soldier than the member of the Army Service Corps who delivers the finished article to the men in the line. When that fact is realised and that man catered for we shall find we have gone a long way towards making Australia a great nation. I am convinced that no stone should be left unturned to put the primary producer fairly and squarely on the economic map. I have all the sympathy in the world for the man who secures an increase in the basic wage. If I had my way and was a fabulously wealthy man I would give every individual in Australia all the money I could to enable him to enjoy a decent standard of living. As the member for Perth (Mr. Needham) pointed out, this could be done if we wanted to do it. Before the end of last session in December, 1939, a motion was introduced in this House by the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) urging that the resources of the Commonwealth Bank should be used for the purposes of defence and other things. I refer particularly to the defence aspect because that is the sub-

ject paramount in our minds now. The motion was passed as far as I can recollect without a dissentient voice, and it then passed out of the House apparently into the grave, because we have gone on in exactly the same way and seemingly will continue to do so. Our finances are becoming more and more muddled, so much so that perhaps our very war effort is being prejudiced through strict adherence to an economic system which is not only rotten but which many of us prophesied would lead to the tragedy we are facing to-day.

Hon. members probably saw a reference in the Press yesterday to the fact that power alcohol was being produced from molasses. That is a very important point because it has a bearing on the question of petrol restriction, restriction that none of us is going to dispute provided it is equitable. It is pleasing to note that in the Eastern States the question of power alcohol has been given consideration. Unfortunately the attention of scientists is to be directed mostly towards molasses. I trust that is not because of the influence of the Colonial Sugar Refining Co. Power alcohol can also be produced from barley and wheat. We have been told that the production of power alcohol from barley and wheat is more expensive than from molasses, but the fact remains that we have unsaleable stocks of wheat and some of that tremendous surplus could be converted into power alcohol, thereby saving the wheat from destruction by mice and weevils. Such an activity would be of advantage to the primary producers. Before the downfall of France, thousands of bushels of wheat were used for that particular purpose in that country, and a high power motor spirit was made. Probably the Minister for Industrial Development will tell us later that he has gone into this matter, and I hope he will stress to the fullest extent the importance of the subject. Years ago when I was in Singapore we went into this question of power alcohol and produced from Nipah palm a spirit that drove a motor car. I admit that we had to start on petrol, but the product of the Nipah palm definitely drove the car. The same result could be obtained from the use of wheat. As far back as 1871 this fact was recognised, but we have never bothered about it, be-

cause we have never had to do so. To-day, however, with war all around us, we have to explore every avenue and do the very best we can to ensure that we emerge on the right side of the fence. None of us will quarrel with necessary restrictions on the use of petrol, but if it is possible to alleviate the position as the result of investigations into the possibility of producing power alcohol from wheat, the Government should undertake those investigations and do the job thoroughly. I agree with the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald) that the Government should ask some of us to co-operate on committees appointed to inquire into problems of this kind. A little while ago my mind was in a turmoil over existing conditions, and I went around this State to see if I could do something to help. I found, however, that I could do nothing, that I was bumping my head against a brick wall. That is not right. They even told me when I went to the military that my "tummy" was too large. The fact remains that we all want to do something. People everywhere are crying out to be allowed to help. In their enthusiasm, the returned soldiers—and I pay them tribute for it—have almost got in the road, but they are at last being recognised, and the home defence units they have succeeded in forming will, I consider, prove a fine additional asset to the war contribution of Australia. If any funny little yellow Jap comes poking his nose here, he will be well and truly punched on that nose by some returned soldier. Returned soldiers are asking, in fact, demanding, that they should be armed and given equipment, and I think their request should be granted.

Reverting to the matter of power alcohol from wheat, I would point out that, apart altogether from the spirit that can be produced, there is a residue of 25 per cent. of the wheat which is a very valuable product. If the matter is closely examined, I do not think any further loose statements will be made about its being cheaper to produce power alcohol from molasses than from wheat.

Concerning the problems of farmers, a little while ago the price of super was raised by 30s. a ton. The reason for that increase was that the cost of production had risen.

Mr. BERRY: I was speaking about the enhanced cost to the farmer of superphosphate. It is only logical to assume that if the cost of production rises against the manufacturers, it must also rise against the primary producer who is growing crops. The Federal Government might well bring this matter under the notice of the Wool Purchasing Committee in England. It should be pointed out to that committee that it fixed the price of wool before any rise in the price of superphosphate occurred or before the price of other commodities went up. During war time as well as at other times, justice must be shown to every section of the community whether the primary producing section, the labouring section or any other. I shall be glad to know whether anything can be done in this direction. When the Imperial Government fixed the price of wool the Chairman of the committee remarked, in reply to a question, that he had not taken into consideration, when fixing the price, the cost of production. That was an astounding and stupid statement to make and indicated a good deal of ignorance on his part. If it was made clear to the Home authorities that costs were rising, probably they would be glad to pay a higher price for our wool. The same remarks practically apply to wheat. Every effort should be made to see that justice is meted out all round so that there may be no more abandonments of farming properties in Australia.

Unfortunately the season in this State has not been a good one, and already hundreds of people have come to the conclusion that it is impossible for them to carry on. Many of them have interviewed me on the subject. They say they do not want to carry on, that the struggle is too uneven, that they have been battling against inequalities for some years, and feel that they can no longer shoulder the burden. They would, therefore, rather leave their farms, and endeavour to find work in the city. It would be very unfortunate for the State if that occurred. Apparently 6,000 men are already unemployed, and we do not want the number increased. Perhaps it would be more in the interests of Western Australia, and the Commonwealth, if we could devise a scheme whereby men on the land, who through adverse circumstances were practically being forced off it, were given an adequate sum of money on which to live so that their

assets might be preserved. Undoubtedly the properties will be an asset some day. Farm lands are the greatest assets we have, and there could be no secondary industries without them. If we can keep these people on the land by giving them only the equivalent of the dole they would probably get if they came to the city, that would be of advantage to the country as well as to them. For that consideration the farmers concerned would keep down the vermin on the properties, keep suckers down, and maintain the assets. When the period of rehabilitation arrives and the lot of the primary producer is less unhappy than it is today, those people will be able to take up their tools of work and once more become a definite asset to the State. I assume that in conjunction with the munitions drive many of the 6,000 unemployed will be absorbed. I hope that in the course of that drive every business and firm capable of making something to help win the war will be brought into the scheme, just as was done in England during the last war. I am confident that the Government will have that in mind.

No reference was made in the Speech to education. To this the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald) drew attention. He suggested that we should have some new form of education, though I confess I did not understand to what he was referring. Education is of paramount importance to the children who are growing up in the State, war or no war. I hope it will not be necessary in any way to economise so that the children will be handicapped through lack of adequate educational facilities. Technical education under the defence scheme will receive a considerable impetus in this State. That is a fine thing. I hope that in no circumstances will the education of children in the country be any less efficient than it has been in the past. Up to date country children have not had all the opportunities for education to which they are entitled. The Federal Government could well make an annual grant to assist the State in rendering this necessary service, the value of which I am sure it recognises. It is a pity the Education Department is not able to control its own Vote. When one visits the department to get some concession for the country one learns that whilst the officials and probably the Minister are in favour of certain things being done, some other department is able to veto them. In one

instance recently I reached the stage when I did not know where to go or how to set about doing what I wished to do. War or no war we should carry on education progressively, as I am sure the Government will do if possible. The same remarks apply to the dental treatment of children. More dental vans are necessary. Another request from the country is for wire doors and windows so that flies may be kept out of the schoolrooms during the summer. That request should be kept well to the fore.

Another thing about the Speech that struck me was its conciseness and brevity. I take that as an intimation that members also are expected to be concise and brief in their remarks. At a time like this we can do no more than assure the Government of our willingness to do all in our power to help win the war, which is the main objective of the moment. Earlier in my speech I paid a tribute to the returned soldiers, as well as to the people for the wonderful manner in which they had responded to the war effort. I should now like to pay a tribute to the British Navy. Not only has the British Navy shown that it is a match for the Germans in efficiency, but it has gone far beyond that. The operations at Dunkerque make one proud to belong to the British Commonwealth of Nations. It showed that the Germans are going to find it extremely difficult to cross the Channel. We are also very proud of H.M.A.S. "Sydney" and its action in the Mediterranean a few days ago. These two achievements are a lesson to us and show that we have to get more efficiency into our fighting forces on land to make them comparable with the efficiency of our forces at sea. Our flying men, too, have done work that makes us intensely proud of them.

An increasing number of people is coming to this State from the Near East. By every vessel dozens of visitors are reaching these shores. I wish to pay a tribute to the Tourist Department. I know many of the visitors and those with whom I have come into contact have told me that their treatment in Western Australia has been excellent. Those who have been here a few months have informed me they are getting the same feeling towards Western Australia that I had when I first arrived. They like

the State. I assure the Government that I personally will do all I can to help in any direction whatsoever.

MR. TRIAT (Mt. Magnet) [7.42]: I congratulate the member for Pilbara (Mr. W. Hegney) on his address last week. Knowing him as I do I was not surprised at the manner in which he handled his subject. There is no doubt the Speech of the Lieut.-Governor contains very little that one can deal with. In a time of war that is perhaps excusable. Everyone seems to be in a fog. I am in a fog myself. The decisions and announced intentions of the Commonwealth Government are causing people to become more befogged than they were in the past. Let me refer to the petrol rationing proposals. No one seems to know what is going to be done. We are told that the rationing is to consist of sufficient petrol to take a vehicle 40 miles in a week. In my electorate it is common for people to have to travel long distances. At Sandstone for instance, there is only one train a week and residents in the district come long distances to meet the train and obtain their supplies. People are forced to get their supplies at the railhead, and many of them travel from 80 to 120 miles with that object in view. Those who come long distances sometimes subscribe for the cost of a motor truck. There is one place 86 miles away from the railhead where 40 people are living. If the proposals are carried into effect and only sufficient petrol is available to take a car 40 miles in a week, those persons will be unable to secure their supplies. At another place 120 miles away from the railhead there are 200 residents all of whom will be greatly inconvenienced. Everything in the district has been done by motor transport, and those people will be unable to exist if they are restricted to enough petrol to carry them 40 miles per week. It is all very well to say that motorists can instal a gas producer plant on the vehicles, but such devices cost money. Many of the people to whom I have referred are prospectors, and they could not afford £60 or £70 for the purchase of a gas producer. If petrol is rationed as is proposed, the State Government will have to stand behind many of the taxpayers to enable them to purchase gas producers. In my opinion it is not beyond the capacity of the authorities at the Midland Junction Workshops or at some other foundry in

Western Australia, to turn out a gas producer plant at a cost less than £60 or £70. The patent rights may be held by some concern, but I do not know that that covers every form of gas producer. I believe patent rights are held by people who make their profits on the sales.

Hon. C. G. Latham: At any rate, the plant could be improved.

Mr. TRIAT: Yes, and I believe the Government could encourage investigations along those lines and perhaps have a gas producer put on the market at a cost of £30. Possibly terms could be arranged so that a farmer who had not much money available, could secure the plant to enable him to work his property. Such a move would be of importance and in the interests of the State. In the meantime the people in the outer areas are confronted with the prospect of serious difficulty in regard to petrol supplies. They have to travel over long distances to the rail head in order to secure their requirements. In addition to the other centres I have mentioned, there is Field's Find and again Payne's Find, which is 98 miles from the rail-head. The people there depend on motor traction for supplies. There are 70 people at Field's Find, including 25 who are married. They secure their supplies from Wubin, but I admit that in that instance a gas producer is available, so that these people are not so seriously affected. Station properties in my electorate are in many instances situated 110 miles from the rail-head and that necessitates a journey every two weeks or so to secure supplies. Further than that, motor bicycles are used to travel over the station properties. There is no feed available in the country for stock, so that if horses were to be used for that work, the necessity would arise to provide feed for the animals. In those circumstances, obviously the use of motor bicycles is much the cheaper proposition. I trust the Premier will make representations to the Commonwealth Government when the next conference is held, so that special consideration will be given to the fuel requirements of those residing in the outer parts of Western Australia. I regard the manufacture of gas producers by the Government as a good suggestion, and I hope the Government will investigate the possibilities. I heard the Leader of the Opposition or the Leader of the National Party disagree to the manufacture being undertaken by the State. I did not think

anyone would object to that course being followed. If no private individual is prepared to supply gas producers at a reasonable price, the Government should step in and supply the need. I trust the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the National Party will not dispute the right of the Government to assume that responsibility.

During the present period it is most regrettable to learn that many of our men are out of work and, according to the Lieut. Governor's Speech, 6,000 are dependent upon the Government for part-time employment. I believe that is quite correct. The member for Irwin-Moore (Mr. Berry) said that many of them would probably be absorbed in the manufacture of munitions, but I am given to understand that that is not likely. I have been told that very few unskilled men will be required for munition work. On the other hand, those employed will have to be skilled tradesmen, such as fitters, turners, and so on.

The Minister for Mines: They have to be highly skilled.

Mr. TRIAT: I understand that is so, particularly for the manufacture of fuse caps. The operation is most delicate; if the fuse cap is not made perfectly, the shell will not explode. One regrettable feature is that most of the lads who leave school today are not skilled in any trade. From time to time we hear discussions regarding our system of education. Whatever may be said for it, the fact remains that little opportunity is available for our youth to be trained in any skilled trade until after he has left school. In my opinion no boy should leave school until he has practically one skilled trade at his finger tips. Every boy who passes his junior examination should be able to claim to have at least a good grip of one such trade. He should be able to acquire a knowledge of a trade such as carpentry, fitting, turning, electrical engineering, and so on. What do we find regarding the Junior Examination to-day? The syllabus shows that 14 subjects are available for the student and if he passes in five subjects, he is able to secure his Junior certificate. That means that he can take English, history, geography and a language together with, say, drawing, and he is able to secure his Junior certificate, although he has not even a smattering of one skilled trade. That is quite all right from one standpoint. With the possession of his certificate the lad can

secure a position, but, in my opinion, the holding of a Junior Examination certificate should not entitle a lad to any consideration beyond that accorded a boy who has passed out of the sixth standard. It would be far better if the Junior Examination included a compulsory subject that would give the lad some knowledge of a skilled trade that, with a little technical education after leaving school, would enable him to attain a proficiency sufficient to secure for him a place in industry. I suggest that the authorities of the Education Department should consider the advisability of including some such compulsory subject in the curriculum so that a lad after leaving school would be able to enter some useful occupation if required. Everyone should desire to possess some such qualification. I feel sure that nearly every member of this House would have been glad if, when he left school, he had had some knowledge of a skilled trade. I know that many of them went into public life and endeavoured to make good promptly through the avenues available to them. However, the bugbear from which we suffer to-day is the lack of skilled tradesmen. We have been told that most of our skilled men are leaving Western Australia for the Eastern States where they can take part in the manufacture of munitions.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You are quite right. We must have vocational training here.

Mr. TRIAT: I trust that matter will be taken into consideration by the authorities. Something along those lines is essential in order that our young people may be in a better position. I trust, and believe, the problem will be tackled. From our reading, we know perfectly well that every youth who leaves school in Germany has a trade at his finger tips. Moreover, service in the Army is compulsory and the youth continues further with his trade. The result is that most foreigners who arrive here are not unskilled workers. I am not speaking of Italians but of Germans, Danes, Swedes, and so on. The foreigners who are finding positions on the mines are all skilled. They are fitters, turners, riggers, electricians and so on. They are qualified men, and when they come to Australia they are able to secure the good jobs that are offering, jobs that require skill and expert knowledge. The unfortunate part of it is that we find the Australians doing the pick and shovel

work under the direction of men more or less recently arrived from foreign countries. That is definitely traceable to the deficiencies of our system of education. Improvements can be effected in that direction, and I certainly hope steps will be taken along the lines I suggest. The question may be asked how it will be possible to secure such advantages to the boy in the back country. The suggestion is made that it would be impossible to provide such a lad with tuition in the ordinary skilled trades. I do not hold that opinion, because if his instructor had previously had the benefit of education along the lines I have indicated, he would be able to impart his knowledge to the pupils under his guidance in the back country, and thus give them at least some knowledge of a trade. I certainly trust that the Government will go into that matter and endeavour to effect some reforms. It cannot be doubted that we will require skilled men in the future. I regard the fact that we have 6,000 men still dependent on the Government for part-time employment as most regrettable. I recollect that when Parliament adjourned last year there were about that number on part-time work.

Mr. Thorn: They depended on the Government for employment.

Mr. TRIAT: That is so, and there may be some truth in the remark made by a member on the Opposition side of the House to the effect that some of those people do not desire to leave the employment they now enjoy. That may be quite correct, but nevertheless the fact that so many men are even now dependent upon the State for employment is indeed regrettable. With the resources at its disposal, the Government has not sufficient means enabling it to place those men in a form of employment that will recoup the State for the money expended. Notwithstanding that fact, the State essentially must find work for the unemployed. How can it be done? I am of the opinion that we should receive assistance from the Commonwealth Government to enable the State to make effective use of the unemployed. I feel that the Commonwealth Government is so far removed from Western Australia that it has little thought for our people here. If we could secure some financial assistance, little difficulty would be experienced in finding work for the 6,000 men, and that would be an advantage to the State in general.

Take the position regarding the Yampi Sound iron ore deposits. There we have over 97,000,000 tons of iron ore above sea level that can be mined without the necessity to sink a shaft. It is so situated that ships can be brought alongside in 30 feet of water right up against the ore deposit itself. Germany has lost thousands of lives in an endeavour to secure the right to operate the same class of iron ore deposit that we have lying idle at Yampi Sound. In Western Australia, apparently, we do not want to do anything with it, and so it can lie idle year after year. Western Australia does not produce a single ounce of pig iron in a year. What is wrong with the country? Why cannot we produce pig iron seeing that we have the best class of iron ore that can be obtained in any part of the world. I have put that question to others, and I have been told that the explanation is that we have no furnaces. Great heavens! Other countries have been in that position but they have secured furnaces and are now smelting iron ore. Why cannot we do that? Why cannot we convert our iron ore into pig iron and then acquire still further furnaces and convert the pig iron into steel? The task is accomplished in other parts of the world. In the Eastern States pig iron is being manufactured, and I heard the Premier state that a million tons had been exported to England from Broken Hill. Yet we in Western Australia have upwards of 97,000,000 tons of iron ore lying idle, and no attempt is made to use it! The Japanese would work the deposits if allowed to do so, and we can thank God now that they were not permitted to operate there. The fact remains that 97,000,000 tons of iron ore are available in the North, and the deposit should be worked. We should be turning out a million tons or so of pig iron with the right to export the product overseas or to make use of it in our own country for the manufacture of munitions, especially as we are told a commencement is to be made locally with that industry.

I have been informed that it is possible to smelt iron ore with the use of charcoal. Thousands of growing trees are destroyed annually in Western Australia, and we could make use of the charcoal that is now going to waste. Why cannot we carry out experiments with that charcoal, if Collie coal is not available for that purpose? That task ought to be undertaken; and it will be, if

we have but the will so to do. Then again in Western Australia we have the greatest alunite deposits known in the Commonwealth. We have over 300 acres of alunite ore situated within seven miles of a railway line. That deposit contains over 13,000,000 tons of ore that will yield 50 per cent. aluminium. The deposit extends to a depth of 20 feet, and I have been told by a qualified chemist that it contains sufficient potash to pay for the cost of the excavation of the whole of the alunite. I understand that potash has to be imported into Western Australia.

Hon. C. G. Latham: And it is extremely difficult to secure at present.

Mr. TRIAT: And here we have in Western Australia that extensive valuable deposit of alunite and are willing to allow it to lie idle, awaiting exploitation. I do not know whether the country there is held. If it is, it is in the possession of people who have no possible chance of securing the aluminium from the deposit. I am aware that the country was held some time ago, but I do not know what the position is now. I know it is lying idle, and, if held, is in the possession of people who cannot work the deposit. If we could work the alunite deposit and produce aluminium, we would have an asset of extreme value to the country. We would have a commodity at our disposal that is essential to our progress, and we could certainly absorb a proportion of the 6,000 men who are now dependent on the Government for employment. If we could carry the development to the stage I have indicated, we could go one step further and undertake the manufacture of aeroplanes.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That would provide employment for others.

Mr. TRIAT: That is so.

The Minister for Labour: At the present time 30 tons of the ore is being tested at the University.

Mr. TRIAT: I know the University authorities are testing the ore, but the important point is to know who owns the ore. Once the information gains currency that the alunite ore is being tested, we will find people rushing the leases, although they will not be able to work the deposit. I have been informed that it will take at least £500,000 to accomplish that end. I do not know that even the State Government could handle the proposition, and that Government has every right to expect financial as-

sistance from the Commonwealth to enable the deposit to be opened up. I think the Commonwealth Government in duty bound would have to furnish that assistance.

The Minister for Labour: If the University test proves successful, no difficulty will be experienced in securing the necessary capital.

Mr. TRIAT: I hope that is correct. If that should prove to be the position, I trust that a fair proportion of the 6,000 men who are now dependent on the Government for employment will be absorbed in the undertaking. We may find the establishment of an industry that will turn out aluminium and lead to the manufacture of aeroplanes. So far the manufacture of munitions in Western Australia has been limited to a degree. A start is being made. I have had discussions with people connected with the matter and am informed that much difficulty is being experienced in obtaining finance. The matter is still in the experimental stage. We have now been at war nine months, and after nine months of war have not produced a bow and arrow in Western Australia. I say without fear of contradiction that we have not produced sufficient munitions in Western Australia to shoot a flock of birds. No blame for that is attachable to our Government, because the responsibility for the defence of Australia rests upon the Commonwealth Government. I sincerely trust the Premier will place the Bill for civil defence first on the Notice Paper, and not fifth. All our people are anxious to do something towards the war effort. Men too old to enlist have said they are quite prepared to do what they can. So is everybody in Australia, but what is the use of trying to do something when the Commonwealth Government, which controls defence, is not prepared to move in the matter as far as this State is concerned? I have been told there is no fear of an invasion of this country; but tonight's paper shows there is grave danger of invasion. Japan has been talking in an exceedingly cheeky way for some time past, and according to to-night's paper the British Government has informed Japan that unless it releases the British subjects who have been arrested there, drastic action will be taken. When nations talk in that way, it means but one thing—war. Japan is not too far away from Australia to attempt an invasion, and her expressed intention for the past five or six years has been to occupy our

country. I do not say that of my own knowledge, but from what I have read. Quite recently I have read a work by a Japanese naval commander who is an authority on warfare. With the permission of the House, I shall quote some short extracts from his book. The writer is Lt.-Commander Tota Ishimaru and his book was published in 1936. The title is "Japan must fight Britain." He asserts that the Japanese could easily defeat the British Navy.

The Minister for Mines: Japan would have a tough job in front of her to do that.

Mr. TRIAT: But that is Japan's intention.

Mr. Cross: Has Japan got Italian naval commanders?

Mr. TRIAT: I cannot say, but whether or not Japan has competent or incompetent commanders makes little difference. The Commonwealth Government should see that we are amply protected. We were never less prepared for an invasion than we are at present.

Member: Read the extract.

Mr. TRIAT: At page 240 the following appears:—

With the outbreak of war Japan would, we may suppose, descend on Hong Kong and Singapore like a thunderbolt and capture them. But there are other British possessions within range of attack by the Japanese fleet; British Borneo and Australia, for instance, would be dealt with.

The writer proceeds to show how Japan would capture those possessions, but I shall not read what he says about that. At page 242 he continues—

What ships, then, have the Australians got?

The writer deals with the vessels we had at that particular time, and continues—

If only they had taken Admiral Henderson's advice and built those 52! But that is all past history, and now they have but two 10,000-ton cruisers, two light cruisers, six destroyers and two submarines. England, with her present shortage of light cruisers, cannot send more than four, with, perhaps, from 12 to 18 destroyers. And the more she depletes her battle fleet, the more she jeopardises her chances of success in the decisive action in the South China Sea. Further, 34 or 35 ships at least would be required adequately to defend both the east and west coasts of Australia.

Mr. Doney: What is the date of the publication of the book?

Mr. TRIAT: 1936, four years ago.

Mr. Doney: Before the China war.

Mr. TRIAT: It is written before Britain had her hands so full.

The Minister for Mines: And before Japan had heard of the "Sydney."

Mr. TRIAT: That is so. I have read what is in the mind of Japan. I do not say that Japan can achieve that objective; what I am trying to point out is the apathy of those in authority. Apparently, the Commonwealth Government is not taking any notice and has not given us even provisional protection. As I said, this State has done nothing, while the Commonwealth Government has done very little. That is what I am trying to stress. I do not for a moment say that Japan can defeat us, but she should not be treated as lightly as we treated the Germans, who recently defeated a nation which thought it could hold Germany at bay for 12 months. At page 278, Commander Ishimaru states—

If Japan should win, what then? In a word, the collapse of the British Empire. Let us take India first. If England went to war with Japan, she would try her time-worn trick of promising the Indians independence if they sided with her. But now they have learned far too much to be taken in. They would ignore her offer and seize the opportunity to take for themselves the independence they so greatly desire. If England were defeated, India would break away from her, nothing is more certain. England would then lose her vital treasure house. Next, England would lose her markets in China, which have figured so largely in her fortunes, she may be sure of that. She would have to cede Hong Kong to Japan, and that would undermine the very foundations of her China trade. But more serious than all else, Australia and New Zealand would pass into Japanese hands.

That is a quotation from a work written by a Japanese, a man in authority, who says that his country is prepared to invade Australia should the opportunity present itself.

Mr. Thorn: He likes himself a lot.

Mr. TRIAT: Although the Japanese are a cheeky race, they are foemen worthy of consideration who will not be defeated by merely blowing off gas. It is a wrong policy for a country at war not to prepare itself for the worst, while hoping for the best. We have collected a few pounds to assist patriotic funds—a fine effort. We have collected some money to put in the Commonwealth coffers to prosecute the war; that must be done. But what have we done to build up the internal defence of Australia, or to manufacture munitions of war? What have we done to produce a gun or a

rifle for the purpose of destroying the enemy? We have done nothing at all in that way in Western Australia.

Member: But munitions are being manufactured in the Eastern States.

Mr. TRIAT: Very little, from what I can gather. I was at Sandstone a fortnight ago. Some 40 people there had formed a rifle club and among their number were some keen rifle shots. However, they received instructions through the police that every round of ammunition had to be seized and delivered to the Commonwealth for defence purposes. Most of that ammunition was made in 1926 and should be discarded as far as war purposes are concerned, as it would be of no use. The members were permitted to use eight rounds for the final cup and then 147 rounds were sent to Perth. That is wrong. The ammunition might be of use up to 500 or 600 yards, but not further. As the distance increases the velocity decreases, because the cordite, or whatever it may be called, has lost some of its virtue. The Commonwealth Government must be very short of ammunition to fight the enemy should he arrive. Everyone knows that 1,000,000 rounds of ammunition do not go far in war time.

Mr. Seward: It is better to have the ammunition under one control than scattered all over the country.

Mr. TRIAT: That may be so, I am not skilled in war matters. But why confiscate 147 rounds of ammunition from a place like Sandstone, when the modern machine gun fires 1,200 rounds a minute? According to what is published in the paper to-night, that is twice as many rounds as the old-type of machine gun fired. At the rate of 1,200 round a minute, it would not take long to use the few rounds of ammunition that we could manufacture in Australia. There is not much work entailed in making a cartridge. I have seen kangaroo hunters refilling cartridges. They put in the cordite and close the cartridge again.

Member: How do they put the cap on?

Mr. TRIAT: It is done quite easily. The cap is put in position with a small instrument. Kangaroo hunters use the cartridge shells over and over again until the shell bursts, when of course it is no longer used and is thrown away. The matters upon which I have touched are essential to the

welfare and defence of Australia. We have an abundance of iron ore which can be manufactured into pig iron and steel which, in turn, can be made into munitions at the Midland Junction Workshops. If locomotives can be built at those shops, surely armoured tanks could be made also. There is merely a difference in the method of traction; the armoured car would have caterpillar wheels. We have skilled tradesmen capable of doing the work, but we must have the iron and steel. For that reason, we should at once proceed to develop the Yampi iron deposits. We have an ample supply of aluminium also. I am glad to learn that experts at the University are making tests of our alunite; if these prove successful I hope the Government will take immediate steps to work our deposits of this material. I hope that within the next nine months, at all events, Western Australia will be able to undertake its share in the manufacture of munitions for the defence of the Commonwealth. The member for Irwin-Moore said that if our country were invaded our returned soldiers would meet the enemy and give him a crack. I have no doubt they would, but they must be adequately armed. It is no use serving them with the old type of rifle; they should be supplied with Bren and Tommy guns, which are capable of firing 600 or 700 rounds a minute. The time has gone by when soldiers should be asked to use rifles which, after firing five cartridges, necessitate the pressing of a bolt to ensure a further supply.

Member: Bren guns are now being made in the Eastern States.

Mr. TRIAT: Why make them only in the Eastern States? Why should Western Australia always be passed over in favour of the Eastern States? The time is long overdue when that attitude should no longer be adopted. The people of the Eastern States are well off; they have large secondary industries, they get all the cream, while we in the West get nothing. It is time the people of Western Australia woke up and demanded their rights. Western Australia is just as much a part of the Commonwealth as are New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland.

The Premier: The Director of Munitions is coming to Western Australia next week

and we will see him about the matter. He is coming with an open cheque book.

Mr. TRIAT: I hope the Premier will be able to persuade the Federal Treasurer to give us some money when the director arrives. I do not propose to delay the House much longer, but I honestly believe—and I am not joking when I say this—that we have been lacking in our duty to the country. I am not especially attacking the Labour Government, for I realise the Government cannot do anything without money. I do not blame it as much as I blame the Federal Government. I am a member of the Labour Party and am very proud of the fact. Nevertheless, I would not be beyond castigating my own people if I had reason to believe they were in the wrong. I have the courage of my convictions and am prepared to condemn anybody I believe to be at fault. I do not altogether blame the Government, but the people responsible for the manufacture of armaments, who are not giving us an opportunity to show our worth. I hope that the Premier's statement about the Chief Director of Munitions coming here with an open cheque book will be justified, but I am afraid that it will not be. The Chief Director of Munitions may come here, but unless pressure is brought to bear, there will be no cheque except for a very small amount.

The Premier: You are pessimistic.

Mr. TRIAT: Yes, I am, after nine months' experience of actual facts.

The Premier interjected.

Mr. TRIAT: I beg your pardon?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member will address the Chair. He is under no obligation to reply to interjections.

Mr. TRIAT: I do not intend to delay the House by discussing the matter further, but I feel keenly about it. I and all other members of this House were returned by the people on the understanding that something would be done for our constituents. True, we were not returned in time of war. Peaceful conditions prevailed when we were elected, but when war broke out, the people did not recall us, saying, "We would like you to stand for election because we think we have somebody better." They left everything in our hands. They said, in effect, that they could depend for protection, if war occurred, on the men they had returned to Parliament. They felt sure that

the security of the State would be safe in our hands, just as they felt that the security of the Commonwealth would be safe in the hands of the Federal Government. But I do not feel secure; not a bit. We have nothing with which to defend ourselves if we are invaded by the hordes of the North. We cannot count on the British Fleet to be here at the psychological moment. Before the vessels could arrive, serious damage could be done to our cities. I hope that adequate protection will be demanded from the Federal Government. I do not know what measures the Premier intends to introduce, but let us hope that he will suggest something vitally necessary for the defence of this State. Only the Federal Government has power to take military precautions, but let us do something here in the way of civil defence. Increased population is urgently needed in this State, but how this increased population can be secured is a difficult problem, especially when our numbers are being depleted by the departure of so many people. I trust that when we meet this time next year the State will be alive with secondary industries and particularly munition works, that we shall be manufacturing iron ore and steel plates, and making aeroplanes and armoured cars. We can do all that. We have the opportunity and the men, and all we need is the will. That is what we are waiting for. I trust that something will be done in the near future.

On motion by Mr. North, debate adjourned.

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying the personnel of sessional Committees appointed by that House.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 1), £2,500,000.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

House adjourned at 8.20 p.m.