

the bounteous season which we then had in the eastern districts. Unfortunately that labour was not forthcoming, and huge areas of self-sown crop simply went to waste—were not harvested at all. I know of cases where farmers had cut some of it in the hope of getting labour to stack it. That hay is still lying out in the paddocks, and has never been carted. The losses were very heavy. If some labour had been made available at the critical time last season, the recent fodder worries could have been largely got over, and our dairy production could have been increased; there was not sufficient fodder going into the dairying districts this year. I hope the Agricultural Department will watch the position very closely this year, because the crops are short whilst labour is offering some difficulties. Fortunately the labour position has been eased by prisoners of war being allotted to some farms, though not to all by any means. I repeat, the position will need very careful watching. However, I commend the position to the attention of the Government and hope that Ministers will keep closely in touch with it.

That, I think, covers the main subjects on which I wished to speak. I would like to stress again the importance of the Government's giving consideration to plans for improving the position generally in country districts in order not only to hold the position which we have now but also to build up a better feeling there and make it easier to deal with the repatriation of our soldiers when they come back from the war, which we hope will not last much longer now. But unless we do give serious thought to the organisation that we are going to set up for the purpose of bringing about the various reforms and improvements to which I have referred in the agricultural areas, I greatly fear that we shall not see as many ex-servicemen returning to the land as we hoped would do so, thus helping to lift our agricultural industry to a higher level of prosperity than we have known for some time past.

On motion by Mr. Leslie, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.48 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 8th August, 1944.

	PAGE
Auditor General's report, Section "B" 1943	97
Questions: Potash, as to production and cost	97
Third party insurance, as to licenses issued	98
Superphosphate, as to allocation for 1944-45	98
Orchard registration, as to fees and inspectors	98
Address-in-reply, fourth day	98

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

AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT.

Section "B," 1943.

The PRESIDENT: I have received from the Auditor General a copy of section "B" of his report on the Treasurer's statement of Public Accounts for the financial year ended the 30th June, 1943. It will be laid on the Table of the House.

QUESTIONS (4).

POTASH.

As to Production and Cost.

Hon. J. CORNELL (for Hon. H. Seddon) asked the Chief Secretary:

In reference to the Lake Campion alunite deposits—

(i) On what date was the production of potash commenced?

(ii) What amount has been produced to the end of June, 1944?

(iii) What is the daily production of potash now, and in what form?

(iv) What was the capital expenditure to end of June?

(v) What further capital expenditure is estimated to enable the estimated tonnage of potassium salts set out by the Minister in his memorandum to Parliament in 1942, when introducing the State (Western Australian) Alunite Industry Partnership Bill to be attained?

(vi) What is the cost per ton produced?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(i) 16/2/44.

(ii) 420 tons to end of June. July production—135 tons.

(iii) (a) About 5 tons. (b) Potassium salts.

(iv) The total expenditure to the end of June was £185,014, in which is included £14,000 for the purchase of the syndicate's

interests, £6,700 for stores on hand, £16,500 for housing, store and refrigerated butcher's shop, £10,600 for additional power plant for plant triplication and £6,300 for excavating equipment not provided for in the original estimates.

(v) Preliminary running of plant has indicated that modifications of certain units are necessary before the estimated tonnage can be obtained. Alterations to the most important unit are now practically completed and other improvements are in hand. The total estimated cost of these modifications is £10,000.

(vi) Approximately £37. When modifications are completed it is estimated production will be at the rate of 13 tons per day and the cost will be reduced to £14 per ton.

THIRD PARTY INSURANCE.

As to Licenses Issued.

Hon. A. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary:

How many motor licenses have been issued in compliance with Third Party policy as per schedule items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

The licensing authorities have been asked by the Department to supply the desired information. A reply will be given as soon as the figures are received.

SUPERPHOSPHATE.

As to Allocation for 1944-45.

Hon. G. B. WOOD asked the Chief Secretary:

(i) Has the Government any authentic information as to the allocation of superphosphate to Western Australia for the year 1944-45?

(ii) If Western Australia is not to receive the 55 per cent. increased allocation as stated by Mr. Buleock, will the Government use every endeavour to see that Western Australia is treated on the same basis as the rest of Australia?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(i) The matter has not been finalised yet.

(ii) There is no likelihood of the Government missing any opportunity of having Western Australia treated at least as well as the rest of Australia as it is fully conscious of the importance of superphosphate to this State.

ORCHARD REGISTRATION.

As to Fees and Inspectors.

Hon. G. B. WOOD asked the Chief Secretary:

(i) Is the Government aware that the orchard registration fees are inadequate to meet the costs of sufficient inspectors?

(ii) Will the Government make up the deficiency required from Consolidated Revenue?

(iii) When the orchard registration fee was reduced in 1941, did the Minister concerned undertake to supplement any deficiency from another fund?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(i) Fees collected are insufficient to meet the costs of present inspectorial staff.

(ii) A sum has been placed upon the Estimates for this purpose.

(iii) No.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fourth Day.

Debate resumed from the 3rd August.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [4.39]: Although no reference is made in the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech to the question of future soldier land settlement, I shall, in order to give some assistance to whoever is chosen to represent this State at the Premiers' Conference, confine myself mainly to that subject. If in doing so I appear somewhat tedious, I hope members will overlook that fault. It is not usually apparent. But I am very anxious to deal with this question in several phases, particularly as it has been considered by the R.S.L. of Australia. I will first endeavour to deal generally with three activities in this respect. One is the efforts of the R.S.L. in connection with the work and findings of the Rural Reconstruction Commission and the Commonwealth Government's reaction to the Commission's recommendations. As far back as 1941 the R.S.L. began to deal actively with the question of future soldier land settlement. In 1941 and 1942 two Federal congresses unanimously agreed that any future scheme should in all its phases, be a full Commonwealth responsibility—

Hon. C. B. Williams: That means, vote "Yes."

Hon. J. CORNELL:—such as is the Department of Repatriation and Pensions. The same congresses also resolved that the

maximum interest chargeable on any capital advanced should not exceed 2 per cent. These two conditions can be said to be the fundamental basis of the R.S.L. proposals in respect to future soldier land settlement schemes. The two congresses I refer to were the annual Federal congresses, but there were also two special conferences attended by one delegate from each State. They were held in February and June of 1943 to deal generally with the other essentials and the machinery of any proposed scheme.

During June, 1943, the Federal President and the delegates who attended the special Federal conferences gave evidence before the Rural Reconstruction Commission, which was appointed as far back as the 25th February, 1943, to inquire closely, amongst other things, into and report upon future soldier land settlement. Later the findings arrived at by the R.S.L. were drafted into a Bill that was sent to the Commission, which has seen fit to publish the Bill by way of an appendix to its report dealing with soldier settlement. A copy was also forwarded to the Prime Minister. That is roughly the initial part played by the R.S.L. of Australia in developing a future soldier land settlement scheme.

We will now turn to the Commission which, as I have already said, was specially appointed, amongst other things, to inquire into and report upon this subject. About a month ago this Commission presented its report, under the heading: "Settlement and Employment of Returned Men on the Land." The report covers 55 pages and deals not only with any future soldier settlement schemes, but reviews all phases of the 1914-1918 scheme. To date the report is not in general circulation, but I hope it soon will be. When it is available I commend it to members and trust that they will do as I have—carefully read the report in all its phases. In my long connection with this institution and with public life I have yet to read a report which has so accurately gone into any subject and made such commonsense recommendations. It is not only comprehensive but informative. I feel certain that the findings of the Commission will meet with the unqualified support of all sections of the community, with the probable exception, perhaps, of those who have an axe to grind. Chapters 3 and 4 of the report deal with the proposals submitted to the Commission in the findings of the R.S.L.

at the two special conferences. The Commission states in paragraph 168 of the report—

The Commission places on record its sincere appreciation of the action taken by the Returned Sailors, Soldiers and Airmen's Imperial League of Australia; not merely because of the time and expense which that body has devoted to the matter, but also because of its general attitude towards the investigation.

The paragraph further states that the R.S.L. made no attempt to gloss over the failures of the 1914-18 soldier settlement schemes but, on the contrary, was constructive rather than critical, and that its opinions in regard to past failures, and the necessity for future successes had been reinforced from all over the Commonwealth by the views of other citizens who were not returned soldiers. This unanimity, the Commission went on to say, had assisted it to draw up with confidence its analysis of the failures of the past and its deductions as to the principles which should guide soldier settlement schemes in the future.

I will revert now to the other two phases of the basic principles laid down by the R.S.L., namely, that any soldier settlement scheme should be the full responsibility of the Commonwealth Government and that the maximum rate of interest should not exceed 2 per cent. The Rural Reconstruction Commission has this to say on the first point in paragraph 182—

The Commission has given this suggestion a great deal of thought and has come to the conclusion that it is not practicable for the Commonwealth to take over all aspects unless the Commonwealth, by an alteration of the Constitution, is charged with the full responsibility of controlling land and land utilisation.

We know what that means. It puts land on the same basis as the Postal Department. In paragraphs 183 to 185 the Commission states that Commonwealth participation is inevitable, and the cost of implementing the scheme on a fair basis to prospective settlers is a financial burden beyond the resources of the States, and that the greatest part of of the financial responsibilities must be accepted by the Commonwealth.

In paragraph 187 the Commission outlined the principles of a Commonwealth and State agreement and indicated the essential principles that should be approved. On the question of interest rates the Commission goes some way in respect of the R.S.L. proposal of a 2 per cent. maximum inasmuch as

it suggests that there should be no interest charge for the first five years, that the charge should be 2 per cent. for the next five years, and thereafter the charge should be at the current rate, not exceeding 4 per cent. As to the question of land tenure, the R.S.L. suggested perpetual leasehold with subsequent right to convert to freehold. The Commission appears to favour the choice of tenure being left to the settler as it now stands in the several States. That is to say, if a returned soldier wants freehold, he may have it; if he wants leasehold, he may have it. The Commission appears to have agreed to the remaining suggestions put forward by the R.S.L. vide paragraph 174, which reads—

With regard to the land settlement scheme propounded in the Bill—

That refers to the Bill submitted by the R.S.L.—

there are many valuable suggestions with which the Commission is in agreement, and which have had support from other sections of the community, namely, the necessity for—

- (a) examining and determining the qualifications of applicants;
- (b) instruction and training of applicants;
- (c) special concessions in settlement terms to enable soldiers to succeed;
- (d) special financing arrangements for soldiers;
- (e) acquiring land for settlement purposes;
- (f) preparing land and improving it to a certain condition before allotment.

In paragraph 257, page 45, the Commission sets out its views regarding the division of financial responsibility as between the Commonwealth and the States. This is the particular part that deals with the land, and I will quote what the Commission says—

The Commonwealth to provide—

- (a) costs of pre-discharge training;
- (b) living allowances and transport of selected applicants undergoing specialised training courses;
- (c) amount of additional expenditure incurred by the States in arranging the specialised training courses after demobilization;
- (d) payments to subsidise wages of applicants undergoing training whilst in farm employment;
- (e) interest on capital funds for acquisition and preparation of lands for allotment;
- (f) agreed contributions to irrecoverable costs of acquisition and preparation of lands for allotment.
- (g) agreed contributions to irrecoverable costs of public works specifically associated with soldier settlement;

- (h) capital requirements and net administrative expenses of financing settlers;
- (i) administrative expenses of the Commonwealth Investigating Authority;
- (j) concessions of interest on loans to settlers;
- (k) subsequent writings down of capital sums advanced. It is possible that the Commonwealth Financing Authority will have further losses caused by the changes in price levels of commodities. This amount will depend on the future of markets, especially international markets.

That is what the Commission says the Commonwealth should do in the way of finance.

The States to provide—

- (l) administrative costs of farm employment and training scheme;
- (m) administrative costs of acquisition and preparation of land for allotment;
- (n) agreed contributions to irrecoverable costs of acquisition and preparation of lands for allotment;
- (o) agreed contributions to irrecoverable costs of public works specifically associated with soldier settlement;
- (p) capital requirements for public works less Commonwealth contributions.

So much for the R.S.L. and the Rural Reconstruction Commission. Now, as to the reaction to the Commission's recommendation, the Commonwealth has made an alteration. While it may be said that the R.S.L. and the Rural Reconstruction Commission have laid all their cards on the table and have submitted their proposals to be perused and digested by anyone who is interested, the Commonwealth's reaction to the Commission's recommendations has not been made available to the public. To ascertain the reaction of the Commonwealth, we have to rely upon newspaper reports. On the 17th July, "The West Australian" reported the Prime Minister to the effect that Cabinet had not accepted all the Commission's proposals and that the soldier settlement scheme was to be carried out by the States as principals with certain Commonwealth aid. No mention of the extent of the Commonwealth aid is made. According to the same newspaper, in its issue of the 27th July, the State Minister for Lands, who is chairman of the Rural Reconstruction Commission, stated—

Two fundamental differences suggested by the Press statement appear to be that the State shall be asked to act as principals, with certain Commonwealth aid, and that the tenure shall be on a leasehold basis. Without precise information on the question of rent as referred

to in the Prime Minister's statement and the nature of the leasehold, it is not possible at this stage to make any useful comparisons.

That was the reaction of the chairman of the Commission to the Prime Minister's statement. On the 4th August, the following paragraph appeared in "The West Australian":—

The proposals submitted by the Commonwealth to the States for the settlement of ex-service men on the land provide that they shall be placed as leaseholders with an option to purchase. This reply has been received by Senator Collett from the Minister for Post-War Reconstruction (Mr. Chifley) in answer to a question submitted by Senator Collett during the recent short session of Parliament.

Here are three instances to indicate that any attempt to indicate the reaction of the Commonwealth Government to the Commission's proposals would be really assumption, because we do not actually know what the Commonwealth Government has in mind. However, with a view to obtaining authentic information, the land committee of the R.S.L. in this State has made several urgent appeals to get the Commonwealth's reaction made available to it and to the branches in the several States. These requests have been refused on the plea that they are confidential and are intended for consideration only at the forthcoming conference of Premiers. Who, I ask, has a better right to review any departure from the Rural Reconstruction Commission's proposals before they are submitted to the Premiers' Conference than has the R.S.L.?

The general public expects that body to speak authoritatively for and on behalf of members of the Forces. The R.S.L. in this State will continue to press for the release of any reactions by the Commonwealth that are to be placed before the Premiers' Conference, for the simple reason that the opinions expressed will be most valuable to whoever represents Western Australia at that gathering. If the R.S.L. knew what the reactions of the Commonwealth Government were the information would be invaluable to the men who go from this State to fight the battles on behalf of the returned men. So far we have not got that information, but will keep on trying. Furthermore the R.S.L. has already asked for the admission of its representative at the Premiers' Conference in the capacity of observer, and will continue to press that request. The object in view is to enable the League to gauge the reaction of the

States' representatives towards any alteration in the Commission's proposals.

When the Commonwealth and State legislation is introduced to implement the findings of the Premiers' Conference our endeavour will be to keep out of it anything that is repugnant to the R.S.L. in any future soldier settlement land scheme. In other words, if the States are to act as principals we desire to see that the mistakes of the 1914-18 period are not repeated. That is the object we have in view in our endeavour to help the Commission. If the Prime Minister has been correctly reported there are two other phases that merit some comment. In the first place, the question is: Are the States to act as principals in any future soldier settlement scheme, as was the case at the termination of the 1914-18 war? Simultaneously with the presentation of the R.S.L.'s proposals regarding future land settlement it also forwarded to the Prime Minister in the form of a draft Bill its views with respect to preference in employment.

Earlier I read the remarks of the Commission as to the constitutional bar to making any future land settlement scheme a Commonwealth responsibility. That was well known at the inauguration of the scheme that was put forth after the 1914-18 war, and was mentioned in evidence to the Commission by the Federal President of the R.S.L. Hence the necessity for the States themselves having to act as principals in soldier land settlement schemes. Mr. Drew, who was a member of the State Government at the time, will know that I am correct in this statement. On this question the Prime Minister has said that practically the same bar exists to giving any Commonwealth-wide effect to preference to soldiers as exists in the case of soldier land settlement. This was the opinion of the R.S.L. when it agreed to the drafting of the Bill it sent to the Prime Minister, the idea behind both Bills being to assist in avoiding in each instance the mistakes that followed the 1914-18 war.

The Prime Minister's reaction as to preference, if he is correctly reported, is entirely opposed to his reaction to the recommendations of the Commission on the other point. He has said that if the first question in the Referendum is not agreed to his Government cannot implement the policy of preference. As there exists a constitutional bar to any Commonwealth-

wide application to a soldier land settlement scheme, the Prime Minister apparently is prepared to come to an agreement with the several State Governments. If an agreement is possible and uniform legislation is passed in each State upon such a diversified question as soldier land settlement, surely a similar agreement is possible in the field of preference in employment. No attempt, for obvious reasons, has been made in that direction. The Commonwealth is prepared to collaborate with the States and make an agreement in regard to land settlement, but is not prepared to collaborate with the States in regard to preference, and yet the same constitutional bar exists in both instances.

Another phase of the Prime Minister's statement is that all service men who have served for six months or so and are honourably discharged from the services should be eligible to participate in any future soldier settlement scheme. As that is a matter of policy the Rural Reconstruction Commission has wisely made no recommendation. That is a question for the Government of the day, and it is not for the Commission to say who shall participate. The R.S.L. submitted a draft Bill to the Prime Minister and not only in that Bill but in the preference Bill gave priority to servicemen. They were to have priority in both instances. The term "soldier" is defined as being—

A person who during the war of 1914-18 or during the war which commenced on the 3rd September, 1939, (a) served in a naval, military or air force of the Commonwealth in a combat area; (b) being domiciled in a State or territory of the Commonwealth served in a naval, military or air force of any part of His Majesty's dominions other than the Commonwealth in a combat area; but does not include any such person who was discharged from any such force by reason of misconduct, or whose record in the Commission's opinion was not satisfactory.

A combat area is defined as meaning—

An area of land or sea declared by the Governor-General by proclamation to be a combat area for the purposes of this Act.

That postulates what the Prime Minister was reported recently as having said, namely, that if there was any section of the Australian community deserving of special consideration it was the front-line soldier. Our object has been to ensure that such a person shall have first priority, but if the Prime Minister is correctly reported it means an "open go." I do not think old

soldiers would stand for that. A provision similar to that to which I have referred appeared in the Canadian Veterans' Land Settlement Act, 1942. According to questions I asked Mr. Ross, a visiting Canadian delegate, this has been in operation for some time.

Speaking as one who has taken a major part in formulating the future soldier land settlement scheme, and having represented the R.S.L. of this State at both conferences which drew up the main principles of the Bill submitted to the Prime Minister and the Rural Reconstruction Commission, I am certain that the R.S.L. in this State accepts without qualification the recommendation of the Commission which, as I have already indicated, practically agreed to all the proposals put forward by the R.S.L. I hope that a similar attitude will be adopted by all State representatives at the Premiers' Conference and that they will be united and stick to the Commission, and not be the catspaw of the Commonwealth Government which wants to cheescare. I understand that Mr. Craig has read the report of the Commission and I hope he will support me. The Commission has left little undone and nothing unsaid. I also hope that other returned soldier members of this Chamber who are interested in the land, namely, Mr. Cornish, Mr. Roche and Mr. Moore, will support me too, for they can speak authoritatively respecting returned soldiers' settlement in Western Australia. So much for soldier land settlement. I have now a few words to say about the Lieut.-Governor's Speech generally.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: What about Mr. Parker, who is also a returned soldier?

Hon. J. CORNELL: He is not on the land. The other members I have mentioned are connected with the land, and are probably more qualified to speak on the subject than I am, although I was once connected with the land. I am the chairman of the Soldier Land Settlement Committee of the R.S.L. in this State. One paragraph in the Speech deals with the supply of firewood to the metropolitan area. During my election campaign of last April I stressed the point that it would be idle to look to the goldmining centres as a medium for the rapid absorption of demobilised men unless appropriate action were taken not only as regards the domestic supply of fuel, but the supply of fuel to keep the mining industry

going. Anyone who knows the Western Australian mining industry, and reads as he runs, must agree that that is the most important phase of any future development in mining. Nature is almost at its last ebb so far as the supply of firewood is concerned in most mining areas. What is to be the substitute? In Kalgoorlie and Boulder particularly, and perhaps in Coolgardie, there is a shortage of firewood for domestic purposes, but the problem of finding fuel to keep the mines going transcends other problems.

With regard to education, a measure is to be introduced to increase the annual grant to the University to £40,000 and plans are being formulated for new schools and other educational necessities, to meet the demand of the post-war period. If any of our public utilities cry out more than others for consideration and re-conditioning, those utilities are the country schools of this State which actually scream for attention. Some of our country schools are an everlasting disgrace to any civilised community. One can travel through the North-East and South Provinces and see the deplorable condition of the school grounds and the playgrounds and the third and fourth-hand equipment, which very often has come from the metropolitan area. I have gone through other provinces and seen the same thing.

The future of this State depends not upon the metropolitan area, not upon the big towns, but upon what lies behind them—the natural resources of the State and the people who develop them. The children of the man in the bush deserve as nearly as possible educational facilities equal to those enjoyed by the children of the metropolitan area, but they do not get them. I recognise that the problem is a big one, but it must be faced. I have already said in this House—knowing the outer wheat belt areas as I do—that the drift from the land has not all been attributable to the departure of men who would never become farmers, or to drought conditions. It has been attributable, in part, to men with consciences who have said that whatever might befall them they were determined to quit and take their children where they could obtain a reasonable education and be on an equal footing with others. I know the Chief Secretary understands all that. I know it is a question of finance and that extra taxation is needed, but the Government should

certainly do something to obtain the money that is necessary to re-condition our country schools. If we concentrate on giving country people additional housing but not educational facilities, we shall certainly make life a little more bearable for parents but at the same time we shall make it a little more impossible for their children later on.

I did intend to deal with the reference in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech to the proposed measure to liberalise the franchise for the Legislative Council, but, with all due respect to the dear old Council, it should have been left out of the Speech altogether. However, we have heard all this before. According to the Speech, approximately 4,500 men are still employed in the mining industry. It is generally considered that for every working miner, there are four other individuals who are carried by the industry. At the outbreak of the war there were 14,000 men in the industry. Ten thousand have left, which means that 40,000 other individuals have gone from the industry as well. It is possible to see the effect of this in Kalgoorlie and Boulder. In the latter place the result is particularly noticeable. In what were considered the doldrum days in Kalgoorlie and Boulder and on the Golden Mile there were at least five or six big drapery emporiums in Boulder, but today there are only two. In the main street of Boulder 65 per cent. of the shops are empty and wherever one goes throughout the goldmining districts similar conditions can be seen.

There is much glib talk about how quickly the mining industry will absorb men at the conclusion of hostilities. Anyone who knows goldmining is aware that if unworked for years what is a good mine today will deteriorate in all its phases and, unless a mine is exceptionally good, an enormous amount of capital will have to be raised to rehabilitate it. While there are big possibilities in the mining industry in the future, they will not be realised in a short time but their development will be a long and tedious process. There has been a good deal said regarding what will happen or what should happen on the 19th of this month and what will occur if the referendum is carried and what will occur if it is not. In all the specious talk that has taken place I have not found one casual reference to what is going to happen to the great goldmining industry of Western Australia.

I extend my congratulations to the faithful ten of this House who remained solid like the Romans of old, stood shoulder to shoulder and came back unseathed. I do not know whether I should be prepared to extend congratulations to Mr. Gibson and Mr. Bolton. As far as they were concerned the enemy never appeared and they had no fight to wage at all! I also want to express my appreciation of the position in which the allied nations find themselves. Old soldiers are aware that Fritz is a dour old chap and a last-ditch fighter and it may still be a long way to Berlin and a long time before the end of the war. But the writing is on the wall and eventually the Allies will be on top, because if history teaches me anything it teaches me that those who command the seas ultimately win the victory. Japan is a great sea power, but when the Allied nations are finished with Fritz, the might of the British and American navies will be brought against Japan, and that country will be overpowered. May that day of victory be soon!

I am not one of those who hold that the new order which is talked about so much will be realised in the way some think it will. I have lived 70 years. I have crossed too many dry creeks and I have yet to learn that fundamentally mankind ever changes. Our progeny will probably be faced—I shall not be here; I shall be looking down—with problems never dreamt of by us. All I hope is that the democracies can retain their balance of power. But I would utter a word of warning to those who say that they must have this power and that power to carry on through the peace: On the day the last shot is fired there will be a psychological reaction throughout the Allied democracies. The men who did the fighting and those who made it possible for them to fight—those who put up with all kinds of Gestapo methods—are not going to endure them after the war. If an attempt is made to force such methods upon them, there will be a reaction in this Commonwealth that will astound those who try it. They will find that what cannot be done by persuasion and commonsense will not be achieved in other ways.

During war there is always the threat of enemy invasion hanging over the heads of the people and this can be used to induce the people to endure a good deal, but they will not be caught on that hook after the

war. Men will stand four-square for some reasonable semblance of the application of democratic principles and for the right to go about their peaceful avocations in a quiet and sensible manner without being directed here, there and everywhere. Those who think they are going to have a new order commensurate with what is now in existence should take heed lest they fall.

HCN. V. HAMERSLEY (East): Since the last Parliament was in session, the elections have taken place for the Legislative Council and I wish to congratulate the members who have been returned. Those members have put up a record for the Legislative Council in that they all managed to find themselves endorsed by their electors. The Legislative Council as a whole should be congratulated, too, because it is evident that there is no particular anxiety on the part of the community to make any radical change. The voters for this Chamber are apparently satisfied and the ten who submitted themselves for re-election and were returned have established a very good lead. I hope that state of affairs will be continued in spite of the suggestion in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech that an alteration in the Council franchise is proposed.

We can take pride in the portion of His Excellency's Speech that deals with the contribution Western Australia has made towards the war effort. I refer to the paragraph which reads—

Enlistments of both men and women from Western Australia remain the highest per capita of any State in Australia. Contributions to war savings certificates and war savings bonds continue to be above the Australian average. Subscriptions by the people to patriotic funds have been maintained and approximately £1,250,000 have now been collected for this purpose.

The figures quoted are remarkable and serve to emphasise the wonderful loyalty of Western Australians respecting anything pertaining to the war. The Speech itself is optimistic in tone although guarded in its references to the short rainfall in the agricultural districts and particularly to the disappointing falls in the pastoral areas. It is unfortunate that, just as we did in 1914 when the earlier war commenced, we should be experiencing conditions that enable one to say that a drought is in progress. I regard the position seriously both from the standpoint of Western Australia and of Australia as a whole. I cannot help reminding members

of the prognostication of the late Clement Wragge, who was a past-master in connection with weather predictions and the vagaries of the seasons. He predicted that in 1944 there would be one of the greatest droughts in the history of Australia. While the Speech contains a certain amount of optimism I feel that we are not yet out of the wood.

I wish to quote extracts from a speech by Mr. Eric A. Johnston in London before the members of the Association of British Chambers of Commerce. Mr. Johnston, who is an American, when referring to a comparison between America and Great Britain said—

Your financial system makes your country much more a unit than ours is. Your great banks have branches all over Britain. We have strong independent banks in all localities. . . . Your national Government is completely sovereign. It can do anything. Ours cannot; it has only such powers as the people have given it. The most striking clause in our Constitution is that all other powers continue to reside in the States or in the people. It is an error to describe the United States as a sovereign union of sovereign States. It is the people who are sovereign. The people of each State give to their State Government what powers they please. They retain the rest. The people of all the States together give the national Government such powers as they please, and retain the rest.

This consciousness of and practice of popular sovereignty—of the power to give powers to government, of the power to deny powers to government and, above all, of the power to withdraw powers from government—is the basic political fact of America. Add it to our sentimental localism and to our diffusion of banking power and of the power of radio and Press, and what do you get? You get an American who acutely questions all centralised dominance in any field and who is for ever conducting crusades to break down private monopolies and public bureaucracies alike. He does not believe in irreversibly surrendered powers, either in government or in business. He regards all powers, whether political or economic, as subject to constant revision—by himself.

Now what this American is in America, he will also be in international affairs. You do not change the spots of a leopard by putting him into a zoo. One of the most pernicious fallacies of a certain sort of world planner is his belief that if he can just put leopards, lions, antelopes and elephants into the same international cage they will immediately crossbreed into one kind of international animal. They will not.

For centuries, many countries have tried to make you less British. We have even tried to do it by marrying into Britain. And what is the result? Out of an intermarriage with an American you have today the most British Prime Minister of your whole history. You do

not lose your spots. Nor shall we. Let us write that truth in the prologue of every attempt at collaboration between us.

I regard those remarks as very appropriate in view of the forthcoming referendum that is the subject of so much discussion at present. They serve to draw particular attention to the power of the people themselves and the danger now facing them in the proposal to grant additional powers to the Commonwealth Government. There is an old saying to the effect that "it is the gun that kicks." I fear that the people will realise the truth of that saying if the proposed powers are transferred, for once handed over they will never be returned to the States. In America the people can demand the return of powers granted, but that will not be the position here—and therein lies the grave danger. I sincerely hope that when the referendum vote is taken on the 19th August, an overwhelming majority of the people will clearly indicate to the Commonwealth Government that they are not disposed to hand over far-reaching and serious powers, the effect of which would be to take from the people themselves the democratic system of government they have enjoyed in the past. The writing is on the wall, and I hope the majority will vote no.

We are now reaching a stage in our history where we are commencing to feel the full effects of a tendency that has grown up over the years. Industrial unions are enjoying more and more power and have become arrogant. They are practically in full command and now are seeking further powers. In these days we are dominated by an absolutely bureaucratic system and are governed in all directions by committees. I come in contact with business people who tell me that from time to time they have to approach some individual in an official position seeking his permission to enable them to do this or to do that. At times they have found that the individual they have to interview is someone who was formerly employed in their business and had to be discharged as incompetent. Some had really been a menace to the business, yet such people are now in control. It is all very difficult.

When new governmental activities are established one would think that, as in ordinary businesses, men appointed to take charge would be above suspicion and fully qualified. Business people tell me that there has been some looseness regarding

the appointment of many to these bureaucratic positions, and that procedure does not encourage confidence. It means that stagnation will develop, and people will get out of the country altogether. Certainly no one will be encouraged to provide capital for the establishment of new industries of which we have heard so much and which we desire to see established in Australia. I cannot view the position with equanimity. People will not be likely to engage in business here, particularly if the additional powers sought are granted to the Commonwealth Government by way of the referendum.

Constantly we have before us the spectacle of industrial strife. Certainly there are strikes in other parts of the world but the trouble is not so pronounced elsewhere as it is in the Eastern States in particular, where there has been a series of strikes which I regard as absolutely unpatriotic. They are contrary to the welfare of Australia and disloyal to those who are fighting our battles on the various Fronts. From time to time the men have been told how the strikes have reduced the output of essential commodities and hampered the movements of vessels required to ship the requirements of the Fighting Forces in New Guinea and elsewhere. The delays in that respect are truly appalling, and that position has obtained right throughout the war period.

In fact, I have heard it stated that these strikes are really making Australia, in a sense, the laughing-stock of the world. That is a most unfortunate thing, because the achievements of our soldiers have been wonderful and have raised the name of Australia throughout the world. That reputation, however, is being broken down on our home front at every turn. I do not understand the attitude adopted by the strike leaders. Their action represents an outstanding confirmation of objections raised by early opponents of industrial arbitration in this Parliament. The one contention that was constantly stressed by their opponents to framers of industrial arbitration legislation was that if Labour was given the power proposed by the measure, there would still be strikes. Now, the object of passing Industrial Arbitration Acts was to keep men at work and to settle any disputes by courts. It was argued that the workers would not abide by decisions of the courts but would be a law unto themselves.

It was retorted that in such a case they would be fined, and to this the rejoinder was made that they would not pay the fines.

Employers sentenced to fines for not obeying the directions of Industrial Arbitration Acts have paid the fines in every instance, but I have yet to learn of any case where members of a union similarly sentenced have paid the fines. As a general rule, I believe, they have got out of paying them. Therefore the position is utterly unfair. Of that unfairness we had an appalling exhibition here quite recently, in connection with our trams. I marvel that we have to put up with such things. Again, I observe that the Prime Minister has undertaken to put a stop to all the thieving that takes place on the waterfronts around the Australian coast. I do not know what success the hon. gentlemen will have. Thieving has developed freely for many years. I doubt very much whether Mr. Curtin will have success. He has power to deal with the evil, I understand; but it has been going on for a great many years and still appears to flourish.

In view of the fact that Western Australia has granted many powers to the Commonwealth Government—sufficient powers, in the opinion of this Parliament—I fail to understand the dissatisfaction expressed by Commonwealth Ministers with the powers they already possess. It makes me feel that the Commonwealth Government is obsessed with the one idea of creating a position in which the Federal Parliament will be under the orders of the unions. The unification proposal has been in the forefront of the Labour platform for many years.

Hon. T. Moore: Nationalisation!

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Yes. The Communists have got hold of the position. This reminds me of a remark made by Sir George Reid many years ago, when the advisableness of Federation was being discussed. He was asked his opinion as to the result of Federation, and his answer was, "If you put a terrier in with half-a-dozen kittens, who will get fat first?" My opinion is that if we are thrown bodily to the wolves as proposed by the referendum, we shall have a pretty thin time and Sir George Reid's prophetic answer will prove to be the truth. The terrier will be in control from Canberra, and we in the West will be in a very bad position.

The tone of His Excellency's Speech is fairly optimistic throughout; but my feeling

is that the farmers, though having reason to applaud the Commonwealth Government for taking control of wheat when the writing on the wall was plain, yet have not much cause to thank that Government. An export pool was formed, and I gather that the Commonwealth Government took charge of the wheat. Present sales by the board controlling the wheat are in the vicinity of 6s. 10d. per bushel in bulk, and 7s. 6d. in bags. However, the Commonwealth Government has decided that the price of wheat for home consumption shall remain at the 1942 level. Today the price of this wheat stands at 3s. 11d., but the flour tax, it is stated, increases the amount to 5s. 2d.

Breakfast-food manufacturers and maltsters get their wheat for 3s. 11d. per bushel. The millers' price for wheat includes 40,000,000 bushels for stock feed as apart from flour sold to traders outside the scope of the wheatgrowing farmers. Much wheat has been sold at 6s. 6d. to 7s. per bushel to the United States, Chili, Peru and South Africa. The millers' price of 5s. 2d. was fixed when wheat was very low in price, to compensate growers for the high cost of farmers' machinery owing to the tariff. The Commonwealth Government takes a rake-off of £500,000 from the fund raised by way of flour tax. In the year 1943-44 the farmers producing wheat lost £9,341,666. That amount of money was taken from them by the Commonwealth Government through taxation. I should imagine the farmers are not too pleased about that. It is an extraordinary thing that the Commonwealth Government should take charge of their business. I gather that much more has been taken from the farmers through this Commonwealth pool than would have been taken by an ordinary pool.

The Commonwealth Government, of course, has full control, and the responsible Minister dictates to the farmers. The position is not like that obtaining in an ordinary co-operative pool where all share alike. This pool is practically a tool, and the Commonwealth Government is sitting tight granting no rise in price although the world's markets show that a considerable increase should be granted. Very large quantities of Australian wheat still remain to be sold. We realise that something had to be done to keep the farmer alive and going, and I am pleased to learn from the Speech that phosphatic rock is being obtained from a mine in some

part of Australia—I do not know where. There is just that reference, and I am indeed pleased to know that the mine is in Australia. I trust that the mineral is of sufficient quality to permit of our farmers being supplied with fertiliser of a higher grade than has been the case for some time past.

I trust, also, that a fair average quantity will be made available to Western Australia, as last year our farmers were very short of superphosphate and up to the present it has been extremely difficult to get any reliable opinion as to the quantity that will be available here. Western Australia unfortunately is still under very tight control as to the area she is allowed to put under wheat. That applies not only to the production of wheat but also to the production of other foodstuffs such as butter, cheese and mutton, and the production of wool. Superphosphate plays a highly important part now in the production of areas for grain on for feed. Therefore it is to be hoped that somewhat greater quantities of superphosphate will be made available to us. I do not desire to take up the time of members any further and therefore conclude by supporting the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

On motion by Hon. C. R. Cornish, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.1 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 8th August, 1944.

	PAGE
Question: Commonwealth Housing Scheme, as to cost of homes	107
Address-in-reply, fifth day	103

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

QUESTION—COMMONWEALTH HOUSING SCHEME.

As to Cost of Homes.

Mr. WATTS (without notice) asked the Premier:

(1) Has the Government obtained prices for the erection of brick and tiled homes in